

# Belmont Nursery School

## Behaviour Policy



**Date Reviewed & Signature of Principal: Anne Burke**

**Date Ratified by Chairperson & Signature: Sean T Murphy, October 2025**

**Review Date: Oct 2026**

*This policy has been written following a consultation process, ratified by the Board of Governors and communicated to the school community as required. It will be monitored and reviewed as part of the school's policy review schedule.*

# **Behaviour Policy**

When it comes to behaviour management we aim to work in partnership with parents to lay foundations from which children will grow into happy, self-confident, well adjusted children.

Nursery aged children are cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically developing a sense of right and wrong in everything they do.

We believe that children and adults are happiest in an ordered environment in which everyone knows what is expected of them and children are free to develop their play without fear of being hurt or hindered by anyone else.

## **At Belmont Nursery School we aim to:**

- ensure a happy, caring and secure environment for everyone who works in or visits Belmont Nursery School;
- ensure that everyone in our setting, their opinions and their talents are respected and valued;
- emphasise and encourage positive behaviour by everybody in the setting: this includes adults as well as children;
- promote self control, self esteem, self confidence and independence;
- promote good social skills – sharing, taking turns, caring, showing respect for others and property;
- provide a happy, stimulating, learning environment for all children, thereby reducing the likelihood of behavioural problems;
- create an environment where children learn to control their own behaviour and take responsibility;
- have good, open lines of communication and develop positive relationships between the school staff and parents;
- provide a consistent approach – working together as partners - giving support where/when necessary;
- promote good behaviour by emphasising praise and reward rather than discipline and sanctions;
- deal with unacceptable behaviour firmly, consistently, and fairly;
- identify emotional and behavioural problems at an early stage using a variety of observations, assessments and monitoring procedures, according to the child's needs; (assessments and identification of behavioural difficulties will be done by the appropriate member(s) of staff);

- when behaviour is particularly challenging work together with the child, parents and outside professionals including:
    - Behaviour Support Team Services – Strabane
    - ASD Support
    - Educational Psychology Service
    - Clinical Psychology
    - RISENI
    - GSAP - Ethos
- \*to plan and use appropriately revised Personal Learning Plans (PLPS) and/or Action for Specific Children Plans to support the child;
- \*to regularly review these PLPS/ ASC plans to ensure that they remain appropriate and effective for the child’s progress;
- ensure that parents are fully aware of the school’s Behaviour Policy.

We accept the importance of adopting a positive attitude which emphasises and recognises good behaviour rather than identifying only that which is unacceptable. Young children have to learn how to get on with each other - to share toys, resources, ideas, friends and adult attention. In the course of this they may occasionally hit, snatch, name call, exclude others from play or otherwise be unkind. Teaching children not to do this is a major part of the nursery experience and indeed parenting. We hope that the prevailing atmosphere of cooperation and respect in the nursery and the attitudes and conduct of staff enable children to learn how to behave appropriately.

### **Hurtful Behaviour – why do children sometimes behave the way they do?**

The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are that:

- they do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs this may be in the home and it may also be in the school setting;
- their parent, or carer in the school setting, does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger;
- the child may have insufficient language, or mastery of English, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated;
- the child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse;
- the child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave;
- a change or upheaval at home, or frequent change of carers. Sometimes a child has not settled in well and the behaviour may be the result of ‘separation anxiety’;
- they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them – which could result in impulsive behaviour eg hitting out without reason, not being able to control themselves.

## *Class Strategies*

The following class strategies will be used to help promote positive behaviour within the nursery environment:

- Use of circle time when children are given opportunities to talk about their concerns and feelings – naming their emotions. Use of puppets to reenact/reinforce behaviour scenarios – Social Stories. Jenny Mosley book of ideas.
- Empathy Programme using Molly & Mark Puppets
- Discuss Golden Rules with the children – what does it mean to be kind etc?
- Children given responsibilities and jobs to do
- To promote routines that will help children develop caring attitudes and respect for others, the environment and equipment eg snack/meal times, circle time, tidying up and helping each other.
- Providing strategies to support turn taking e.g. using a sand timer
- Communicating and modelling positive behaviour, using a variety of strategies and props e.g. makaton, gestures, visual timetables and puppets.
- Having a transparent reward system for the children that is seen and applied fairly and consistently – stampers into their individual books at dinner time in line with our “5 Golden Rules”
- Teach negotiation skills such as ‘If you, then I ... or How about if...?’
- Involving the children in problem solving by using the conflict resolution steps as is outlined later in this document.
- Class Rules & Routines visuals that will be used daily to highlight what behaviours and routines we have in nursery.
- Maintaining good/open channels of communication with children, staff and parents.
- Name different types of behaviours – desirable and undesirable, discussing consequences of undesirable behaviours.

### **Useful strategies to use when a child's behaviour is challenging. Staff will:**

- Get down to the child's level where possible.
- Show concern for the child.
- Make eye-contact where possible. If eye contact is not possible, then ensure we are speaking so that the child can hear us.
- Keep language focused and to-the-point.
- Speak calmly without raising our voice.
- Visual cues such as a "first and then" board or a sand timer will be used if appropriate
- State positively what we want or need, e.g. "I need you to walk in nursery." "I need you to come down and put your two feet on the ground." "I want to keep you safe."
- Be firm and clear while giving the child some time and space to process what we are saying e.g. "I can wait until the sand runs through the sand timer for you to give that to me."
- Follow through after giving an instruction, e.g. "I need you to come away now. I can wait until the sand runs through the sand timer but then I will have to hold your hand and bring you away."
- If the child does not respond: "I need to hold your hand and bring you away now."
- Bring child to visual class rules and read through them together.
- Acknowledge children's feelings e.g. "I can see that you are angry about that, but it is important to listen to the adults in nursery."

### **Useful Strategies to use when one child hits another child. Staff will:**

- Where possible, focus on the child who has been hurt first. Show the child positive care, attention and comfort.
- Speak to the child who has done the hurting when he/she is feeling calmer by saying, "Can you see, that you hurt your friend. She is feeling very sad. Remember, there is no hitting in nursery, we have safe hands."
- Encourage the child who has been hurt to say, assertively "No hitting!"
- Decide if the child is ready to return positively to play or if some time is needed to calm down.
- Read from our Good Behaviour books, e.g. "Hands are not for Hitting"
- When appropriate, end the intervention with, "Remember, no hitting in nursery. Are you ready to play nicely now?"
- Inform both sets of parents at the end of the session.

### **Staff Role in Promoting Positive Behaviour**

Staff play a crucial role in helping promote positive behaviour in the nursery setting, they must strive to be positive role models for the children with regard to friendliness, care, conduct and courtesy. Staff will:

- take care of child's paintings, drawings, constructions;
- work hard to ensure a child's attachment figures in the school setting, class teacher and assistant, are building a strong relationship with them, this will provide a sense of security and belonging to the child;
- tell children what they can do as opposed to what they can't do;

- praise and endorse desirable behaviour such as kindness, empathy and willingness to share;
- recognise and acknowledge feelings to encourage empathy;
- help children to name their emotions;
- take positive steps to avoid a situation in which children receive adult attention only in return for undesirable behaviour;
- help children recognise that fighting, hurting, inappropriate use of language and other similar actions are not acceptable behaviour.

## **Staff Development**

The strategies required to secure positive behaviour among young pupils change through time. In this era of rapid social and economic change, the change in required strategies is likely to be consistent. In order to secure staff's ability to meet these changes, all nursery staff will have access to appropriate staff development activities. The staff development activities available will be in line with our School Development Plan.

## **Resources**

- The nursery will retain and utilise a wide range of appropriate indoor and outdoor play equipment so that children are stimulated and motivated.
- Books to reinforce social skills and emotional awareness
- Puppets to model emotions
- Personalised social stories
- Use of quiet room
- Wind Chimes
- Classical piano or other calming music
- Keep calm box of sensory resources
- 1 minute, 2 minute, 5 minute and 10 minute sand timers

The presence of such resources and their continual upgrading will facilitate concentrated engagement in activities and appropriate behaviour.

## **What we regard as undesirable behaviour**

1. Behaviour which hurts others:
  - Physical – hitting, biting, shaking, scratching, pushing, nipping, punching, tripping, poking, slapping, spitting, head butting, kicking, throwing things at people;
  - Verbal – name calling, racist remarks, shouting, swearing, answering back;
  - Emotional – sarcasm, putting down, emotional threat or manipulation.
2. Disrespect for others and property
  - Invasion of a child's space or privacy eg while dressing, using toilet etc;
  - Not waiting for a turn;
  - Snatching items, hoarding to prevent others using equipment;
  - Damaging toys and resources;
  - Making a mess and leaving it.
3. Bullying ...See Separate 'Bullying Policy'

Some behaviours are extremely concerning e.g. racist remarks, inappropriate touching, verbal aggression, persistent harming (of themselves or others), and intentional damaging of property. Incidents such as these will be managed on an individual basis and in a non-judgemental and appropriate way.

### **Rough and Tumble Play and Fantasy Aggression**

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes – such as superhero and weapon play; some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying.

We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or aggressive.

We will continually reinforce strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.

### **What happens when a child behaves inappropriately?**

We have categorised the different behaviours depending on severity.

*Category 1 Behaviours – Minor*

*Category 2 Behaviours – Serious*

***When dealing with any undesirable behaviours staff must be sure that the child is in no doubt that it is the behaviour we don't like not him or her.***

|   |
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| <b>Category 1 – Minor Incidents</b>   |
| Not following Golden Rules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are kind and gentle towards others</li> <li>• We share and take turns</li> <li>• We listen carefully when others are talking</li> <li>• We look after our toys and keep everything tidy</li> <li>• We stay safe</li> </ul> |
| Not following carpet rules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good sitting</li> <li>• good listening</li> <li>• good looking</li> <li>• lips closed when teacher is talking</li> <li>• hand up to speak</li> </ul>   |
| Running in the classroom  |
| Using outside voice when indoors  |
| Snatching items from others   |
| Not including others in play  |
| Using unkind words or names towards others  |
| Pushing   |
| Destroying others creations   |
| Playing inappropriately – carrying water away from water tray etc   |
| Annoying others – invading upon their personal space  |

### ***Protocol after a Minor Behaviour/Incident***

Adult to say a positive statement starting with “remember to ....”  
eg instead of “you’re not listening” we say “remember to use your listening ears”, this will also remind children of the golden or carpet rules.

Try to catch the child doing something good and give lots of praise.

If the behaviour continues an adult will position themselves beside the child, either at carpet or a play activity, and the adult will role model carpet or golden rules for the child.

If we notice a pattern developing ie persistent poor listening, the child will join an attention and listening development group to help promote their good listening skills and be included in Action for Specific Children or Personal Learning Plan.

If a **second minor incident** occurs staff will follow the steps above but will then sit and play alongside the child and model good play or move the child to another play area.

If a **third minor incident** occurs staff will repeat some of the steps but children will be taken aside quietly to have some “Thinking Time” along with the adult. During this period of “thinking time” a member of staff will sit with the child and reflect on the incident.

If a third incident occurs parents will be notified via Whats App or verbally.

|   |
|---|
| <b>Category 2 – Serious Behaviours are forceful and intentional</b> |
| Hitting/Slapping/Punching   |
| Biting  |
| Scratching  |
| Nipping/forceful poking   |
| Pushing causing harm  |
| Throwing things at people   |
| Spitting  |
| Breaking of toys/resources  |
| Swearing  |
| Head butting  |
| Shaking   |
| Kicking/Tripping  |
| Pulling hair  |
| Excluding others from play  |
| Prolonged tantrums  |

### ***Protocol after a serious incident***

1. Firstly, check on the child who is the victim, reassure and comfort as necessary.
2. Get down to children’s level - use a calm voice to calm the child who has displayed the undesirable behaviour. If the child does not calm down staff will ask them how they feel or show them the relevant emotions pictures to help them identify how they feel. If necessary use some resources from the “Calm Down Box” to settle the child.

The child may also benefit from some time away from the classroom in a quieter area where they can regulate their emotions, the child will never be left on their own.

3. Gather information from both sides (say “What’s happened?”)
4. Acknowledge and name feelings – ‘I can see you’re feeling hurt/cross/upset/angry’.
5. Draw the children’s attention to our ‘Golden Rules’ and give a positive reminder of the behaviour that we expect  
eg ‘Remember to follow the golden rules we look after our toys’,  
or ‘remember to follow the golden rules be kind and gentle towards others’.
6. Ask “how can we make everyone feel better?”, if the children do not suggest a resolution then the adult should suggest some ideas.  
***If the child does not volunteer to say sorry ask them “do you think you need to say sorry?”***
7. Parents should always be informed of any serious behaviours or incidents. The teacher will use WhatsApp or Class Dojo to let the parent know eg “There was a behavioural incident in school today, could you phone after 2/3pm to discuss”. The teacher will reassure the parent that they will monitor the child in school and report back if there are any further incidents.
8. The injured party should get positive attention from an adult and/or a child in the class. If there is a physical injury to a child the teacher will ring the parent to inform them what has happened or let them know at home time. The accident/injury book will also be completed.
9. Adult should observe from a distance to ensure behaviour is not repeated and praise the child at the earliest opportunity for good behaviour and relay this to home via Class Dojo.

***On the very rare occasion when a child or number of children are in danger, staff must always make it their priority to get these children to a safe area away from the source of the danger e.g. when another child is throwing furniture or other dangerous objects around.***

*The school will not share information about which children were involved in the incident, as this is considered a breach of confidentiality and data protection.*

### **Important Considerations**

- We must make sure that the child is in no doubt that it is the behaviour we don’t like not him or her.
- After an incident in which parents have been informed staff will make sure to catch the child being good at the earliest opportunity and give lots of praise. A positive What’s App message will also be sent to parents highlighting this..
- Staff will use lots of positive praise and acknowledge when a child has helped another child. And equally when a child has tried hard after a dispute.

- During circle time/small group time staff use puppets to reenact/reinforce behaviour scenarios.

### **Repeated patterns of behaviour.**

If a child is consistently repeating the same behaviour staff will:

- Meet with the parents, in order to gain an understanding of the child's behaviour and develop agreed joint strategies for moving forward
- Provide 1-1 adult support for a period of time to reinforce expectations of behaviour (if staffing level ratios can facilitate this)
- Look for "triggers" e.g. is it always at tidy up time or rhyme time?
- Then act to prevent the behaviour occurring at these trigger times by perhaps giving the child positive attention at the appropriate time or extra adult support.
- Provide personalised social stories if appropriate
- Provide opportunities for outdoor physical play, e.g. running, climbing, cycling, jumping...
- Provide a Sensory Circuits session which is a short and snappy sensory physical skills programme advised by Occupational Therapists, to energise and then settle children
- Evaluate the provision/expectations for the child and make adjustments

If a child does not respond to the above strategies after a period of 4-8 weeks staff will then implement the Special Needs Policy. In consultation with parents the teacher will draw up an Personal Learning Plan. Referral to external agencies for additional advice and support may also be suggested by the teaching staff.

Some external agencies we liaise with include:

- Speech and Language therapy
- Waterside Family Support Hub
- RISE NI (an early intervention service which helps children develop the foundation skills for learning)
- Educational Psychology

All referrals to external agencies will be made by the principal/teacher in liaison with parents.

### **Use of Reasonable Force**

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'.

It is very rare a member of staff would need to use reasonable force in our nursery school. If it is necessary this will be to safeguard a child or a peer.

See Policy on Use of Reasonable Force

## **Exclusion**

It is the policy of Belmont Nursery School to avoid exclusions, fixed term or permanent, whenever possible. The school will follow its strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour, when unacceptable behaviour occurs. The decision to exclude a child from school permanently is regarded as a last resort. Parents will be informed of such decisions at all times.

## **Parents**

It is the responsibility of the class teacher in particular but also the Nursery Assistant to maintain a positive relationship with the parents of all children.

Parents in turn are:

- *encouraged to discuss any problems that may arise at home and keep teachers informed of any unusual behaviour in their children;*
- *encouraged to take an active role in their child's education. Enquire how their day went?/Who or what they played with? Etc;*
- *to inform the school immediately if their child encounters any problems at school, Their complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow;*
- *encouraged to read "the Peaceable Classroom " booklet which details our procedures in detailing with incidents.*

In the event of a situation arising the parents will be invited to discuss the issue as well as any strategies which may be used. When appropriate, parents will be asked to support such strategies at home thereby providing a consistent approach.

In some cases incidents of challenging behaviour may be linked to varying circumstances happening outside of school – perhaps within the home situation (mum/dad going away for a few days, the death of a grandparent etc) which may influence the child's behaviour. In these cases it is essential that the principal/class teacher knows what is going on (any details will be kept in the strictest confidence).

## **Belmont Nursery School – 'Golden Rules'**

At Belmont Nursery School we follow an assertive discipline model of promoting positive behaviour. An important element of this approach has been the implementation of our '5 Golden Rules'.

Our '5 Golden Rules' help promote the safety of the children and the staff and help children develop a sense of responsibility for their actions and an understanding of the effect their actions may have on others.

Belmont Nursery School's '5 Golden Rules' are as follows:

1. We are kind and gentle towards others.

2. We share and take turns.
3. We listen carefully when others are talking.
4. We look after our toys and keep everything tidy.
5. We stay safe.

We expect everyone at Belmont Nursery School, both adults and children to follow these Golden Rules, all staff will ensure that the rules are applied consistently, so that children have the security of knowing what to expect and can build up useful habits of behaviour.

Belmont Nursery will use an individual **Reward System** to promote the learning behaviours expected in line with the Golden Rules.

A **Rewards System** works well because it promotes good behaviour and helps children see that good behaviour is valued. Rewards encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and promote self-esteem. All children have a need for positive affirmation and most respond well to verbal praise and social approval. Praise and positive feedback will be the basis of the reward system. An individual ‘Golden Rules’ chart will be completed by a member of staff for each child on a daily basis. For every day the child has met the golden rules a stamp will be given. One stamp equals 1 marble into the jar. The maximum number of stamps a child can get on a weekly basis is 5 which in turn equals 5 marbles into the jar.

I had a good day at nursery.  
I was kind and gentle, I shared, I listened carefully,  
I looked after the toys and I stayed safe.

★ Abdullah ★

| Date      | 😊 (I followed the rules (1 stamp/1 marble)) | 😞 (I didn't follow the rules (0 stamp/0 marbles)) |
|-----------|---|---|
| Monday    |   |   |
| Tuesday   |   |   |
| Wednesday |   |   |
| Thursday  |   |   |
| Friday    |   |   |

Total Marbles for the week=



Once the jar is full, the whole class will benefit from a reward i.e. a class movie, special visitor to school etc.

### **Star of the Week**

The class teacher in consultation with the nursery assistant will pick out a child at the end of the week in each class who has done really well. These children will each receive a ***‘Star of the Week’*** certificate. They will also be able to bring home a school camera for the weekend and they will have the opportunity the following week to display their photographs on the whiteboard and walk about these with the rest of the class. ***It is essential that all children have at least one turn to be ‘Star of the Week’ during their year in nursery.***