

Horden Nursery School

Behaviour Policy and Guidelines



Introduction

At Horden Nursery School we are proud to promote a love of learning within a safe and secure environment, in which every child matters. We believe that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour. All children gain a sense of belonging within a safe and nurtured environment where they feel confident to develop positive relationships both with adults and children.

Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This is a developmental task that requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

Principles

1. At Horden Nursery School we believe that a whole school approach to the management of behaviour is essential for effective learning and teaching to take place. This policy refers to all children, staff, parents, carers, governors and visitors to the school.

2. Everyone has the right to:-

- Feel safe and a responsibility to ensure the safety of others.
- Feel respected and a responsibility to show respect for others.
- To be supported both in their learning and everyday life and a responsibility to assist and support others.
- Be treated fairly and to treat others fairly.
- Move freely and safely subject to rules.
- Have property kept safe and a responsibility to care for the property of others.

3. We believe that a positive approach to behaviour has more effect than a negative reaction to it. Good behaviour is best encouraged by positive example, by recognising, rewarding and modelling good behaviour.

4. Children have a right to be treated as individuals and their developmental needs taken into consideration. Children should be involved in decision making, including formulating some of the rules they are expected to understand and follow. This will be implemented through discussions and circle time activities.

Examples could include:

- We are kind to one another.
- We will not hurt our friends.

- We share and look after our toys.
- We listen to each other and work together to sort out problems.
- We take turns when playing with toys.
- We will look after our nursery and put our things away.

5. A consistent and positive approach is adopted towards behaviour management. Strategies include: all policies, a welcoming environment, curriculum development, staff training, induction and appropriate resourcing.

6. A clear evaluation is made of policies and practice using facts to inform future development.

7. Parents, carers and Governors are given reports on children's behaviour and general progress as appropriate.

Aims

We aim to promote the understanding of what constitutes good behaviour, to celebrate and encourage good behaviour, courtesy and politeness, to manage unacceptable behaviour in a clear consistent way.

Safety

Safety is a priority. The use of physical force is not acceptable in nursery. The LA policy on restraint allows for the most minimal level of force to be used to prevent harm to children and adults or serious damage.

Children should be taught strategies to deal with unwanted contact, e.g. calling on an adult for help. Similarly, bullying and threatening behaviour is unacceptable and will be addressed using a system of sanctions.

Respect

Some forms of unacceptable behaviour take the form of verbal attacks, gestures, and looks. No one should be subjected to ridicule or personal insult about their family, race, culture, belief, gender or appearance or indeed about anything. We are required by the LA to monitor and record instances of racist behaviour and to take action to prevent its recurrence. Members of staff have a responsibility to provide a good model to children by observing respectful behaviour. Children have a right to be taught in a respectful manner.

Access

Children are able to access all curriculum areas to develop free choice and independence, both indoors and outdoors, under qualified supervision. Children will be actively encouraged to walk at all times inside for safety.

Property

All property must be respected, whether it is that of the setting, staff, child or other adult. The setting does not accept responsibility for children's property brought into school.

Ways in which we support and encourage positive behaviour

- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome. Staff role model respectful interactions with children, families and visitors.
- We have high expectations of our children – celebrating their successes and being supportive of their efforts.
- We encourage independence; reflective questioning, problem solving and involve children in making choices. By asking children what they think, and how they feel we show them that their views, and feelings are important. Giving children well – informed choices, with knowledge of the consequences, enables them to take the responsibility for their own behaviour.
- We ensure that there are enough resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns. We offer opportunities for activities where children learn to take turns and share.
- We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as politeness, kindness and willingness to share and reinforce, acknowledge and celebrate it.
- We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- As part of our curriculum we recognise the importance of celebrating the cultures of the home and community, to enable children to express and be proud of their experiences. Through a rich and diverse curriculum, we aim to encourage children to respect and value themselves and each other. We also seek to equip our children so that they can challenge negative misconceptions about themselves and others.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour and use positive behaviour as an example, acknowledging desired behaviour.
- We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.

Adults as role models

Adults in nursery are critical in acting as role models for the behaviour we want to encourage. Adults demonstrate, by their behaviour towards each other, how people within the Nursery are expected to interact. If adults are kind, friendly, polite and thoughtful, whilst supporting each other and looking after resources and the environment, they create a model for children to copy. Adult behaviour supports children in developing the skills and attitudes which will help them behave in ways which are acceptable to other people and satisfying to themselves.

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, although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.

Staff monitor this kind of play and put in interventions as appropriate.

- 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 develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
- We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, blowing up, shooting etc., and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

Strategies to support children who engage in inconsiderate behaviour

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions include, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what behaviour was not acceptable and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- We use a calm and consistent tone of voice when responding to children.
- We may on occasion use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property. Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of the Head Teacher and are recorded. The child's parent is informed on the same day.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.

Hurtful behaviour

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying'. For children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without understanding of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.

- We recognise that young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
- We will help them manage these feelings as they have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.
- We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the

physiological processes that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear. Therefore, we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her own feelings.

- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. "Sophie took your doll, didn't she, you were enjoying playing with it. You didn't like it when she took it did you? Did it make you feel angry? Is that why you hit her?" Older children will be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves, the feelings that motivated the behaviour.
- We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. "When you hit Sophie, it hurt her and she didn't like that, it made her cry"
- We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. In order for both the biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
- We help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt. We also recognise that many children demonstrate that they are sorry through actions, rather than words.

Use of physical intervention

Staff use different elements of physical contact with a child as part of their interaction in the setting especially when they are comforting a child or giving first aid. However, physical intervention to keep a child or other children safe is different and should only be applied in exceptional circumstances. The EYFS states that physical intervention from a staff member towards a child may be used for the purposes of "averting immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child's behaviour if it is absolutely necessary".

Staff must do all they can to avoid using a physical intervention because this is not the preferred way of addressing children's behaviour.

To offer protection to children a range of appropriate graded interventions may be needed before physical intervention is applied. However, there will be some situations where a child places themselves or others in danger which requires an immediate need for the use of both verbal and physical intervention. If a single or persistent incident requires a physical intervention such as physical handling from a staff member towards a child, then this is used intentionally to restrict a child's movement against their will. In most cases this can be applied through the use of the adult's body gently and safely blocking the child from access to danger or to prevent danger.

To physically intervene, a practitioner may use "reasonable force" to protect a child from injuring themselves or others. If a situation arises which requires urgent physical hands-on intervention this is best applied by the staff who knows the child well such as their key person who is more able to calm them or use other known methods for defusing situations without physical intervention.

Physical handling

We use the principle of applying reasonable minimal force and handling in proportion to the situation. Staff use as little force as necessary to maintain safety. This intervention should only be used for as short a period as possible to keep the child safe and maintain well-being by aiming for:

- keeping the child's safety and well-being paramount
- a calm, gentle but firm approach and application of the intervention
- never restricting the child's ability to breathe
- side-by-side contact with the child
- no gap between theirs or the child's body
- keeping the adults back as straight as possible
- avoiding close head-to-head positioning to avoid injury to the child and themselves (head butting)
- only holding the child by their 'long' bones to avoid grasping at the child's joints where pain and damage are most likely to occur
- avoiding lifting the child unless necessary
- reassuring the child and talking about what has happened
- only applying a physical intervention on a disabled child if training or preferred method is provided from a reputable external source e.g. British Institute of Learning Disabilities www.bild.org.uk/

Risks

There are risks associated with any physical intervention and handling of a child. The younger and more vulnerable a child may be, the greater risk to the child of using physical intervention towards them. However, there are also risks to children associated with not intervening physically; for instance, if a practitioner did not take hold of a child by the wrist, they may have run into the path of a fast-moving car.

Before intervening physically to protect a child from immediate harm a practitioner needs to decision make in a split second, considering the following factors. This is described as dynamic risk assessment.

- What is the immediate risk to this child if I do not intervene now?
- What might the risks be if I do intervene? If this was my child, what would I want someone looking after them to do in this situation?
- What is the minimum level of intervention that will be effective here? How can I do this as gently as possible for as short a time as possible and how am I going to manage myself to stay calm?

Recording

Any instance of physical intervention is fully recorded immediately and reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible, ensuring that it is clearly stated when and how parents were informed. Parents are asked to sign a copy of the form which is then kept on the child's file. The designated person decides who will notify the parent and when, ensuring that the parent signs to say they have been notified.

Working with parents

Effective partnership with parents and carers is essential for success in managing children's behaviour. By being welcoming and accessible, we aim to develop a good

relationship with parents and carers, as this can be significant in reducing difficult behaviour. Parents are regularly informed about their children's development and behaviour by their key person.

If an aspect of a child's behaviour is of serious concern to the staff, then the Headteacher will discuss it with the parents. When parent's insights are added to those of the staff, the combined picture of the child's behaviour both at home and at Nursery may lead to a joint parent/Nursery strategy to help the child. Such strategies must always be carried through and regular supportive progress reviews held with parents.

Additional help

Sometimes the combined efforts of staff and parents may not be sufficient to help a child to make the necessary changes. In this case, if the parents are agreed, outside help may be necessary. The Nursery has good relationships with all support services - health visitor, educational psychologist, behaviour support team, SALT, One Point, who could be approached for help.

Seeking outside help is not a failure, but a responsible approach by adults to ensure that support which is available in the community is used to benefit a child who needs it.

Conclusion

By a whole school approach to developing and maintaining appropriate behaviour patterns, we hope to create a stimulating learning atmosphere within school to which the children will respond positively. This will support children in responding to their everyday life situations outside of school with appropriate behaviour.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Hornden Nursery School Governing Body

Autumn Term 2025

Date to be reviewed

Autumn Term 2026

Signed by Head Teacher

N. Parkinson

Date-

Signed on behalf of Governing Body

J. Long

Date-

Name of signatory

Jane Long

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/vice chair
etc)

Chair of Governors