



**NERROLS**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL  
AND NURSERY

## **Nerrols Nursery**

# Behaviour and Relationships Policy

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## Contents

- Intent
- Implementation
  - Everyday interactions
  - Explicit teaching and planned opportunities – the behaviour curriculum
  - Emotion Coaching and Zones of Regulation
  - Thrive
  - Rewards
  - Trauma
  - Reparative support work
  - Providing support for big emotions
  - Sanctions
  - Responses to extreme behaviours
  - Use of reasonable force
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Strategies in managing behaviour
  - Rough and Tumble play
  - Hurtful Behaviour
  - Bullying
- Impact



## Intent

We want the children of Nerrols Primary School and Nursery to be happy, kind, thoughtful, resilient and successful individuals who are able to relate to others, make responsible decisions and build healthy, positive relationships with those around them. We want our children to have emotionally rich lives, to have a positive sense of self and to be giving members of society who treat others with kindness, patience and understanding.

At Nerrols Primary School and Nursery, we work hard to develop children's ability to understand their emotions and those of others. We support children to regulate their emotions and to be resilient when things are difficult. At Nerrols, adults are attuned to children's needs and respond sensitively so that our children thrive socially, emotionally, physically and academically.

We want children at Nerrols to be kind, work hard and try their best.

## Implementation

At Nerrols, we spend time intentionally developing children's behaviour and relationships in a number of different ways:

1. Through everyday interactions
2. Through explicit teaching and planned opportunities – the behaviour curriculum
3. Through reparative support work

All interactions are valued as opportunities to help children become the responsible, caring people we would like them to be. We are committed to creating a nurturing environment where all members of our community value kindness and empathy, where people are treated with compassion and consistency and are able to thrive.

We believe 'good' behaviour is more than compliance. It involves how to conduct oneself in a discussion, how to behave in unfamiliar social circumstances, how to forgive, how to understand another perspective, to share and much much more. This doesn't come naturally to everyone and not all children start from the same baseline.

We aim to make expectations as clear as possible and provide consistency and predictable structure. Throughout our everyday interactions, adults will be noticing and narrating using positive scripting, making explicit the expectations and actions we would like to see. 'Thank you for waiting'. 'When we would like to use the scissors we can say please could you pass the scissors when you are finished'. 'I noticed that you managed to calm yourself in a difficult situation'.

## The behaviour curriculum

At Nerrols, behaviour is an integral part of the curriculum. In addition to our everyday interactions, we consciously and explicitly teach behavioural and relationship skills.

We utilise opportunities such as circle times and pretend play as powerful contexts for children to develop their understanding of themselves and others and to develop the skills needed for self-regulation. We use



this time to talk about our emotions and how we can manage our emotions. We use listening games to support the development of listening skills and following instructions.

At various stages throughout their childhood and time with us, children will display a range of behaviours, this is part of typical healthy development. We recognise, at this young age, that experiences, even difficult ones, allow children to grow and learn. Rather than shelter children from difficulties we support children through these and help them to learn from these. We believe that the development of language is central to self-regulation and provide children with the language and strategies they need to overcome the situation next time. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, cooperate and resolve day to day conflicts peacefully.

### *Emotion Coaching and Zones of Regulation*

Adults at Nerrols Primary School and Nursery are trained in Emotion Coaching and Zones of Regulation. Throughout our everyday interactions, we actively support children to name their emotions, recognise how they are feeling, develop the ability to articulate reasons, and support them to develop a personal 'toolkit' to manage this and consider possible solutions, using a range of strategies to regulate their emotions.

### *Thrive*

Nerrols is a 'Thrive' School and uses the Thrive approach, which is based on established neuroscience, attachment theory and child development, to support the development of children's social and emotional needs. Our work in this area is central to our work in developing children's behavioural and relationship skills.

### *Rewards*

At Nerrols, the use of noticing, narrating and scripting provides children with an ongoing feedback loop that provides a scaffold. Children may also receive recognition of their actions through:

- Sincere and specific praise  
(We recognise that not all children enjoy public praise, for these children we offer praise indirectly without a drawing undue attention to them, mentioning them within earshot, mentioning briefly and moving on, or non-verbal recognition such as a nod, smile or thumbs up)
- Rewards such as stickers or rewarding with a specific activity they would like to do
- Public recognition – sharing and celebrating with other pupils and other members of staff if they enjoy public praise.
- Communication with parents
- Award of special privilege – such as a visit to sensory room etc.

### *Trauma*

We are proud to be a trauma informed school and we aim to keep trauma informed approaches at the forefront of our whole school approach to behaviour and relationships. We take account of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and recognise the importance of meeting children's basic needs.

We seek to understand children's threat responses and know that these responses can trigger an overwhelming response which overrides other thoughts and feelings and may cause someone to react disproportionately to something which, to others, may seem small. Adults at Nerrols seek to steady these



feelings, offering predictability, understanding and fairness. We understand that adverse circumstances can make it more difficult for some children to develop self-regulation skills and know that stability, consistency and high quality provision can make a powerful difference.

## Reparative support work

Just as with other areas of the curriculum, we recognise that not all children start at the same baseline, and some of our children may require a differentiated response or individual support with behaviour and relationships. Some children may work more closely with their key workers and have ‘time in’ in order to build supportive relationships with their key worker. This ensures our children needing support with their behaviours have one-to-one time with an adult to develop their understanding of their emotions and how to manage them.

## Providing support for big emotions

Throughout their nursery and primary years, children are learning about how to manage their feelings and behaviours both as individuals and in a group context. There will be times when children are dealing with big emotions. We focus greatly on this in the early years when our children are just becoming familiar with their emotions and how to manage them in an appropriate way. We incorporate emotions into our daily routines and regularly discuss how we are feeling and how some things make us feel.

At Nerrols, we seek to distinguish between occasions involving conscious choice, where firm boundaries, clear choices and discussion about appropriate and non-appropriate actions may be needed, and other occasions where this is not what is needed.

On occasions where the amygdala takes over and the child is unable, at that moment, to control emotions or use higher order thinking skills like considering consequences, solving problems or considering other people’s feelings, a nurturing response is required.

In these moments, adults will follow the attune, validate, contain, regulate cycle.

### Validate

Be alert to the child’s experience. Validate their perspective / experience / feeling. ‘I’m wondering if...’ ‘that must be so hard when...’

### Contain

Be alert to how the child is feeling. Demonstrate containment by catching and matching their experience and offering it back to them in named digestible pieces.

### Attune

Be alert to how the child is feeling and their emotional state through their facial expressions, body language gestures and the noises they make. Demonstrate that you understand their emotional state.



### Regulate

Calm, soothe or stimulate the child back to social engagement Demonstrate emotional regulation.

Adults will reduce sensory input, often by taking them to the quiet room with less children and in a calmer environment, and connect with the child letting them know that they are there to help. They will use a soothing tone of voice, empathic body language and co-regulate, and offer a cuddle if the child would like one. Adults know at this moment, the child has limited capacity to process information. They will listen and utilise emotion coaching strategies and Thrive techniques.



We understand that making sustained positive changes takes time, consistency and repeated experiences. At an appropriate time, when the child has moved from a reactive to a receptive state, we encourage children to discuss and break down what happened and work together to identify a shared solution. We ask questions to help children to look beyond the surface of what they understand and draw children's attention to other people's emotions. Through repeated opportunities to practice problem solving and decision making, over time children develop the skills to make positive decisions in high-emotion situations.

## Sanctions

When a child is displaying inappropriate behaviours we recognise that each situation will be unique to the child and therefore the response will be unique too.

The systems of measures taken may include:

- Using the least invasive interventions first e.g. eye contact, moving within closer proximity, or waiting
- Recognising the positive actions of others
- Quiet discussion with the pupil, framed in a way in which the child is encouraged to think about the behaviour they should be taking rather than the one they shouldn't.
- Reminder of expectations bringing focus towards the desired behaviour.
- Prompt, clear instruction.
- Actions such as changing seats or removing distractions may be relevant
- Helping to rectify e.g. clear up a mess made
- Separation from the area for a limited time, if needed for the safety of other children, at which time support is provided
- Meeting with parents / carers
- Natural consequences e.g. throwing toys - the toy will be packed away

Where behaviours of concern continue, staff may work with other agencies to assess and support the needs of pupils.

## Responses to extreme behaviour

In serious situations, including harming others, or serious or persistent breaches of the behaviour policy, a meeting with parents will be held and an ABCC chart will be put into place to identify patterns and triggers. Monitoring of the child's behaviour will continue and a decision will be made about how best to support the child. If a child is consistently showing extreme behaviours a discussion will be held with parents and senior members of staff about whether the child's attendance pattern may be contributing to this and a reduction of the child's hours may be considered appropriate.

## Use of Reasonable Force

We take a proactive approach to anticipating and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour and provide support at the earliest opportunity. We acknowledge however that situations may arise where physical intervention and the use of reasonable force is necessary, such circumstances may include: to prevent a child from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing serious



disruption. Staff will always consider a range of alternative strategies before considering physical intervention. Reasonable force is not used as a method of behaviour management or discipline, only as a last resort in situations that require de-escalation to prevent harm. In these situations a child may be picked up by an adult and moved to another area of the room if they are hurting themselves or others.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Nursery Manager has overall responsibility for supporting personal, social and emotional development. All practitioners within the setting are responsible for developing children's personal, social and emotional development in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage and their child's next steps. The nursery has a designated mental health and wellbeing team member that works on supporting the wellbeing of children and staff within the setting.

All staff:

- Keep up to date with legislation, share research and current thinking on promoting positive behaviour and managing behaviour that may require additional support.
- Stay up to date with relevant training and guidance on promoting positive behaviour.
- Promote a positive model of behaviour by treating all children, parents/carers, and other staff members with friendliness, kindness, care and courtesy.
- Staff and volunteers are familiarised with Nerrols Nursery Behaviour Policy and our guidelines and expectations for behaviour.
- Ensure the guidelines of our behaviour policy are followed by children, parents, volunteers, and students.
- Work in partnership with children's parents and ensure parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour at daily handovers. Staff are to work with parents to address recurring incidents of behaviour and to use the ABCC charts to identify the cause of behaviours and ensure parents and practitioners are following the same routes of managing that behaviour.

## Strategies in managing behaviour

- All staff, volunteers and students must use positive strategies for handling behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways that are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Children's ages and stages of development must be considered when responding to behaviour e.g. a 2 year old that will not sit for activities for prolonged periods of time will not be deemed as a behaviour of concern.
- We ensure consistent routines and boundaries are followed, and children are engaged in learning and play to reduce the likelihood of any concerning behaviour arising.
- Children are supported with learning to take turns and sharing through the use of games which reduces disagreements within the nursery on sharing of resources.
- We acknowledge and strongly praise kindness and sharing.
- We support each child in developing self-esteem and confidence through various techniques and work with their key worker.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging to make them feel valued and welcomed in Nerrols Nursery.



- We ensure we give all of the children in our setting valued time and give children that need extra support with their behaviour 'time in' with their key worker. This ensures children needing support receive well needed positive attention.
- We do not send children out of the room by themselves or use any form of 'time outs'.
- Singling out and humiliating will never be used. If a child needs to be spoken to about their expected behaviour this will be done on a one-to-one basis away from other children.
- In cases of racial or other forms of discriminatory abuse, we immediately make it clear that the behaviour or comments are not something we do/say. This will then be taken as an extra opportunity to educate on equality and diversity.
- We do not shout or raise voices to respond to behaviour.
- We recognise that children within the early years are still developing the understanding of regulating their emotions, especially fear, anger or distress, and require a sensitive and supportive approach in managing this.
- Common behaviours of children within the early years include tantrums, fighting or biting. Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
- If tantrums, biting or fighting are frequent, we to establish the underlying cause – such as life changes. Once the underlying cause is established, parents and staff can discuss a plan to manage these behaviours.
- We focus on ensuring a child's attachment figure in the setting, their key person, builds a strong relationship to provide security to the child. We also encourage our children to develop strong relationships with other members of staff in the setting to ensure they are comfortable when their key person is not there.

## Rough and Tumble play

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes, such as superhero and weapon play. This behaviour is not initially considered as concerning and we understand it is a natural part of children's development and interests. Although if the play becomes too rough and children are hurting one another it may be that the behaviour is addressed using the strategies below:

- We will develop strategies in agreement with the children for acceptable boundaries to ensure children are not getting hurt.
- We recognise that this type of play often contains violent themes e.g. 'blowing up' or 'shooting' and 'goodies' and 'baddies'. We use these opportunities from their play to explore right and wrong and use this as a learning experience. We will suggest alternatives such as heroes and heroines and look to teach empathy and conflict resolution strategies.

## 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 cognisance 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 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 child 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 to manage their own feelings.
- We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage as that will have the opposite effect.
- Our way of responding to children is to calm them through offering a cuddle alongside an explanation and discussion of the incident appropriate to their level of understanding.
- 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. "Adam took your car, didn't he, and you were enjoying playing with it. I wonder if that made you feel angry?" "Is that why you hit him?" Older children will be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour.
- We help young children to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. "When you hit Adam, it hurt him. He didn't like that and it made him cry".
- We help young children to develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy. "I can see you are feeling better now and Adam isn't crying any more. Let's see if we can find another car so you can both play with one".
- 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 support social skills through modelling behaviour and through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- 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.
- When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with the parents / carers to identify the cause and find a solution together. 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 or in the nursery
  - Their parent or carer, does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the main response the child has to express feelings of anger
  - The child may have insufficient language, or mastery of English, to express themselves and may feel frustrated



- The child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally or physically
- The child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave

Where this does not work, we use the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals as necessary. We can also offer support to parents and offer strategies for managing behaviours.

## Bullying

We take bullying very seriously. Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterised by the intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying. Bullying is unusual in the early years as children have not yet reached the cognitive development for this at this age.

If a child bullies another child or children:

- We show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act on them
- We intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children
- We explain to the child doing the bullying why the behaviour is not acceptable
- We give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied.
- We support the child who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions
- We ensure children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour
- We do not label children as 'bullies'.
- We recognise that children who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstances causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others.
- We recognise that children who bully are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they say sorry unless it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done. Empty apologies can be as hurtful to the bullied child as the original behaviour.
- We discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and identify a plan for handling the child's behaviour
- We share what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

## Impact

Children's personal, social and emotional development is discussed at staff meetings on a regular basis. Where children require additional support to manage behaviours and relationships, monthly reviews take place where patterns, potential triggers and next steps are reviewed and considered so that occasions when children are overwhelmed by big emotions reduce over time.