Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

Principles

Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup implements the approach that strongly believes in fostering and developing young children's growing ability to control their own lives, to make choices and accept responsibility for their actions. We also believe that all children have the right to expect a positive approach to support, and guide young children to develop socially, and emotionally. Staff use the **Six Steps of Conflict Resolution** in solving problems with children (**see Appendix**).

Policy Statement of Intent

Ballygawley Early Years is committed to establishing and maintaining a supportive active learning environment and promoting respectful relationships among adults, between adults and children, and among children. At all times adults will act as role models of positive behaviour. Our staff members are committed to understanding children's actions from a child development viewpoint and to supporting and promoting children's social and emotional development, including capacity for problem solving, fairness and co-operation.

Promoting Positive Behaviour:

- Communication between staff and children is positive and encouraging, and contributes to the development of children's confidence, self-esteem, self-control and tolerance
- Staff use a variety of age appropriate methods when managing children's behaviour. These include distracting the child, offering an alternative, providing a simple explanation as to why their behaviour is inappropriate or removing the child to another area.
- Simple rules are in place within Playgroup and are regularly reinforced by the staff and discussed with the children, e.g. we walk inside, we use our inside voices, we have kind and caring hands, etc. At all times, staff will support the children as they deal with their strong feelings.
- Managing challenging behaviour does not involve isolating children and does not include any methods that are degrading, humiliating or frightening for children, or that involve derogatory comments about them. No form of physical restraint is used unless the child is in danger of seriously hurting themselves or others. Physical punishments including smacking, slapping or shaking are neither used nor threatened.
- We believe that the elements of adult support that contribute to a supportive active learning environment are **sharing control, focussing on children's**

strengths, forming authentic relationships, supporting children's play and problem-solving, and adopting a problem-solving approach to conflict resolution.

Procedures:

As the children develop a fuller understanding of relationship building and sharing, and in order to establish and maintain a supportive, active learning environment to promote positive behaviour, staff will:

1) Sharing control:
   - Provide in clearly defined areas a variety of accessible materials that support and extend children's interests and abilities.
   - Establish and maintain a consistent daily routine with a balance of child-initiated and adult-initiated activities.
   - Communicate the daily routine clearly using pictures or drawings to make the segments concrete.
   - Plan ways to share control with children throughout the daily routine, such as listening and speaking, teaching and learning, leading and following, initiating ideas and following others' ideas.
   - Help children anticipate transitions in the daily routine and keep them brief or make them playful.
   - Have many choices for play available.
   - Encourage and value children's choices, plans and decisions throughout the daily routine.
   - Encourage children to reflect on the choices, plans and decisions they have made.

2) Focussing on children's strengths:
   - Look for children's interests and enthusiasms.
   - Record observations of children and plan for children on a daily basis.
   - Note what children can do and plan activities that build on children's abilities.
   - Assume that children want to be successful.
   - Share children's strengths, abilities and successes with parents and staff.
   - Plan ways to focus on children's strengths.

3) Forming authentic relationships with children:
   - Show genuine interest in children and their families.
   - Share own interests with children as appropriate.
   - Converse in a give-and-take style.
   - Listen carefully and patiently to children.

- Incorporate children's words, ideas and feelings into their conversations with other children.
- Ask honest, open questions to which they do not have the answers and respond to children's questions honestly.
- Give children time to respond to questions and accept the fact that some questions will not be answered.
- Plan ways to put children in touch with other children.
- Seek, value and listen to children's concerns, feelings, ideas and points of view.

(4) <u>Supporting children's play and problem-solving:</u>
- Value, appreciate and encourage children's play and efforts to solve problems.
- Describe children's actions and efforts.
- Look for opportunities to join children's play without disrupting it.
- Participate in children's play by playing alongside them or by playing as a partner in the play theme.
- Learn about children by watching and listening to their play.
- Provide ingredients of active learning.
- Accept frustrations and disappointments as part of children's play.
- Encourage children to find solutions to problems encountered in play.
- Provide encouragement and support to enable children to master emerging abilities.

(5) <u>Adopt a problem-solving approach to conflict resolution:</u>
- Keep expectations for behaviour developmentally appropriate and respect and plan for children's different abilities, life experiences and interests.
- Model respectful ways of interacting with others and using materials.
- Maintain a few simple rules, e.g. we keep the sand inside the sand pit, we walk inside, we use our listening ears, etc.
- Give children clear, consistent reasons for the expectations, rules and limits.
- Involve children in establishing ground rules and limits as spontaneous situations arise.
- Reframe children's hurtful statements to help communicate more positively the feelings and needs of the child.
- Acknowledge personal feelings when interacting with children in situations which they find especially upsetting.
- Approach social conflict as another opportunity for learning.
- Use the 'six steps to conflict resolution' when children appear unable to resolve the situation without adult support.

- Staff will stop aggressive or destructive behaviour or bullying immediately, giving a reason why the child's action is not safe or acceptable.

In the case of persistent unwanted behaviour:

- The child's key worker will contact the parent in the first instance and they will discuss the issue together, aiming to agree on ways to manage the behaviour.
- Staff will be aware that some kinds of behaviour may arise from a child's individual or additional needs.
- If the unwanted behaviour continues and is giving parents/staff cause for concern, the registering social worker will be asked for advice, and other relevant professionals such as the Health Visitor may also be contacted with parental permission.
- Any significant incident related to the management of children's behaviour will be recorded and the parents informed of the incident on the day. Parents are to sign and date the incident report to confirm their awareness of its contents.
- Strategies to manage challenging behaviour do not involve isolating children and do not include any methods which are degrading, humiliating or frightening for children.
- Staff will not use derogatory comments about the children, and physical punishment including smacking, slapping or shaking are neither used nor threatened.
- Staff will stop aggressive or destructive behaviour or bullying immediately, giving a reason why the child's action is not safe or acceptable.
- If the aggressive behaviour has the potential to cause physical injury to the child themselves, another child with Playgroup or a staff member, then it may be necessary for the child to be physically restrained and/or removed from the area for a limited time.
- Physical restraint will only be used as a last resort to prevent risk of injury and will be strictly limited and appropriate to the situation at hand. Techniques used may include shepherding a child away from a situation by placing hands on the backs of the elbows, holding a child's arm if they are going to strike, or blocking their path.
- When using physical restraint/safe handling, the child's health and safety must always be considered and monitored. Physical interventions should involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the situation and calm the child. All staff are trained in this respect.
- If a child needs to be removed from an area for safety reasons (this will never be used a punishment) they will be taken to a calm and quiet place, usually the

Quiet Area, and will accompanied by a staff member at all times. During this time they will be encouraged to talk through their feelings. They will never be left alone and will be able to re-join the session as soon as they are calm and happy to do so.

- If the Playgroup staff believe that a child has underlying issues that may suggest a child protection issue, Staff are advised to forward their concerns to Gateway Team and follow the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.
- If Playgroup staff feel they have exhausted all attempts to resolve an issue, they will then bring the issue to the Management Committee.
- If a solution still cannot be found, Management Committee reserve the right to exclude the child for a temporary period or permanently if all other avenues have been exhausted. Please note this is the last resort and will be avoided if at all possible.

Appendix

Six steps of conflict resolution

1. **Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions**. Place yourself between children, on their level. Use a calm voice and gentle touch; remain neutral rather than take sides.
2. **Acknowledge children's feelings**. Say something simple such as "You look really upset." If needed, set limits positively- "Pushing needs to stop" and hold the object.
3. **Gather information**. Ask "What's the problem?". Or describe the problem you see and look for yes or no response. Do not ask 'why' questions as young children focus on what the problem is rather than understanding the reasons behind it.
4. **Restate the problem**. "So the problem is…" Use and extend the children's vocabulary.
5. **Ask for solutions and choose one together**. Ask "What can we do to solve this problem?". Encourage children to think of solutions but offer options if the children are unable to at first.
6. **Be prepared to give follow up support**. Acknowledge children's accomplishments e.g. "You solved the problem!" Be prepared to give follow-up support.

Problem solving actions and phrases guidance taken from High/Scope programme and Kids and Conflict website.

www.kidsandconflict.com

This policy was adapted at a meeting of our playgroup held on the 30th May 2023

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the management team to ensure it remains fit for purpose.
This policy was reviewed by the Ballygawley Early Years Management Committee on:

Date: 07/05/2024

Signed:
          …………………………………………………………………………..
(on behalf of the Management Committee)

Name and Position: Caroline Buchanan, Chairperson

Reviewed on:

Date: ……………………... Signed:…………………………………
Position:……………………………………

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This policy links with the following policies;
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Confidentiality and Client Access to Records policy

- Data Management policy
- Equal Opportunities policy
- Participation & Partnership with Parents policy