

Oyster Bay Nursery

Behaviour Management Policy

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Date agreed and ratified by October 2026

Date of next full review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any lessons learnt and/or updates to national or local guidance and procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Debra Hines
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Grace Sidders Rachel Finch
Nominated Individual	Debra Hines
Nursery Manager	Grace Sidders

1. Policy Statement

At Oyster Bay Nursery, we believe that children learn to manage their feelings and behaviour through positive relationships, consistent guidance, encouragement and supportive adult role models and our ethos – we are kind, we are caring, we are careful (Appendix 1).

We aim to provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where every child feels valued, respected and supported to develop confidence, independence, emotional wellbeing and positive relationships with others.

We recognise that young children are still developing their communication, social skills, emotional regulation and understanding of boundaries. Behaviour that adults find challenging may be a child's way of communicating a need, expressing an emotion or responding to an unfamiliar situation.

Our approach is based on positive reinforcement, clear and consistent boundaries, age-appropriate expectations and an understanding of each child's individual circumstances. We do not label children as “naughty” or define them by their behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are included, supported and given equal opportunities to participate in nursery life. We recognise that reasonable adjustments may be needed to help individual children understand expectations, communicate their needs and manage their emotions.

The welfare and safety of all children remain paramount.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote positive behaviour through praise, encouragement and supportive relationships.
- Help children develop emotional awareness, self-regulation and social skills.
- Establish clear, consistent and age-appropriate boundaries.
- Support children to communicate their feelings and needs safely.
- Encourage kindness, sharing, cooperation and respect for others.
- Identify possible reasons for behaviour that causes concern.
- Provide additional support for children who need help managing their emotions or behaviour.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.

- Ensure that all children, including children with SEND, are treated fairly and included.
- Protect children from physical punishment, humiliation, discrimination and inappropriate disciplinary practices.
- Promote a safe environment where children and adults feel respected.

3. Our Approach to Positive Behaviour

We understand that children develop at different rates and that behaviour must be considered in the context of their age, stage of development, communication skills, experiences and individual needs.

Staff will act as positive role models and will:

- Speak to children calmly, respectfully and at an appropriate level.
- Recognise and praise positive behaviour, effort and cooperation.
- Provide clear, simple explanations of expectations.
- Use consistent language and responses across the staff team.
- Help children understand how their actions may affect others.
- Encourage children to express their feelings using words, gestures, pictures or other communication methods.
- Support children to solve disagreements with adult guidance.
- Provide predictable routines and suitable opportunities for play, rest and movement.
- Offer choices where appropriate to help children develop independence.
- Adapt expectations to the child's developmental stage and individual needs.

Staff will recognise positive behaviour specifically, for example: “You waited for your turn” or “You used gentle hands when playing with your friend.”

Children will not be expected to demonstrate levels of emotional control beyond their developmental ability.

4. Understanding Behaviour

Behaviour can be influenced by many factors, including:

- Tiredness, hunger or illness.
- Frustration or difficulty communicating.

- Changes in routine or family circumstances.
- Sensory needs or an overwhelming environment.
- Difficulty sharing resources or adult attention.
- Anxiety, uncertainty or emotional distress.
- Developmental differences or additional needs.
- Difficulties understanding instructions or expectations.
- Experiences that may affect a child's sense of safety and security.

When behaviour becomes challenging, staff will consider what the child may be communicating and whether there are changes that could help prevent the situation from recurring.

Staff will observe patterns, consider possible triggers and discuss concerns with the key person, Nursery Manager, SENDCo or parents as appropriate.

We will not automatically assume that challenging behaviour is deliberate or that it indicates a SEND diagnosis.

5. Responding to Behaviour That Causes Concern

When a child displays behaviour that may hurt themselves or others, disrupt play or cause distress, staff will respond promptly, calmly and consistently.

Staff will:

1. **Ensure safety.** Intervene when necessary to protect the child and others, using the least restrictive and proportionate response appropriate to the situation.
2. **Stay calm.** Use a reassuring tone and avoid escalating the situation through shouting or confrontation.
3. **Acknowledge feelings.** Help the child understand and name their emotions, for example, “I can see you are upset.”
4. **Set a clear boundary.** Explain what needs to stop and why, using simple language such as, “I cannot let you hit. Hitting hurts.”
5. **Offer an alternative.** Support the child to communicate their needs or choose a safer activity.
6. **Help the child recover.** Give the child time, reassurance and appropriate space to settle.
7. **Support positive relationships.** Where appropriate, help children resolve disagreements and return to play safely.

8. **Review the incident.** Consider what happened before the behaviour, how staff responded and whether changes to support or the environment are needed.

Staff will consider the developmental stage of the child when deciding how to respond. Young children may need repeated guidance and practical support before they can consistently manage their behaviour.

Children will never be humiliated, threatened, intimidated or physically punished.

6. Unacceptable Disciplinary Practices

Oyster Bay Nursery does not permit:

- Smacking, shaking, hitting or any other physical punishment.
- Threats, intimidation, shouting intended to frighten or humiliate, or degrading language.
- Deliberately embarrassing or shaming a child.
- Withholding food, drink, comfort, sleep or essential care as a punishment.
- Preventing a child from accessing appropriate toileting or personal care.
- Using isolation or exclusion as a routine punishment.
- Comparing children negatively or labelling them as “bad” or “naughty”.
- Discriminatory treatment based on disability, communication needs, background or any other protected characteristic.

A child who is distressed will be supported sensitively. Staff will not withdraw appropriate comfort or reassurance as a means of managing behaviour.

Any immediate protective intervention must be necessary, proportionate, consistent with staff training and nursery procedures, and recorded or reported where required. It must never be used as punishment.

7. Supporting Children Who Display Repeated Challenging Behaviour

If a child's behaviour continues to cause concern, the key person and Nursery Manager will work together to understand the reasons and identify effective support.

This may include:

- Observing the child across different activities and situations.
- Recording patterns, triggers and responses where appropriate.
- Reviewing routines, the environment, staffing arrangements and access to resources.

- Providing additional adult support during difficult parts of the day.
- Using visual timetables, simple instructions, choices or communication aids.
- Teaching alternative ways to express feelings and needs.
- Developing an individual behaviour support plan.
- Meeting with parents or carers to share observations and agree consistent approaches.
- Seeking advice from the SENDCo or other appropriate professionals.

Support plans will focus on understanding the child's needs, preventing difficulties where possible, teaching useful skills and promoting positive outcomes.

Plans will be reviewed regularly and adjusted according to the child's progress and changing needs.

8. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion

Oyster Bay Nursery recognises that children with SEND may need additional support to understand expectations, communicate effectively, manage sensory experiences or regulate their emotions.

We are committed to inclusive practice and will make reasonable adjustments where required to ensure that children with disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

The nursery will:

- Identify emerging developmental or communication concerns as early as possible.
- Listen carefully to parents' concerns and take account of their knowledge of their child.
- Consider the child's views, feelings and communication methods in an age-appropriate way.
- Adapt activities, routines, resources and communication to meet individual needs.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Seek guidance from the SENDCo and relevant professionals when appropriate.
- Review the effectiveness of support and make changes where necessary.
- Ensure children with SEND can participate meaningfully in nursery life.

Behaviour will not automatically be treated as evidence of SEND. Equally, staff will not dismiss concerns where a child's behaviour may indicate an unmet developmental, communication, sensory or emotional need.

9. The Graduated Approach

Where a child may require additional support, the nursery will use an assess, plan, do and review approach, working in partnership with parents and relevant professionals.

Assess

Staff will gather information through observations, discussions with parents and review of the child's development, communication, environment and behaviour. The nursery will consider the child's strengths as well as areas where support may be needed.

Plan

The key person, SENDCo where appropriate, and parents or carers will agree suitable outcomes, strategies, responsibilities and a date to review progress. The child will be involved in an age-appropriate way.

Do

The agreed strategies will be implemented consistently in the child's daily routine. The key person will usually take the lead in day-to-day support, with guidance from the SENDCo and Nursery Manager as required.

Review

The nursery and parents will evaluate whether the strategies are helping. The support plan will be updated where necessary, and further advice will be sought if progress remains a concern.

This process will be repeated as needed to ensure support remains appropriate and effective.

10. Working with Parents and Carers

We believe that positive partnerships with parents and carers are essential to understanding and supporting children's behaviour.

Staff will communicate sensitively and respectfully when discussing concerns. We recognise that conversations about behaviour can be difficult and will aim to focus on practical solutions rather than blame.

Where appropriate, we will:

- Share observations about the child's behaviour and progress.
- Ask parents about possible triggers, changes or successful strategies at home.

- Agree consistent approaches between home and nursery where practicable.
- Develop and review individual support plans together.
- Recommend seeking further professional advice where concerns persist.
- Keep parents informed about significant incidents involving their child, subject to confidentiality requirements.

Parents are encouraged to inform the nursery about relevant changes at home, including illness, tiredness, changes in routine or significant family circumstances that may affect their child.

Information will be handled sensitively and shared only where appropriate and lawful.

11. Biting, Hitting and Other Physical Behaviour

Some young children may bite, hit, push, kick, scratch or throw objects when they are frustrated, overwhelmed or unable to communicate their needs.

Staff will respond immediately to protect children and prevent further harm. They will comfort any child who has been hurt, provide appropriate first aid and record and report the incident in line with nursery procedures.

The child who displayed the behaviour will be supported to understand that the action is not acceptable and to learn safer alternatives.

Staff will look for patterns and possible triggers and work with parents to reduce the likelihood of further incidents.

Children will not be labelled or shamed because of their behaviour. Confidentiality will be maintained, and information about other children involved will not be disclosed unnecessarily.

Further details regarding biting are set out in the nursery's Biting Policy.

12. Emotional Wellbeing and Co-Regulation

Young children are still learning to manage strong emotions. They often need adults to help them become calm before they can understand explanations or consider alternative choices.

Staff will support emotional regulation by:

- Providing a calm and reassuring presence.
- Naming feelings and acknowledging the child's experience.
- Offering comfort and reassurance appropriate to the child's needs.
- Providing a quiet, supervised space where the child can settle if helpful.

- Using stories, play, songs and visual resources to explore emotions.
- Helping children practise turn-taking, waiting and resolving disagreements.
- Recognising when a child needs reduced stimulation, movement or a change of activity.

A quiet space will never be used to isolate, frighten or punish a child.

13. Safeguarding Considerations

Staff must remain alert to the possibility that changes in behaviour may indicate distress, unmet needs or a safeguarding concern.

Where a child displays a sudden or significant change in behaviour, or shares information that raises concerns about their safety or welfare, staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Concerns must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Nursery Manager and recorded factually.

Staff must not investigate safeguarding concerns independently or assume that challenging behaviour is simply a disciplinary issue.

14. Records and Confidentiality

Where concerns arise, staff will maintain appropriate records of observations, significant incidents, strategies used, discussions with parents and agreed support plans.

Records will be factual, respectful and securely stored. Information will be shared with relevant staff and professionals only where there is an appropriate reason and lawful basis.

Parents may request access to their child's records in accordance with the nursery's Data Protection and Privacy Policy and applicable requirements. Information relating to other children will be protected.

15. Roles and Responsibilities

The Nursery Manager will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented consistently.
- Support staff in responding to behaviour concerns.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate guidance and training.
- Work with parents and relevant professionals where additional support is required.

- Review significant incidents and the effectiveness of behaviour support arrangements.

The key person will:

- Build a positive relationship with the child and family.
- Observe and monitor the child's development and behaviour.
- Promote positive behaviour and emotional wellbeing.
- Implement agreed strategies and support plans.
- Communicate with parents and relevant colleagues.

The SENDCo will:

- Advise staff on inclusive strategies and reasonable adjustments.
- Support identification of possible additional needs.
- Help coordinate the assess, plan, do and review process where appropriate.
- Liaise with parents and relevant professionals where necessary.

All staff will:

- Act as positive role models.
- Treat children fairly and respectfully.
- Follow this policy and relevant safeguarding procedures.
- Respond consistently to behaviour that causes concern.
- Report incidents and emerging concerns appropriately.
- Maintain confidentiality and work collaboratively with families.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Share relevant information about their child's needs and circumstances.
- Work collaboratively with nursery staff.
- Participate in support planning and reviews.
- Raise questions or concerns with the key person or Nursery Manager.

16. Complaints

Parents or carers who are concerned about how their child's behaviour has been managed should speak to the Nursery Manager in the first instance.

If the concern is not resolved, the nursery's Complaints Policy and Procedure may be followed.

Any concern relating to the safety or welfare of a child will be addressed promptly through the appropriate safeguarding procedures and will not be delayed while a complaint is being considered.

17. Monitoring and Review

The Nursery Manager will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through observations, incident records, discussions with staff and feedback from parents.

The policy will be reviewed regularly and whenever changes to legislation, statutory guidance or nursery practice make a review necessary.

Appendix 1 – Ethos Poster

