

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Working with young children can provide a good opportunity to understand and influence how they play together and communicate. These are times where disagreements between children are a healthy part of growing up, however, it is important to recognise when there may be a change in power and tip into bullying.

Bullying behaviour can be displayed by children as young as 3 years old. The Behaviour Management Policy outlines the procedures and strategies to be used to support the behaviour of young children.

However, there may be times where it may be felt that the behaviour of a child is negatively impacting on one or more other children, and this may fall into one of the following key aspects of bullying behaviour:

- It's hurtful
- It's intentional
- It's repetitive
- It involves a power imbalance

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### PREVENTING BULLYING

- Challenging bullying behaviour in the early years gives us the best opportunity to 'nip it in the bud'. It should not be ignored or excuses made.
- Adults need to observe and step in only when they feel the balance has tipped. We may want to model conflict resolution, empower children with language they could use, reinforce the settings golden rules.
- Support should be offered to all children involved – the child receiving the unwanted behaviour should feel they are being listened to and supported, equally the child displaying the bullying behaviour needs to be supported to change how they are interacting with others.
- Children need to be supported to speak out if they think someone isn't being nice to them. They need to feel comfortable to come and tell you. Work on protective behaviours can support children to know who they can speak to if they feel worried or upset.
- Do not label a child a 'bully'. This is an unhelpful label and says that bullying is something you are rather than a behaviour choice you can change. Instead, talk about bullying behaviour.
- Praise positive behaviour and interactions amongst children, use the Golden Rules to reinforce the nursery's expectations.
- Role model positive behaviour amongst staff and parents
- Use story telling: there are many books you can use or you could use dolls to act out scenarios to explore empathy and cover sensitive topics with the children, for example about children not being good friends or not playing together nicely.
- Challenge stereotypes such as 'these are boys' toys' in a positive and friendly way
- Where children understand, use a restorative approach including supporting children to express their feelings in a safe space and to apologise to each other in meaningful ways.

- Undertake empathy building activities which help young children learn how to express their feelings and recognise emotions in others, discussing the way that people are different, talking about kindness and helping others to feel better when they are upset.
  - Work with our parents to ensure they understand our approach to bullying and relational conflict. Help them to look for signs of bullying and the need to speak to their child's keyworker if they are worried. Children should not be told to fight back, but to tell an adult.
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