

# TRUST POLICY

## Nursery Handbook – Understanding and Supporting Children’s Behaviour Policy



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## 1. Introduction

Providers are responsible for supporting, understanding, and managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way.

**3.73 pg. 38 EYFS Statutory Requirements Framework 2025**

## 2. Policy Statement

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust nurseries recognise that all children are unique, and we believe this is the key to understanding, acknowledging and acting on children's behaviour.

The nurseries are committed to supporting and caring for children and their families based on their individual needs.

Through knowledge and experience, staffs recognise and acknowledge that children's behaviour varies depending on their age and stage of development.

Staff recognise there are many reasons for the display of behaviours and will endeavour to establish these and support the child and their family.

## 3. Nursery Aims

To ensure the nurseries are meeting a child's emotional wellbeing we will endeavour to:

- Establish relationships with Parents/Carers to share information and needs of the child.
- For children to understand the expectations, rules and boundaries when in nursery.
- For children, staff and families to treat each other with respect.
- To promote children's confidence, self-esteem and independence.
- Concerning behaviour will be identified and addressed.
- To value and recognise the contribution every individual brings to the setting.
- Respect and value individuals' own feelings and the feelings of others.
- For individuals to express their concerns and fears without feeling judged, incompetent or inadequate.

## 4. The Nurseries Commitment to Children and their Families

Every child that attends the nursery will have a 'Named' Key Person who will have an excellent knowledge of the child's social and emotional needs as well as their overall

developmental stage. The role of the Key Person is to build a strong bond with both the child and the family; however, we recognise that every staff member is responsible for ensuring that a child feels safe and secure when attending the nursery.

We will:

- Notice and acknowledge positive behaviours, giving praise, encouragement and reassurance for behaviours and achievements.
- Staff are expected to be sensitive, caring, patient, understanding and calm.
- Children and their families are treated always with dignity and respect.
- Nursery staff will plan and provide a challenging and stimulating environment, minimising the risk of conflict.
- Staff to work together with parents/carers and families to share strategies and ensure we are giving a consistent message.
- Children's human rights are always taken into consideration
- Staff will use constructive positive language emphasising what they can do and the behaviours they would like to see.
- Nursery staff recognise the importance of consistency in practice and ensuring there is appropriate and concise boundaries within the nursery. We recognise that there may be different expectations for children's behaviour at home and at nursery and we will endeavour to have a good level of communication with parents and families to help alleviate any misunderstandings or concerns.
- UH Sussex nurseries promoting the 'Golden Rules' through everyday play, learning and communication.
- The expectations we have of the children attending our nurseries are realistic and achievable.
- In some cases, especially when Speech and Language maybe a factor the Nursery Manager and Key Person will liaise with the SENCO at devising an individual termly plan with specific targets related to behaviour.
- Nursery staff may liaise with other agencies e.g. health visitor, behaviour improvement team, to access further support and advice.
- When observing the behaviour, especially new or complex behaviours Safeguarding indicators will always be considered

## 5. Management of a Child who Bites

UH Sussex nurseries recognise that up to a quarter of children will bite others at some stage. For small children it could occur for varying reasons such as frustration to communicate, exploration, teething and illness and attention.

Though the staff will endeavour to prevent any incidents, due to the spontaneity and speed this is not always possible.

It is important that as a nursery we work closely with other colleagues, parents and families to ensure that the approach is firm, and consistent and any possible root causes are discussed.

The nurseries will support the child by:

- Staff will remain calm. The child will be immediately removed from the group with a firm “No biting, biting hurts” and direct eye contact from the practitioner.
- The bitten child is consoled and first aid applied. The child will be spoken to on a level that he/she can understand and then redirected to an activity. The practitioners in the room will support both children during the session.
- Staff will guide the child to apologise to the child they have bitten. This is will in language/or gesture that is appropriate to the child[ren] stage of development.
- Staff will provide First Aid to the wound, and an Incident Form will be completed. Both sets of parent/carers will be notified on the incident.
- Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.
- A bitten area should continue to be assessed by the parent/carer for signs of infection.

### Further Incidents of Biting in a Playroom:

- Practitioners will assess the learning environment to ensure it is challenging, stimulating and developmentally appropriate for the child / children.
- Staff will observe ‘Triggers’ to note when biting incidents occur i.e. tiredness, hunger, and illness, lack of verbal ability, unsettling life changes, stress or lack of holiday from the setting, frustration, and age.
- Praising the child[ren] for good behaviour. Reminding the child of the “No biting rule” and ‘Golden Rules’ and if appropriate the use of a reward system.
- Staff will use resources such as books and puppets to discuss inappropriate behaviour and giving kindness to others.

- One member of staff follows and observe the child, keeping a daily Home/Nursery diary to monitor incidents and increase the nursery's understanding of when, where and why this behaviour is taking place.
- Daily discussions and weekly meetings with parent/carers will take place to ensure that we are working together and that we have all information that may be relevant to the problem.
- Room meetings will take place with all relevant staff to discuss strategies that can be used to prevent the problem and how to move forward. A common strategy will be decided upon for a consistent staff and parent/carer approach. Evaluation of how strategies are working will take place daily.
- Where possible an increase of the level of supervision will take place to ensure the safety of other children and try to pre-empt incidents.

A child which continues to bite:

- If the problem continues an extra member of staff, over and above the recommended ratios will be brought in for a short while to give the child extra support.
- The Local Inclusion Team will be contacted for advice and support.
- Sensory Resources maybe offered such as chewy toys, teething rings or washable cloths.
- A Play Plan or Individual Support Plan will be put into action.
- A visual timetable will be introduced. Simple language used for instructions and Signing could also be used.
- In the event of one other child being the subject of the biting incidents on numerous occasions moving the biting child to an alternative room may be necessary.
- We recognise that for some children that may have Special Educational Needs such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) the approach may be very different, and we would work very closely with the Key Person, SENCO, LEA Inclusion Team and the parents on how best to meet the child and other children's needs in the group.

## 6. Rough and Tumble Play (Pro Social Play)

Rough and Tumble is a common form of play, especially with young children. This comes in the form of climbing on each other, rolling and wrestling style actions. It is recognised as different form of positive learning by improving cognitive skills, risk taking and conflict resolution and not inappropriate, aggressive or bullying behaviour.

Rough and Tumble play should not cause harm or being mean to another person but promotes body control and helps children understand and regulate their own strength and movements. It builds empathy and social awareness to those involved.

Rough and Tumble play can be influenced by superhero or weapon play from watching television or films with the child wanting to recreate a scene or be a certain character. To ensure pro-social play is safe and positive learning experience, staff will:

- Set boundaries in Play and Games
- Use EYFS planning, circle/group time to talk about safe boundaries and what is good and bad play
- Staff do not leave Rough and Tumble play unsupervised
- Nursery staff will support the play to find alternatives for example the use of language rather than the use of weapons.

## 7. Procedures to Deal with Unkind Behaviours (Bullying)

As young children's characters develop and become more social aware they might start to demonstrate behaviours that are unkind or having bullying tendencies. This may involve hitting, scratching, biting or taking toys. This is not out of malice or dislike but due to the lack of understanding about empathy, emotional regulation, overstimulation or a lack of social interaction. In some cases, it can be from poor role modelling or external material such as the television.

To understand and support children's behaviours it is important that unwanted, negative behaviours are dealt with at the earliest opportunity in a calm, consistent but firm manner.

We recognise that the managing of emotions can vary within the child age and stage of development however if a child presents behaviours that is displaying poor emotional regulation, aggression, control or threatening that the Nursery staff will endeavour to:

- Staff will intervene if Play becomes aggressive, threatening, or physically domineering.
- The child in receipt of such behaviours will be immediately comforted by a staff member. Any physical injury will be treated immediately.
- The child will be comforted and distracted until such time they are able to rejoin the group to resume play.
- The bullying child will be taken away from the situation and have a period out/cooling off procedure will be in place (subject to age and stage of development). After a time (approx. 1min per year of age) the child will be able to resume play within the group.
- Staff will acknowledge children's feelings and help them understand how others might be feeling.

- Nursery staff will talk to the child using appropriate language suitable for their age and understanding about their behaviour and explain that they should be nice to their friends. The child is then encouraged to say sorry and if appropriate to give the victim a hug (reinforcing the 'Golden Rules').
- Staff will adapt EYFS planning to focus on Emotional Regulation, Empathy and Anti-Bullying Behaviour.
- The context of the incident will be fully looked at for example, what happened before the incident? What time of day is it?
- Incidents of inappropriate behaviour will be recorded on an 'Incident Form / Chronology of Significant Events form'. This will provide details of the incident and if there are any patterns of behaviour.
- Staff will explore 'Root Causes', is the child well, tired, changes at home such as a new sibling, this will be discussed the child's parents/carers.
- The Nursery Manager will arrange a meeting with the Key Person and SENCO to explore triggers and strategies. This will also be discussed with the parents/carers.
- If a child is continually being bullied by the same child further intervention may be necessary by parent/carers, staff and advice from the Local Education Authority Inclusion team.
- Staff will ensure that the discussion takes place with all parties and parent/carers to resolve the issue fairly.
- If any staffs' members have encounter bullying or harassment behaviours these will be dealt with by the Nursery Manager and the Childcare Services Manager in line with the NHS 'Dignity at Work' policy.
- All staff; children and parent/carers should be always shown respect. If a concern is raised regarding inappropriate comments or behaviour, then the Nursery Manager will investigate and take necessary action.

## 8. Staff Behaviours

It is the aim of the nurseries to provide a friendly and respectful working environment for all staff where they can feel valued by their colleagues and be assured that any problems which might arise will be dealt with in an appropriate and professional manner.

Staff conduct also has a big impact on the learning environment for the children. For this to be achieved the management team regular observes practice in the playroom, conducts staff meetings, regular 1:1 meetings and annual appraisals.



We believe that role modelling is essential part of learning and would expect high standards of appropriate behaviour from the management tier downwards within the staff structure. If a member of staff is deemed inappropriate and detrimental to the setting, they will be managed by the UH Sussex Dignity at Work policy.

All staff follow the University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust core Values and Behaviour policy.

The following Behaviours or Conduct would be deemed inappropriate:

- Using strategies that are not appropriate for a child's age or stage of development.
- Children are not to be 'labelled' or assumptions made about their behaviour.
- To refer to the child as "Naughty" (as this is known to encourage children to be labelled)
- Isolating a child or giving extended periods of 'timeout'. We do not have a 'naughty chair' or area which is seen as a punishment.
- Staff should not Shout at a child[ren] (only when preventing harm or to ensure safety to a child/children).
- Staff should not use aggressive body language, eye contact or gestures that are frightening or intimidating to a child[ren].
- Staff should always use positive language towards a child[ren] not to degrade, criticise, humiliate, use sarcasm or insensitive/inappropriate language.
- Staff should not criticise or compare a child to others.
- Staff should not Ignore deliberate hurtful behaviour when witnessed.
- Physical intervention or punishment – physical intervention will only be used to manage a child's behaviour if is necessary to prevent personal injury to themselves, other children or adult or to prevent serious damage to property or what would be regarded as exceptional circumstances. If physical intervention is used it will be recorded, and parents/carers will be informed on the same day.
- Corporal Punishment – this is a breach of 'Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare (page 38 3.74 EYFS Statutory Requirement 2025).
- The threat of Corporal Punishment or any form of punishment that has an adverse impact on a child's wellbeing.

## 9. Physical Intervention

Physical intervention is where practitioners use reasonable force to prevent children from injuring themselves or others or damaging property

**EYFS Statutory Requirement 2025 (3.73 with footnote 53)**

The Statutory Requirements for Early Years acknowledges that Physical Intervention should only be taken for the purpose of averting immediate danger or personal injury to any individual including the child or to manage a child's behaviour when it is absolutely necessary to do so.

UH Sussex nurseries praise themselves on having well trained and well supported nursery practitioners that understand the importance of having a caring and nurturing environment where children can express their emotions securely and compassionately.

The most effective way to prevent the need for Physical Intervention is to create an environment where relationships are positive and expectations of behaviour are clear and concise. The use of 'Golden Rules' in the nurseries provides children from infancy to preschool a foundation of understanding rules and boundaries and social interactions with their peers and adults.

Where possible, staff will use training and/or advice from senior staff to make a good judgement for Physical Intervention.

When using Physical Interventions practitioners should:

- Should always remain calm
- Have the support of a work colleague
- Avoid lifting the child
- Avoid holding the child at joints to avoid pain and/or damage
- Not to restrict a child from breathing

When Physical Intervention has been given:

- The Nursery Manager / Deputy manager should be immediately informed
- The Service Manager to be informed
- A full written record of the incident
- The parents of the child should be informed by the Nursery Manager / Deputy Manager

## 10. Reasons for Exclusion

The nurseries are prevented at allowing any exclusion unless all reasonable support and adjustments have been met. The nursery will liaise with the Local Education Authority, Ofsted and the Parent/Carers for the most appropriate outcome. If after all reasonable measures and support has been sought, then the exclusion of a child may be the only option for UH Sussex Nurseries to undertake.

## Reasons for Exclusion

- A child displays violent and irresolvable behaviour towards other children, nursery staff or the environment
- Child displays persistent disruptive and asocial behaviour within the nursery
- The child persistently uses threatening and abusive language to another child or nursery staff
- The child's behaviour is perceived a physical risk to themselves, other children or nursery staff

## 11. Links to other Trust policies

UHSN008 Nursery Handbook - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

UHSN015 Nursery Handbook - Learning, Play and Care Policy

UHSN018 Nursery Handbook - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

UHSN019 Nursery Handbook - Code of Conduct for Parents, Carers and Families Policy

UHS Nursery Parent and Carer Partnership

UHSN010 Nursery Handbook - Prevent Duty and British Values Policy