1.6 Positive Behaviour, Emotional Wellbeing and Self-Regulation Policy

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1.6 Positive Behaviour, Emotional Wellbeing and Self-Regulation Policy

Policy Statement

This policy is underpinned by the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**, which requires providers to support children's personal, social and emotional development, promote positive behaviour and ensure children learn to manage their feelings and behaviour appropriately for their stage of development.

At Miss B's Nursery, we believe that behaviour is a form of communication. Children's behaviour reflects their stage of development, emotions, experiences, relationships and individual needs. Rather than asking, *"What is wrong with this child?"* we ask, *"What is this child communicating and how can we support them?"*

Our aim is to create a nurturing, respectful and inclusive environment where every child feels safe, valued and understood. Through warm, responsive relationships, consistent boundaries and developmentally appropriate expectations, we help children learn to recognise, understand and regulate their emotions, develop empathy, solve problems and build positive relationships with others.

We do not label children as "naughty", "good" or "bad". Instead, we recognise that behaviour is learned, and children need patient guidance, modelling and support to develop self-regulation and social competence.

Miss B's Nursery recognises that children's behaviour is closely connected to their emotional wellbeing and stage of development. We therefore ensure that expectations for behaviour are **fair, clear and appropriate for each child's age and developmental stage**.

As children grow, they gradually learn about boundaries, fairness and the difference between right and wrong. They also develop awareness of others' feelings, needs and rights, and begin to understand how their actions affect people, environments and objects. Staff support this learning by modelling positive behaviour and guiding children through difficult situations such as disagreements or emotional challenges.

These practices reflect the rights of children outlined in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, including:

- **Article 3** – The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.

- **Article 12** – Children have the right to express their views and feelings.
- **Article 28** – Children have the right to learn in a safe and respectful environment.
- **Article 31** – Children have the right to play and participate in enjoyable activities.

The nursery also follows the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework**, which requires providers to manage children's behaviour appropriately and strictly prohibits corporal punishment.

Legislative Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (0–25 years)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Our Behaviour Philosophy

Children are not born knowing how to:

- share;
- wait;
- cooperate;
- regulate emotions;
- solve conflicts;
- manage disappointment;
- communicate feelings appropriately.

These are skills that develop gradually through secure relationships, positive experiences, adult modelling and repeated opportunities to practise.

Our practitioners understand that challenging behaviour may arise because a child is:

- overwhelmed;
- frustrated;
- tired;
- hungry;
- anxious;
- seeking connection;
- unable to communicate effectively;
- experiencing changes at home;
- developmentally unable to regulate their emotions;
- experiencing an unmet sensory or additional need.

Our role is to teach these skills, not punish children for not yet having them.

High Expectations for Behaviour

Miss B's Nursery promotes a culture where children are encouraged to treat others with kindness and respect. Staff maintain positive expectations and help children understand that considerate behaviour towards peers and adults is important.

Agreed Group Rules

Children are involved in discussing and agreeing on simple rules that guide how everyone behaves within the nursery. This helps children feel ownership of the expectations and supports their understanding of fairness and cooperation.

Consistency and Awareness

When families join Miss B's Nursery, parents and carers are informed about the nursery's approach to behaviour. Staff explain the rules that children have helped create and consistently reinforce them.

Consistency among adults ensures children understand what is expected and helps them develop confidence in managing their own behaviour. Clear boundaries and guidance enable children to gradually regulate their actions independently.

Positive Role Modelling

Staff behaviour provides a strong example for children. All adults working in the nursery, including staff, volunteers and students, aim to demonstrate kindness, patience, respect and good communication.

By modelling these behaviours, we help create a welcoming atmosphere where everyone feels valued.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

Staff actively recognise and praise behaviours such as kindness, cooperation and sharing. Positive feedback helps children understand which behaviours are valued.

Adults also ensure that attention is not focused solely on challenging behaviour. For example, staff may highlight a child who is demonstrating good listening or sharing to encourage others to follow that example.

Celebrating Kindness

Miss B's Nursery celebrates acts of kindness and helpfulness through a visual display, such as a **Kindness Tree**. When a child demonstrates thoughtful or caring behaviour, their name may be added to the display using a symbolic "fruit".

This celebration is shared with the group to encourage children to learn from positive examples. Parents may also receive a short message explaining the child's kind action so they can celebrate the achievement at home.

While the nursery uses praise thoughtfully, staff are mindful that excessive rewards can sometimes encourage children to behave only for external recognition. The aim is to help children develop **internal motivation and understanding** of positive behaviour.

Using Persona Dolls

A persona doll may occasionally be used to introduce discussions about feelings, fairness and behaviour. The doll represents a child with its own personality and experiences and may "visit" the nursery to share stories about situations they have encountered elsewhere.

Children are encouraged to discuss how the doll might feel and suggest ways to resolve the situation. Tools such as visual aids, "feeling fans", and PSED-specific toys may help children express emotions.

The doll also shares positive experiences so that it is not associated only with negative situations.

Clear and Simple Guidance

Group rules are simple and easy for children to understand. Staff regularly refer to them during the day to help maintain a positive and respectful environment.

When behaviour becomes challenging:

- Staff **never threaten or use corporal punishment**.
- Staff **avoid raising their voices** in a threatening way, except if necessary to prevent immediate danger.
- Children are **never excluded or sent out of the room alone**.

Supporting Reflection

If necessary, staff may speak with a child individually to help them reflect on their actions and consider alternative choices.

In some situations, a child may be invited to sit briefly in a designated quiet space, such as a **thinking chair**, to help them calm down and reflect.

Focusing on Behaviour, Not the Child

Adults make it clear that the **behaviour is unacceptable**, not the child. This helps children maintain self-esteem as they learn to make better choices.

Encouraging Apologies

If someone is hurt by another child's actions or words, an apology is encouraged. When appropriate, an adult may support or model the apology on behalf of the child.

Staff Awareness and Intervention

Staff closely observe children's interactions and step in when needed. Where possible, children who are confident may be encouraged to resolve minor disagreements themselves, helping them develop independence and problem-solving skills.

Managing Conflicts

If disputes arise or situations become heated, staff intervene calmly and sensitively by:

- stopping any harmful actions
- acknowledging the feelings of those involved
- listening to each child's perspective
- helping children understand what happened
- guiding them towards a peaceful resolution

Developmentally Appropriate Responses

Strategies used to address behaviour are always suitable for the child's age, understanding and emotional development.

Addressing Recurring Behaviour

If challenging behaviour occurs regularly, staff work closely with parents and carers to understand possible causes.

Observations may be recorded to identify patterns, triggers or influences such as:

- changes at home
- illness or tiredness
- emotional stress
- additional needs

Strategies may include behaviour monitoring systems or structured observation methods such as the **ABC approach**:

- **Antecedent** – what happened immediately before the behaviour
- **Behaviour** – what the child did
- **Consequence** – what happened afterwards

This analysis helps staff identify the reason behind the behaviour and implement supportive strategies.

Rough-and-Tumble Play and Imaginative Aggression

Young children sometimes engage in play that includes themes such as superheroes, battles or dramatic conflicts. While this may appear aggressive, it is often part of imaginative play rather than harmful behaviour.

Miss B's Nursery recognises that **rough-and-tumble play and teasing can be normal aspects of development** when they occur within safe limits.

Staff monitor these situations and help children agree on boundaries so that play remains enjoyable and safe for everyone. Such scenarios can provide opportunities to discuss ideas about fairness, empathy and resolving conflict.

Behaviour Linked to Additional Needs

Staff recognise that some behaviours may arise from a child's **additional needs or developmental differences**. In these situations, the nursery works with families and relevant professionals to ensure appropriate support strategies are in place.

Cyberbullying

The nursery is committed to creating a culture where everyone is treated with dignity, courtesy and respect both within the nursery and online.

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of digital technology to deliberately threaten, intimidate, harass, embarrass, exclude or harm another person. It may occur through social media platforms, messaging applications, emails, online forums, websites, review platforms, gaming platforms or any other form of electronic communication.

Examples of cyberbullying include, but are not limited to:

- Sending abusive, threatening or offensive messages.
- Posting or sharing insulting, humiliating or defamatory comments.
- Sharing photographs, videos or personal information without consent.
- Creating fake accounts to impersonate another individual.
- Encouraging others to exclude, ridicule or target a person online.
- Repeated unwanted contact through electronic communication.

- Publishing false allegations or malicious rumours.

All members of the nursery community are expected to behave respectfully when communicating electronically. This includes communications that take place outside nursery hours where they may have an impact on the welfare of children, staff or the reputation of the nursery.

Staff must:

- Maintain professional boundaries when using social media.
- Never discuss children, families or colleagues on personal social media accounts.
- Follow the nursery's Online Safety and Staff Code of Conduct.
- Report any online behaviour which could place children, colleagues or the nursery at risk.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully with staff using email, messaging services and social media.
- Raise concerns through the nursery's complaints procedure rather than through public social media posts.
- Refrain from posting photographs, videos or comments that identify other children, families or staff without their explicit consent.

Any allegation or evidence of cyberbullying will be taken seriously. The nursery will:

- Listen carefully to all parties involved and maintain accurate written records.
- Preserve available evidence, including screenshots, messages or emails where appropriate.
- Investigate the concerns fairly and confidentially.
- Assess whether the behaviour presents a safeguarding concern, including emotional harm or harassment.
- Inform relevant senior leaders and, where appropriate, parents or carers.
- Take proportionate action in accordance with the nursery's Behaviour Policy, Staff Disciplinary Policy, Complaints Policy or Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Where criminal offences may have occurred, seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police or other relevant agencies as appropriate.

Supporting Emotional Development

Practitioners help children to:

- recognise emotions;
- name feelings;
- understand why they feel a certain way;
- recognise emotions in others;
- develop empathy;
- manage frustration;
- calm themselves with adult support;
- solve problems;
- develop resilience.

Practitioners use emotional coaching by:

- acknowledging feelings;
- validating emotions;
- setting appropriate boundaries;
- helping children identify solutions;
- modelling calm behaviour.

For example:

"I can see you're feeling angry because you wanted the truck. It's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to hit. Let's work out together what we can do instead."

Positive Behaviour Strategies

Practitioners will:

- model respectful behaviour;
- use positive language;
- notice and acknowledge positive choices;
- give children time to respond;
- offer choices where appropriate;
- use distraction and redirection;
- prepare children for transitions;
- provide visual supports where appropriate;
- reduce unnecessary waiting;

- maintain consistent routines;
- support turn-taking;
- encourage problem-solving;
- help children repair relationships following conflict.

Boundaries

Children need clear, consistent boundaries to feel secure.

Our expectations are simple:

- We are kind.
- We are gentle.
- We keep everyone safe.
- We look after our nursery.
- We listen to one another.

Boundaries are explained positively and consistently.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

When challenging behaviour occurs practitioners will:

1. Remain calm.
2. Ensure everyone is safe.
3. Acknowledge the child's feelings.
4. Respond with empathy.
5. State the boundary clearly.
6. Support the child to calm with co-regulation.
7. Help the child solve the problem.
8. Repair relationships where appropriate.
9. Reflect on possible causes.
10. Share concerns with parents where necessary.

Children are never expected to calm down alone if they need adult support.

Co-Regulation

Young children develop self-regulation through co-regulation.

Practitioners will:

- remain emotionally available;
- use calm voices;
- reduce stimulation where appropriate;
- sit alongside children;
- offer reassurance;
- model breathing and calming strategies;
- help children return to play when ready.

Our aim is to teach children how to regulate their emotions over time.

Co-regulation is the process by which a calm, responsive adult helps a child manage their emotions and behaviour until the child gradually develops the ability to regulate themselves (**self-regulation**).

The **EYFS** requires providers to support children's **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)** and help children:

- manage their feelings;
- understand appropriate behaviour;
- build positive relationships.

Children borrow an adult's calm before they can create their own.

Young children are not born with the brain development needed to control strong emotions. The parts of the brain responsible for emotional regulation, impulse control and decision-making (particularly the prefrontal cortex) continue developing well into early adulthood. In the early years, children rely on trusted adults to help them regulate.

Co-regulation in practice

Imagine a 2-year-old who becomes upset when another child takes a toy.

A punishment-based response might be:

"Stop crying. You're fine."

A co-regulation response would be:

"I can see you're really upset because you were playing with the digger. That feels frustrating. I'm here with you. Let's take a deep breath together, and then we'll see if we can find another digger or ask for a turn."

The adult:

- stays calm;
- acknowledges the child's feelings;
- helps the child feel safe;
- sets clear boundaries if needed;
- supports the child in solving the problem.

Over time, children internalise these strategies and begin to use them independently.

The three stages

1. Adult regulates themselves

Children are very sensitive to adults' emotions.

If an adult raises their voice or appears stressed, the child's stress often increases.

The practitioner first regulates themselves by:

- speaking slowly;
- using a calm tone;
- lowering to the child's level;
- maintaining relaxed body language.

2. Adult helps regulate the child

The practitioner may:

- name the emotion ("You're feeling angry.")
- reassure ("I'm here.")
- offer physical comfort if appropriate.
- reduce sensory stimulation.
- breathe together.
- use visual supports.

- give the child time.

The goal is to help the child's nervous system return to a calm state.

3. Child gradually learns self-regulation

After hundreds of experiences of co-regulation, children begin to:

- recognise emotions;
- pause before reacting;
- use calming strategies independently;
- solve problems;
- wait;
- cope with disappointment.

This is **self-regulation**.

What co-regulation is not

It is **not**:

- giving in to inappropriate behaviour;
- ignoring unsafe behaviour;
- allowing children to do whatever they want;
- avoiding boundaries.

Children still need clear limits. Co-regulation combines empathy with consistent boundaries.

Physical Intervention

Physical intervention is used only as a last resort.

It may only be used to prevent:

- injury to a child;
- injury to another person;
- serious damage to property;
- a child running into immediate danger.

Any intervention will:

- use the minimum force necessary;
- last only as long as required;
- preserve the child's dignity;
- be recorded;
- be shared with parents on the same day;
- be reviewed by the Nursery Manager.

Physical intervention is never used as punishment. Any time physical intervention was required, staff must fill out a 'Physical Intervention Record Form'.

What We Do Not Do

At Miss B's Nursery practitioners do **not**:

- shout at children;
- threaten children;
- humiliate or embarrass children;
- use physical punishment;
- isolate children as punishment;
- use degrading language;
- withdraw food, drinks or comfort;
- force apologies;
- label children;
- compare children negatively with others.

Children are always treated with dignity and respect.

Rewards

We believe intrinsic motivation is more sustainable than excessive external rewards.

Practitioners will use:

- genuine praise;
- encouragement;
- acknowledgement;

- celebrating effort;
- recognising kindness;
- sharing achievements with families.

Where rewards are used, they will never create competition or shame other children.

Supporting Children with Additional Needs

Some behaviour may indicate an unmet developmental, communication, sensory or emotional need.

Where concerns arise we may:

- observe behaviour patterns;
- complete ABC (Antecedent–Behaviour–Consequence) observations;
- consult parents;
- adapt the environment;
- implement individual behaviour support strategies;
- involve the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO);
- seek advice from external professionals where appropriate.

Reasonable adjustments will be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Partnership with Parents

We believe consistency between home and nursery benefits children.

We will:

- share successes;
- discuss concerns early;
- listen to parents' views;
- agree consistent strategies;
- maintain confidentiality;
- involve parents in behaviour support plans where required.

Parents will always be treated as valued partners.

Behaviour Support Plans

Where a child requires additional support, an Individual Behaviour Support Plan may include:

- identified triggers;
- early warning signs;
- successful calming strategies;
- communication methods;
- environmental adaptations;
- agreed responses;
- review dates;
- involvement of outside agencies.

Recording Significant Behaviour

The nursery will record significant incidents involving:

- repeated aggression;
- serious distress;
- physical intervention;
- behaviour causing injury;
- behaviour requiring an individual support plan.

Records will be factual, objective and shared with parents where appropriate.

Staff Responsibilities

All practitioners are responsible for:

- modelling respectful behaviour;
- maintaining consistent expectations;
- promoting inclusion;
- supporting emotional wellbeing;
- recognising safeguarding concerns;
- following this policy;

- attending behaviour and safeguarding training.

The Nursery Manager is the named Behaviour Lead and is responsible for monitoring the consistent implementation of this policy.

By following these approaches, Miss B's Nursery promotes an environment where children learn to manage their behaviour, respect others and develop positive relationships. This supports their right to **play, feel safe and learn in a supportive environment (UNCRC Articles 3, 28 and 31)**.