



Model Behaviour and Relationships Policy

The Montessori holistic approach to education is based on a belief in and respect for all children in an accessible and enabling environment. Children's communication and social maturation is a process and depends upon positive interactions and an environment that is supporting and empowering. Children are constantly learning, absorbing, and adapting to the world around them – challenging these concepts along the way. From three years old, children are social embryos and will naturally develop within cohesive groups. The practitioner is personally challenged to consider their own inner attitudes and language patterns to aid children's social maturation.

EYFS: Key Themes & Commitments

- Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.
- Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them... create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.
- Providers must be alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.
- Providers must have & implement a behaviour management policy & procedures (see separate language policy, underpinned by this behaviour and relationship policy)
- Providers must not give or threaten corporal punishment to a child and must not use or threaten any punishment which could adversely affect a child's well-being.
- Providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that corporal punishment is not given by any person who cares for or is in regular contact with a child
- Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.
- Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well (including manage behaviour)
- Providers are responsible for managing children's behaviour in an appropriate way.

Our aims and expectations:

Our mission Oaklea Montessori nursery is for all children to feel valued and have a sense of belonging. Each child is an individual with their own identity, views, and perspective of the world, and it is our role to celebrate their unique spirit, giving them opportunities to grow and shine. We are passionate about making sure each child feels safe and listened to.

This policy is designed to promote a whole nursery approach and explicitly teach good behaviour, rather than simply deterring challenging behaviour. We allow our children to be curious, active, and engaged in their surroundings, while supporting them to understand and express their feelings in appropriate ways, resulting in high levels of engagement and wellbeing.

In addition, we have the following steps in place to ensure that all staff understand the settings approach to managing behaviour and relationships:

- Policies relating to relationships and behaviour are regularly reviewed/shared with staff, and this process forms part of their induction period for staff who are new to the team.
- Regular staff meetings with in-house training and discussions around behaviour management.
- Interview questions relating to behaviour are asked during screening to ensure suitability.
- Observations/ supervisions are carried out on staff routinely, to discuss best practise and explore any possible areas for development such as tailored support/training.
- Parent meetings/partnerships to discuss children's learning and development, including behaviour and attitudes.
- We encourage staff to undertake training and have a behaviour management coordinator responsible for supporting others at the setting.

Rationale:

Oaklea Montessori has adopted a whole setting approach to behaviour, using trauma informed practice. Behaviour is understood neuro-scientifically as a communication of unmet need or as an adapted, defensive response. The understanding that children learn best within positive, trusting relationships informs our approach to managing and changing behaviour. We expect staff to work hard as 'stress detectives' to identify the need and provide developmentally appropriate support, removing barriers to learning and promoting engagement.

Everyday Practice and routines:

At Oaklea we promote '*planting the seeds of kindness*', which has three main principals that are interwoven through everyday practice and routines.

- Being kind to ourselves

- Being kind to others
- Being kind to nature

Oaklea Montessori prides itself on providing a homely welcoming environment to all. We work hard to promote positive respectful relationships and wellbeing among staff, which is mirrored in relationships among children and their families.

As part of promoting positive behaviour, we promote British values in our everyday practice (see separate British values policy)

When thinking about and supporting behaviour and relationships, we take account of the following British values:

- **Democracy – Learning about and taking an active role in making decisions together**
Fairness and equality. Oaklea staff encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, helping children to know their views count, showing consideration for other's opinions and values. We capitalise on opportunities for talking about feelings, e.g., when children do and do not need help and to develop inquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.

At Oaklea we demonstrate democracy in action whenever we can e.g., children sharing views on what song to sing next with a show of hands, turn taking or toddler pointing. Staff support the decisions that children make and provide a wide range of activities that involve participation, sharing and collaboration as part of group, to enable them to develop social skills. As part of positive behaviour management, we promote non-violence and encourage children to deal with conflict peacefully, including opportunities for children to contribute to decisions about accepted behaviour where age/ stage appropriate.

- **Individual liberty – We have the right to believe, act and express ourselves freely and the freedom to make our own choices.** We encourage children to develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities. Staff encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions.
- **Mutual respect and tolerance – We should treat others how we want to be treated, we should respect each other, and different opinions:** We recognise that codes for interacting with people vary between cultures and require all children and practitioners to respect themselves, other people in the community including those of different faiths and backgrounds, and the setting environment. Practitioners and children's relationships are built on

mutual respect and trust, strengthened through staff acting as positive role models who offer guidance and support when children struggle with conflict and emotional situations.

- **Rule of law – We are all expected to follow the law, and other rules:** We aim to promote the development of a sense of right and wrong. As children develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and consider the views and feelings, needs and rights of others. Sometimes it is necessary to help children understand their own boundaries in certain situations, explaining why we do not accept certain behaviour. Boundaries are set in a way which helps the child to develop a sense of the significance of their own behaviour which encourages self-discipline. We keep rules to a minimum and ensure that these are age and stage appropriate.

Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP)

An understanding of trauma and childhood adversity underpins our approach to all relationships within our setting community. We are committed to ensuring that our setting develops a trauma and mental health informed approach, and that all children and practitioners develop positive mental health and resilience which enables them to fully engage in life and learning.

The (TPP) values are:

- **Compassion and Kindness (instead of blame and shame),**
- **Hope (instead of hopelessness),**
- **Connection and belonging (instead of disconnection).**

Oaklea Montessori uses these pillars of practice to outline our approach for positively supporting behaviour:

1. Consistent calm adult behaviour
2. Consistency in routines and boundaries
3. Restorative practice
4. Supporting challenging behaviour with dignity
5. Working together with Parents and partners
6. 'Stress' detecting

At Oaklea Montessori, we believe in the power of positive language for good and caring behaviour as a more effective way of improving standards and relationships between individuals than constant criticism.

Key person approach

Relationships are an extremely important part of behaviour management. Non-verbal and extremely young children require the support of an adult who they trust, and who knows and understands them well to interpret behaviour. Our focus on strong Key

person relationships, enables practitioners at Oaklea to understand each child's behaviour and emotional needs in a much deeper way.

We believe in equality. Our differentiated response to behaviour recognises that our children are unique and individual and that some will require additional support to achieve the high expectation we have for behaviour for all children. We aim to actively promote high self-esteem, and high aspirations for all children, through a culture and ethos that values every child (**connection and belonging**).

Parents as partners

We at Oaklea we are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers in supporting children's development in all areas, including behaviour. We recognise that there may be different expectations for children's behaviour at home and at the setting. With a good level of communication, we can provide consistency for the children, and this will help alleviate frustrations and misunderstandings that can lead to behaviours that are unacceptable or unknown. Where behavioural difficulties continue, parent/carers will be further invited into the setting to talk with relevant practitioners. By working together, parent/carer and the setting will explore possible underlying causes and share positive strategies to ensure a consistent approach between setting and home, and an action plan will be agreed, shared, and reviewed to monitor outcomes.

Oaklea Montessori shares our behaviour and relationships policy, and other related policies with parents on enrolment at the setting. Key adults have discussions with parents about children's wellbeing, relationships, and activities, sharing any behaviour concerns at the earliest opportunity. In addition to this, parents are invited to meet with the key person at least twice annually at parent consultations, where the child's progress and any concerns can be discussed / reviewed in greater detail. We invite parents to come and speak to us with any concerns they have and will arrange additional discussions as required.

Preserving dignity:

Positive language is used when supporting children who are struggling to cope with a situation, and a differentiated, personalised response will always be required to support the individual emotional needs of children. Behaviour management begins with a positive and proactive approach (**hope**). Oaklea practitioners will use the following strategies when they identify that a child is feeling unregulated:

- Redirection- (reminder - what should the child be doing?)
- Distraction- (what else can we find to do instead?)
- Non-verbal strategies- (hand out palm facing up- 'Please stop', Makaton)
- Rule reminder- (what's our rule about-kind hands etc, indoor walking)
- Gentle encouragement- (calm voice, I prefer it when you, I know you can...)
- 'Time in' with the key person or a practitioner- (cuddle, story, opportunity to be listened to)

- Encouragement to a 'safe space' within the room/environment- (for example: tent, den, book corner)
- Peer led approaches (encouraging positive pairings with other friends).

Oaklea practitioners help children to learn through ensuring a consistent, calm and fair approach to supporting children through stressful moments.

Age-appropriate strategies (stepped approach) used by practitioners (ages are a rough guide and responses must be differentiated for the individual child):

1. Be a stress detective! Observe children's behaviours against the (TPP) Window of Tolerance. Support them to feel regulated. Are they in their comfort zone? Consider upstairs/ downstairs thinking (All Age).
2. Always use positive language – (TPP) hope instead of hopelessness (All Age).
3. Direct encouragement:
 - 0-2 years - Directly encouraging and modelling good/kind behaviour. 'I know you can..'
 - 2-3 years - Directly encouraging and modelling good behaviour. 'Kind hands/ feet/ words' prompt. 'I prefer it when you..'
 - 3-5 years - Directly encouraging and modelling good behaviour. Use 'look' and other non-verbal symbols. 'Kind hands/ feet/ words' prompt etc. explain what you want to see.
4. Rule Reminder:
 - 0-2 years - Rule reminder – simple, positive language. Use 'look' and other non-verbal symbols. Stop sign – clear hand signal, along with verbal 'stop'.
 - 2-3 years - Rule reminder – simple positive language. Use 'look' and other non-verbal symbols. Stop sign – clear hand signal, along with verbal 'stop'. Explain what you want to see.
 - 3-5 years - Rule reminder - ask children if they 'remember the rule about', and can they explain why we have this rule. Always use positive language. Stop sign – clear hand signal, along with verbal 'stop'.
5. Redirection:
 - 0-2 years – redirection, distraction, and inclusion – (TPP belonging)
 - 2-5 years – redirection, distraction, and inclusion. Directional choices, when/ then. – (TPP belonging)
6. Approach situation calmly, stopping any hurtful actions (co- regulate using regulate, relate, reason) (All Age):
 - REGULATE: Adult is calm and regulated. Rhythmical breathing pattern. Hurdle help: Aid the child getting over the first hurdle. There is always a way back, keep the problem small. Use Movement – Patterned, repetitive, rhythmic, hand on arm with gentle pressure, mindful breathing. Singing, dancing music, walking, running.
 - RELATE: Help the child to the shore. Connect – empathy: let the child know that we understand how they feel, and it matters to us. Use words the adult would like the child to use at some point in the future during these occasions. Self-talk, self- direction.

Scripts: *'I notice this seems to be a problem', 'this is kind of scary', 'I am wondering whether this might be hard for you'. 'I imagine you are angry/disappointed/frustrated and now you don't know what to do with yourself', 'its scary/hard/big deal because...', 'we can...that should help'.*

- REASON: Invite the child to problem solve with you. It lets the child know that solving the problem is something to be worked out with them rather than to them. Only when the child has returned to their window of tolerance can any consequences be discussed. Having a think about potential solutions to the problem. Remind children that the goal is for a solution that works for both, and it will help them get to what they want.

7. Restorative 5 (All Age).

Summary of Regulate, Relate, Reason:

- Noticing and acknowledging by name, affirm and validate.
- Sitting alongside, not opposite
- Communicating and open body language, not crossing arms or legs.
- Keeping a calm tone
- Initiating contact rather than waiting for a child to approach
- Actively listen with whole body, not just your ears
- Smiling and laughing whenever possible
- Seeing distractions as attempts to self sooth (self-regulate) because a child is feeling stressed.
- Commentating rather than interrogating/translating as much as possible

Restorative five

We use the restorative five (**TPP**) to support children experiencing difficulties through restorative conversations. Five key reflections are used to ensure that the conversation is reflective yet is not detrimental to a child's view of themselves.

- What happened?
- How were you feeling/ what did you need?
- Who else was affected, how could they be feeling?
- What could you do next time?
- What might make things better?

Acting as a 'stress detectives', adults can consider these questions when identifying how to best support and meet the child's needs.

Our Practice

Staff training:

- In order to manage children's behaviour in an appropriate way, Oaklea staff will attend relevant training to help understand and guide appropriate models of behaviour
- Implement the setting's behaviour procedures, including the stepped approach.
- Have the necessary skills to support other staff with behaviour issues and to access expert advice if necessary, such as linking with our SEN, speech and language partners, and TPP networking group.
- Check that all staff have relevant in-service training (TPP) on positive behaviour. Oaklea's business manager will keep a record of staff attendance at this training.
- At Oaklea we regularly assess the environment to ensure that it is not having negative impact on behaviour, and that all children's needs are being met.

We help children to look after themselves by:

- Focusing on the positive things that they do
- Helping them to recognise their feelings and express themselves in an acceptable way.
- Encouraging those to ask for help from peers as well as adults.
- Encouraging their attempts and identifying with a view to planning for their interests
- Building their independence through self-help skills
- Encouraging them to see the good in others.
- Encouraging them to learn from each other.

We help children to look out for others by:

- Using conflict resolution and keeping calm
- Modelling appropriate behaviour
- Working on and reinforcing the understanding of feelings, eg in circle time
- Naming and making feelings clear, including the consequences of their actions: reflecting to children.
- Being aware of the power of language, ie not being confrontational or negative
- Boosting self esteem
- Giving time to listen and help acknowledging their responses sensitively.

We help children to be polite by:

- Saying good morning and where appropriate, please and thank-you (practitioners to role model good behaviour).
- Encouraging children to wait their turn.
- Talking one at a time – listening to each other without interrupting when someone is already speaking.
- Giving children clear messages and setting an example.

We ask children to look after resources by;

- Encouraging children to use resources appropriately.
- Teaching them about health and safety
- Encouraging them to help mend broken toys and equipment (like Sellotape books).
- Playing games e.g., in circle time and considering – ‘how do we look after this?’
- Washing the bikes and toys etc
- Reminding children to tell us about breakages.
- Looking after the equipment ourselves and therefore modelling it.

We help children to care about the environment by:

- Making it as attractive as possible
- Cleaning tables
- Tidying up together
- Displaying children’s work
- Picking up rubbish
- Providing labelled storage
- Looking after indoor and outdoor plants
- Explaining proper care and use of areas (Montessori materials, art area, book corner, sand pit, mud kitchen etc)
- Noticing, acknowledging, and thanking the child when ‘careful handling’ and modelling it
- Sharing responsibility

Children with SEN

At Oaklea Montessori we understand that a minority of children, may require additional or different support, beyond that of other children of the same age. Support for these children in collaboration with parents/carers may involve implementation of a ‘one plan’ and ‘one page profile’ with specific targets related to behaviour (please refer to our specific educational needs policy). Where appropriate, this stage may include referral to external agencies for additional support/ assessments with parents/ carers consent. For these children, it is important that teams (parents, carers, key practitioners, and SENCO) meet regularly (TAF meetings) to ensure good communication and continued consistency.

