

Kids at Play Waterford Policies and Procedures

Managing Behaviour

Last Review Date 31/3/2022

Policy No. 10

Issued:

2020

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Policy Statement

Kids at Play Waterford's aim is to support and guide all children to manage their own behaviour and learn to resolve conflicts that arise. Children attending the service are here for new learning experiences which may test their own coping strategies. All staff will support the children to regulate their behaviour and will have several strategies to deal with both positive and challenging behaviour.

This policy has been sent by email to all parents/guardians of children enrolled in Kids at Play Waterford. It is available on site also and will be communicated to all parents, guardians and school age children.

Procedure for Supporting Positive Behaviour

Parents are encouraged to read the Managing Behaviour Policy on enrolment it will be included in each child's starter pack. Staff will keep open lines of communication with families on an on-going basis in relation to maintaining behaviour guidance strategies and practices:

- Each session is designed with the age and developmental stage of the child in mind.
- Each child will initially take part in a pairing phase with all staff. This helps with getting to know what the child enjoys and some of the situations he/she may find difficult. Staff will familiarise themselves with the children's parents/caregivers and develop a familiar relationship with families.
- Staff will be the role model of positive behaviour and how they play, speak, and interact with the children is a key part of their role.
- Role modelling will include explaining feelings, using a calm tone of voice, getting down to the child's eye level, giving choice to the children, using language to help children understand positive decisions, waiting and checking for the child's understanding
- Positive social behaviours among children will be recognised and encouraged.
- Staff expectations for children's social behaviour will be developmentally appropriate – children's level of understanding and maturity will be considered.
- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings will be acknowledged by sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Play sessions will be used to play out challenging situations so children get the opportunity to practice positive behaviour strategies.

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- Social stories are used to talk about feelings and what we can all do when we are angry, upset, or frustrated.
- Schedules, routines, and transitions serve as a framework from which children gain trust, security and order and are a pathway to positive behaviour management.

What we expect from Our School-Age Children

- Treat others with dignity and respect always.
- Behave well in group so that everyone can learn and have fun e.g., listen to your Educarer, follow instructions.
- Always give your best.
- Play safely and allow others to play too.
- Be respectful of all at mealtime and allow everyone to enjoy their food.
- Keep the Room clean and safe for everyone.
- Have respect for the property of others.

Anticipating Inappropriate Behaviour

Prior to their start date each child's parents/caregivers attend an introductory visit where they offer all essential information regarding behaviours their child present, this includes both positive and challenging behaviours. If a child has a behaviour support plan in place the parents/caregivers will provide this during introductory visit. All information is shared, with consent, with all staff prior to the child's starting session.

During the pairing phase each member of staff will conduct observations through the process of 'tuning-in' and playing alongside the children getting to know their likes and dislikes and emerging interests. By doing so they can begin anticipating a child's reaction and behaviour knowing what is likely to upset a child's mood or behaviour, knowing when to step-in or just observe from a safe distance.

Strategies for Supporting Children

It is recognised that all children's behaviour has some meaning to the child, however, at times this behaviour may be difficult or pose a danger to the child or other children.

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Minor behaviour problems are behaviours in line with the child's age and stage of their development. Negative behaviour incidents are unwelcome behaviour responses such as temper tantrums, fighting, hitting, screaming, biting, kicking, refusing to co-operate etc that occur on occasions, for short period of time, in keeping with the developmental stage. Minor behavioural incidents should only result in minimal or short-lived negative impact on the child itself or on others around them.

Staff will assess each situation and use their best judgement in dealing with the matter, in line with the guidelines set out in this policy.

6 Step Conflict Resolution:

1. **Approach calmly** – put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child's eye level.
2. **Acknowledge feelings** – describe how the child/ children are feeling, children often do not have the language to explain how they feel, leading to more frustration. Help the child by describing it for them "you both look very sad and upset"
3. **Gather information** (in a way that is appropriate to the age and stage of the child) – remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to express their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words or actions out so take your time and remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations.
4. **Restate the problem** – after listening to and communicating the children simply describe what the problem is so both/ all can understand both sides of the story.
5. **Ask for ideas for solutions & choose one together** (or where appropriate give a solution) - give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit of time but gives the children lots of practice compromising with one another, which is a vital skill for the future.
6. **Be prepared to give follow up support** – it is important the staff member follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.

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Examples of behaviour meriting positive intervention – Minor Level

- Tantrum when required to share a toy
- Biting others
- Tendency to be stubborn and wilful
- Hitting, scratching, pinching, or pushing their friends
- Verbally challenges rather than hits out
- Tantrum when being required to share a toy
- Biting others
- Tendency to be stubborn and wilful
- Pushing their friends
- Hitting, scratching, pinching, or pushing their friends
- May be bossy
- Name calling
- Use of in-appropriate language

Moderate Behaviour Problems

This type of behaviour can be recognised when the inappropriate behaviour outlined above is becoming a more regular occurrence.

- Staff will discuss the reoccurring behaviour and put a plan in place
- When the behaviour happens the 6 Step Conflict Resolution Plan will be used with the child
- The matter will be discussed with the child's family. If deemed appropriate a record of child's behaviour will be kept over a period of a week and parents will be consulted and asked to sign the record.
- Staff will carry out observations on the child when the moderate behaviour problems are recognised to try and identify specific trigger points

Managing Severe and Challenging Behaviour Problems

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Challenging behaviours are frequent and repeated actions by a child that impacts significantly on other children or the child himself/herself, or their ability to engage in the daily activities, and which fails to improve under the usual behaviour management strategies or requires ongoing intensive one-to-one management to keep under control. The behaviours may have been present from the start, gradually worsening as the child gets older or involve a deterioration of their behaviour from a previously normal pattern.

If a child's behaviour is considered dangerous to themselves or others, a staff member present will carefully remove either the child or the other children from the situation. This is to protect all using the service. The child will be given time to become calm and the staff member will help guide him/her with his/her behaviour. The staff member will record the incident and discuss it with the family.

If a child's behaviour is ongoing or becomes severely challenging the service will implement the following strategies:

- The staff member present and Service Manager will meet the parents to discuss the behaviour and develop an action plan for going forward to help the child overcome the issues.
- An assigned staff member will carry out a number of observations at various times during the child's scheduled sessions to try to establish a trigger for the behaviour. All observations will be noted and discussed with the family.
- If necessary, the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.
- If the behaviour is a child protection concern, the Child Protection Policy will be implemented.
- All information gathered and discussed will be stored securely and all conversations are confidential.
- All meetings, plans and observations will be recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.
- The staff will always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in situations which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.

Examples of Severe and Challenging Behaviour

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- Repeated openly aggressive actions
- Child is considered a danger to themselves or others
- Repeated contained aggressive actions
- Destructive behaviour
- Impaired or disordered responses
- Poor coping skills
- Unusual behaviour

To ensure that the service environment is a place where positive behaviour is fostered and affirmed the following practices are at all times prohibited:

- the use of corporal punishment
- the use of, or threat of, any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful to the child or neglectful of the child.

Physical restraint may only be used in exceptional circumstances to (Any such intervention will involve minimum force for minimum time):

- To prevent an accident such as a child attempting to exit the building
- To prevent injury e.g., if a child is having a temper tantrum

Such an intervention will be used only as a last resort. It will ensure no pain to the child. An Incident Report Form will be completed, and parents will be advised of the incident and asked to sign the form. Any such last resort intervention will be an evidence-based method. Training in behaviour management from a positive standpoint is a part of Kids at Play Waterford's CPD Programme.

Procedures if a Child Leaves the Crèche unaccompanied and without authorisation

At Kids at Play Waterford the safety of children is of paramount importance. School Age Children are collected from school in fit for purpose cars and are always escorted into the building by their Driver/ Educarer. Once inside, the release of doors of the service are at a height where they are readily accessible only to adults. It is accepted however that in all environments there is a possibility that a child may, in extraordinary circumstances, leave the service unaccompanied, particularly those in the upper age groups of primary school. In the unlikely event of this happening the following steps will be taken:

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- Parents/guardians will be phoned immediately.
- Senior management will be contacted for assistance.
- If the child has a mobile phone, parents/guardians will be asked to phone the child immediately.
- A search of the surrounding area will be made by the Manager and a team of staff.
- Help will be asked from neighbours, if appropriate.
- Bearing in mind that the most likely place that the child will go is home, parents will be asked to make their way to their home as quickly as possible.
- Friends of the child still in the service will be comforted, if upset.
- If the search is not quickly successful, the Gardaí will be contacted, while the search continues.
- After the event, the incident will be recorded on an Incident Report Form and reported to the relevant authorities.

Bullying

In accordance with the standard Department of Education and Skills definition, we at Kids at Play Waterford regard bullying among School Age Children, as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by a child or group of children against another child or children and which is repeated over time.

Types of Bullying: The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, harsh and hurtful words, and other forms of relational bullying
- cyber-bullying
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a child's membership of the Traveller Community and bullying of children with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off, hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the service's Promotion of Positive Behaviour for School Age Children Policy. However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public

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message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Incidents Bullying Behaviour among children will be categorised as Severe and Challenging Behaviour and in response will be dealt using the steps outlined above.

We at Kids at Play Waterford are of the opinion that prevention of bullying is as important as an appropriate response to an incident that has occurred, and therefore, with our school age children we regularly discuss the need to be aware of bullying and we encourage all children to report any instance where they are made to feel uncomfortable. Educарers use the following questions to lead discussion and to check in on all children in a supportive environment. Older children can write their responses, where appropriate based on ability.

1. Has someone called you upsetting names? _____
2. Has someone laughed at you and made you cry or feel bad? _____
3. Has someone hurt you by pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, or biting you? _____
4. Has someone forced you to give them something? _____
5. Has someone made you do something you were frightened to do? _____
6. Has someone made you do wrong things? _____
7. Has someone encouraged you to bully others? _____
8. Has someone refused to let you join in their games for no good reason? _____
9. Has someone refused to speak to you when you wanted to be their friend? _____
10. Has someone encouraged other children to ignore you? _____

If there are some 'yes' answers the Educарer will work with the child and parents to ensure that he/she feels fully safe.

Review

Management, in consultation with staff, monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy yearly or as required.

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