



## **Acorns After School Behaviour Management Policy & Procedure**

### **Rationale:**

Acorns After School aims to promote, support and guide all children to manage their own behaviour and to resolve conflicts that may arise. All staff at Acorns After School will promote and support children to regulate their behaviour and will implement strategies to deal with both positive and challenging behaviour.

***Principle: Acorns Afterschool behaviour management policy is implemented in conjunction with the Child Care Act 1991 [Early Years Services] [Registration of School Age Services] Regulations 2018***

### **Behaviour Management Statement:**

We will work with the children to ensure they receive positive guidance, support, and encouragement to find positive solutions to manage their own behaviour. Acorns After School sets realistic expectations of behaviour in accordance to the age and stage of development of the child. We apply rules and expectations fairly and consistently to all children. We do not use any form of physical punishment. We encourage children to respect themselves, others, and the environment. We facilitate children to make positive decisions and choices about their own learning and development to develop a positive sense of self. We aim to facilitate a happy, caring environment with stimulating activities for all children. In the case of a particular incident, or persistent unacceptable behaviour, we will always discuss ways forward with the parent(s)/guardian of the child.

### **The Social and Emotional Wellbeing of all Children is Fostered within Acorns After School:**

Children are supported to recognise, express and cope positively with emotions. Examples:



- o Being supported to communicate their needs and wants, verbally and nonverbally (picture cards, hand signals) in a positive way.
- o Discussing and naming their wide range of emotions and feelings, while empathising with feelings of others (happy, sad, angry, feelings of exclusion and feeling hurt).
- o Assisting children to develop techniques that help them manage their positive and negative feelings OWL (observe, wait, listen).
- o Listening to children in a caring, gentle way when they express emotions and reassuring them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times.
- o Acknowledging and accepting children's feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other responses.
  - Children are supported to demonstrate self-confidence (example: choose activities that foster children's feelings of competence).
  - Staff respond to infants in a timely and appropriate way when they cry or become upset.
  - Children who show signs of social and emotional difficulties are given the appropriate care and support within the Service.
  - Children Are Supported to Develop Self-Regulation and Pro-Social Behaviour :
    - The social and physical environment is stimulating, challenging, and interesting for children and is focused on their active engagement and involvement.
    - Staff help children to recognise and understand the rules for being together with others (examples: waiting their turn, listening to each other, solving problems together, sharing).
    - A climate is fostered where children know the boundaries and know how they're expected to behave within the Service.



- Staff support children to enter into social groups, develop friendships with other children and to learn to help and positively engage with other children and adults.
- Staff encourage and praise children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours.
- Children are given positive alternatives rather than just being told "no".
- Children are supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict.
- Children with on-going challenging behaviour are supported and helped to control their emotions and distress.

**Staff support:**

Management is committed to supporting staff where challenging behaviour is displayed by offering mentoring, training, and on-going support.

**General Procedures for Promoting and Nurturing Positive Behaviour:**

- During the induction period, all new staff are introduced to the behaviour policy and are asked to sign the policy to say they have read it and agree to implement the policy.
- Staff will adopt a reciprocal and positive relationship with the child. Staff will act as a role model and adopt a confident approach to encourage and support positive behaviour.
- Staff will work in a respectful manner and in partnership with other practitioners, children, and parents/guardians.
- Staff are role models for the children and should treat one another with respect, use appropriate tone of voice and body language to one another and the children.
- Observation and recording will be used to inform and support staff to decide on appropriate methods and strategies of dealing with behaviour problems.



- The Manager is the person designated as the resource person for staff support on behaviour management issues.
- At an age appropriate level, children will be encouraged and supported in resolving their own disputes.
- Each child should be positively supported and recognised as an individual. Staff will practically engage children in resolving their conflicts using age appropriate methods.
- In doing this, children can explore their feelings and conflicts in a safe controlled way.
- Staff will positively support children in doing this. Training will be provided for staff where necessary.

### **Promoting Positive Behaviours**

All staff employed within the service are responsible for getting to know each child and their families. The parents are also asked to fill in getting to know your child sheet. These are important in gathering information, knowledge and getting to know the whole child. Early years staff will carry out observations, work one to one and play alongside the children getting to know their likes and dislikes.

Challenging behaviour interferes with your child's learning, development and success at preschool. It may be harmful to your child, other children or adults. Challenging behaviour may hinder your child's ability to fully engage in all of our preschool's daily routines and programmes.

### **Rewarding Positive Behaviour:**

Staff will acknowledge and praise positive behaviour as it occurs.

- While encouraging positive behaviour, the child's self-esteem should not be negatively impacted. The child should not be labelled through the use of certain words for example bold, naughty.



- All Staff at Acorns After School will role model positive behaviour and through how they play, speak and interact with the children is a key part of their role.
- The staff will role model positive behaviour through: explaining feelings and using language to help children understand positive behaviours and decisions, using a calm tone of voice, giving the children choice and getting down to the child's eye level.
- All staff working with children will receive training in behaviour management.
- All rules will be kept clear, simple and age appropriate. We will encourage good behaviour and have consistent expectations about acceptable behaviour.
- Acorns After School have some simple rules that the children need to follow e.g.:
  1. Speak and play nicely with our friends
  2. No shouting in the classroom
  3. Always listen to your teacher
  4. When you are finished your work you need to tidy it up
  5. Always walk inside
- Teachers continue to use the following language to help a child understand what type of behaviour is acceptable: "no thank you"; "you make me so happy when you.....", "that makes me very sad" and "can you see my happy/sad face".
- All staff employed within the service is responsible for building a special relationship with the child and their parents, this promotes getting to know what the child enjoys and some of the situations they find challenging.
- Staff at Acorns After School will always comfort an upset child.
- Play activities will be used to promote and practise positive behaviour, books and circle time is used to talk about feelings and frustrations for example what makes us feel angry, what do we do when we are angry.



- A wide variety and choice of activities will be available for the children which will offer the children a lot of choice in order to keep them in active play.
- The children will be provided with ample time to explore outdoors providing opportunities for them to run and feel free.
- The child centred school aged childcare curriculum provides the children with freedom of choice, so the child does not have to do an activity which does not interest them.
- The children will develop a list of rules they think are important in helping them promote positive behaviour and ownership of their behaviour.
- Acorns After School play environment is laid out into specific play areas which supports children's curiosity and encourages them to become engrossed in their play and develop their own interests.

#### **Mild Behaviour Issues:**

In anticipating occasional inappropriate behaviour, we follow these guidelines:

- Staff will provide a calm, safe and stimulating environment which is age appropriate and of interest to all children present within the group.
- Children are involved where appropriate in the planning of activities and developing the curriculum.
- A routine and rhythm which is practical and beneficial to the age range of children should be developed and sustained.
- Staff will ensure rules are applied consistently to all children within the setting and are aware of expectations regarding the children's behaviour.
- Correct Child: Adult ratios will be implemented according to the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 at all times.
- Children have regular daily access to the outdoor play area.
- Children are kept informed of what is happening and what is expected of them.
- We ensure there are enough suitable age appropriate activities and equipment for children.

#### **Implementing Positive Steps to Supporting Positive Behaviour:**



Children should be made aware of the expectations and their responsibility: o No hurting bodies

o No hurting feelings

- Positive behaviour should be supported and encouraged from all children consistently throughout the day by all staff.
- Incidents should be dealt with immediately by the staff who witnesses it.
- Staff should not speak about the child, or their behaviour in front of other parents/guardians, children, or the child.
- The child should not be labelled by staff.
- Positive behaviour should be consistently encouraged to all children.
- Age appropriate activities prompts and materials should be provided to children to explore their feelings and emotions throughout the year.
- The staff, where possible, should have a quiet area where children can retreat if they are experiencing negative feelings, for example a quiet area.
- At an age and developmentally appropriate level, when the child is calm, the staff should explore the behaviour with the child using prompts for example I noticed you got [feeling] when you were at the [area].....what could you do the next time you feel....Do you know what I do when I am [emotion]..

**Procedures for Supporting Positive Behaviour: ABCD:**

Action Behaviour Choice Decision Minor Behaviour Problems:

- In these types of situations, the child may have caused no issue all day and suddenly their behaviour changes.
- Minor behaviour problems are behaviours in line with the child's age and stage of their development (See Appendix A: Children and Behaviour).
- Staff should positively support the child's well-being and identity throughout the process of supporting positive behaviour.
- The child should always feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included.
- Staff will assess each situation and use their best judgement in dealing with the matter. Situations may arise where the staff may





allow the children 'resolve their own battles' or ignore minor incidents.

If a child has exhibiting a temper tantrum it is more likely to be linked to defiance. Staff will take a gentler approach with the younger child and a firmer approach with the older child. Staff will explain to the older child in a calm, clear way using simple words why they cannot have what they want. If the tantrum continues and other children are getting upset or hit, the child will be moved to another area in the room until they calm down.

The staff member should act in a calm and fair manner and allow the child to re-join the activity when they have calmed down as if nothing has happened.

At this stage, boundaries should be highlighted to the child. The expectations must be clear and reasonable to the age of the child and their developmental level.

### **Strategies for Supporting Children**

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

For minor behaviour issues e.g. children fighting over a toy, staff will use a six steps approach for conflict resolution:

- ❖ **Approach calmly:** approach the situation calmly and get down to the child's level. Put yourself in the child's shoes, their feelings are relevant and real in the moment.
- ❖ **Acknowledge Feelings:** describe how the child/children are feeling, children don't often have the language to explain how they feel can often cause more frustration for the child. Help the child by providing them with a feelings face and maker, let them draw how they feel and then help the child by describing it for them e.g. you look sad.
- ❖ **Gather information:** remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get words out so take your time and listen to them.





- ❖ **Restate the problem:** after listening to all the children simply describe what the problem is to both children so they can understand both sides of the story.
- ❖ **Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together:** give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. Children need lots of practice with one another which are vital skills they will need.
- ❖ **Be prepared to give follow up support:** it is important that the staff follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in their approach.

### **Managing Moderate behaviour Issues:**

This type of behaviour can be recognized when inappropriate behaviour is becoming a more regular occurrence.

- Any challenging behaviour will be recorded and each child's teacher will also inform parents by telephone, Little Vista Parents App before pick-up time in detail.
- The staff team will meet and discuss the recurring behaviour and put a plan in place (Individual Education Plan).
- Staff will observe the child to identify any triggers of the behaviour.
- When the behaviours happen the staff will use the steps drawn up in the plan.

If a child's behaviour is considered dangerous to themselves or others a staff member will carefully remove either the child or other children from the room. This is in order to protect all staff and children using the service.

Every child at Acorns Afterschool have the right to feel safe from harm both from teachers and other children. We therefore have a zero tolerance policy in relation to any harmful behaviour patterns being displayed. These behaviours include: bullying, spitting, biting, scratching, nipping, kicking, hitting or name calling. If any of these behaviours are being observed a record will be kept immediately and the parent will be informed by telephone.



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

The staff team will carry out a meeting to discuss the behaviour and plan out going forward to help the child overcome the issues.

- ❖ All staff working in the room will carry out observations to try establish a trigger of the behaviour.
  - ❖ All observations will be discussed with parents.
  - ❖ A plan will be drawn up in collaboration with the staff and parents of the child.
  - ❖ 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 highly confidential.
  - ❖ All meetings, plans and observations will be recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet in the office.
  - ❖ The staff will always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement practices prohibited.
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- We shall ensure that no corporal or physical punishment is inflicted on a child attending our service.
  - We shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of any child.

### **Promoting Positive Behaviour**

During Acorns After School any child that is displaying any negative behaviour will be told that it is not acceptable and will be told exactly what type of behaviour change is required. This is carried out in the classroom 'soft' area where there are books that focus on feelings and there are photos of children expressing different emotions.

If a child is not listening the teacher will tell them that they will have to put their sticker away and if they continue to behave negatively the consequence that they receive is not being able to participate in the



activity with their peers. Our aim is to reward each child and we will encourage any child as much as we can during the session.

### **Procedures & Practices**

It is essential for all staff to understand that there are many influences on a child's behaviour – these include:

- Age and development
- General health and well-being
- Relationships with and within their family
- Play and learning environments, which includes the physical indoor/outdoor settings, the weather, the time of year, the time of day
- School Aged Childcare staff practice and interactions
- Relationships with other children and others
- Factors, such as family, home life or peer group experiences.

The role that families play, especially parents/guardians, is crucial to the success of the behaviour guidance approach here at Little Acorns and Acorns After School. Parents/guardians will be provided with regular opportunities to contribute to the service's general approaches to promoting positive outcomes for children as well as the development and review of their own child's individual care and education plan.

### **CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS AND PROMOTES CHILDREN'S SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL WELLBEING**

#### **The role of the adult**

Adults who are loving, patient, and firm help children to learn that it makes sense to act in certain ways. Behaviour guidance based on trust, respect, love and consistency helps children to build self-esteem and self-discipline. Adults can help children to avoid inappropriate behaviour by helping them to understand rules and guidelines. When a child does



something inappropriate, adults can help them look at the consequences of their actions and think about what they can do to make things better. Adults always need to consider whether a child may have some unmet need that is leading to the inappropriate behaviour or is experiencing some distress, and look at ways to address this in addition to helping the child with managing their behaviour.

### **In daily interactions**

- Staff interact frequently with the children in a calm, friendly, positive, respectful manner.
- Staff are available and responsive to the children.
- All children regardless of race, religion, family background, culture, gender or ability are treated with respect and consideration.
- Independence in children is encouraged and scaffolded, as they are ready.
- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings are acknowledged and given sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-regulation.
- Children are generally kept comfortable, relaxed, happy and involved in play and other activities.
- Pro-social behaviours among children are recognised and encouraged.
- Staff expectations for children's social behaviour are developmentally appropriate – children's level of understanding and maturity are taken into account.
- Children are encouraged to verbalise feelings, ideas and interests.
- Staff plan activities and tell stories that help children learn about right and wrong.
- Children are distracted from unwanted behaviour.
- When behaviour is unacceptable, staff explain to the child/children why it is unacceptable in a way they can understand.



- Children need movement for their learning and development and are allowed to move freely for a significant part of the day.
- Soft, quiet spaces are provided for children to withdraw comfortably when they are feeling tired or overwhelmed or just want to be alone.

**Strategies recommended in Aistear that we use include:**

- Anticipating conflict and supporting children in resolving it, coming to the assistance of frustrated children and helping them find solutions.
- Modelling social behaviour when interacting with adults and children, thus helping children to learn from others' social skills such as taking turns, listening, sharing, asking for something, and saying excuse me, sorry, please, and thank you.
- Encouraging children to help each other during their activities, play and routines.
- Helping children share skills and knowledge with each other.
- Encouraging and acknowledging spontaneous co-operative efforts made by the children.
- Talking to children about the time they spend together.
- Encouraging children to play cooperative games.
- Interacting with (play and converse with) children rather than managing (giving instructions and warnings).

**Boundary/limit setting and rules**

- Any limits are clearly related to the safety, welfare and protection of the child themselves and others around them.
- Limits are communicated in a way that is respectful of all.
- Rules are as few as possible, consistently upheld and within the children's understanding.
- Staff consult with the children in an age appropriate way, regarding the codes of behaviour and rules.



- Clear, reasonable boundaries on behaviour are provided and explained.
- Rules are written positively, e.g. 'we walk inside' rather than 'no running'.
- Children are allowed enough time to respond to requests for them to behave within the rules or codes of behaviour, according to their needs and understanding – young children may take more time than adults to think through what is being asked of them.

### **Provide choice:**

- Negotiating choices between the adult and child can help children take appropriate responsibility and prepare them with positive life skills such as listening and reasoning.
- Whenever there is an opportunity for a real choice to be made, children are given the chance to exercise choice and then follow through on it.
- Younger children are given choices within limits, as appropriate to their level of development, e.g. 'would you like to help me put your activity away or would you like to do it yourself?'

### **Positive reinforcement and encouragement**

- Positive behaviour, however small, is encouraged and affirmed with both words and body language (e.g. nods, smiles, high 5's).
- When a child is behaving well and when they are trying to stop themselves engaging in negative activities, this is noticed and acknowledged. This builds self-confidence and encourages children to repeat positive behaviour.
- Negative behaviour is ignored when it is judged safe and appropriate to do so.
- Children are encouraged in their activities.



- Encouragement is demonstrated by adults participating with children in their activities, at the children's invitation, taking care not to 'take over'.

### **Schedules, routines and transitions**

- Schedules, routines and transitions serve as a framework from which children gain trust, security and order. These are always flexible, with as few transitions as possible, but they provide clear guidelines about what is expected.
- Any changes to the scheduling within the timetable will be clearly communicated to the children (and their families where necessary), along with clear reasons for the change.

### **The physical environment**

- The way in which physical space is arranged and used can either encourage or discourage desired behaviour. Space is aesthetically pleasing, planned and well organised to diminish the potential for problems.
- Space is sufficient so children can play and work creatively in a relaxed setting. Providing, or allowing for, insufficient space for an activity will limit and is likely to influence children's behaviour negatively.
- The outdoor space provides opportunities for children to move more freely, be louder without restrictions and become calmer.
- Active, loud and energetic play spaces are balanced with soft, passive, quiet and peaceful areas both indoors and outdoors.

### **Toys, materials and resources:**

- Resources for working with children are developmentally appropriate and in good condition.
- Open-ended materials allow for children to use them in whatever way they choose and support engagement in play.





- There are enough easily accessible materials and equipment with enough complexity to keep children engaged for long enough without having to share too much or wait too long.

### **Responding to challenging behaviour:**

We recognise that some of the ways children tell us they are stressed and overwhelmed are when they show the following behaviours on a regular basis. For example, they:

- are overactive
- have difficulty focusing on or completing a task
- become easily frustrated
- have difficulty making decisions
- have difficulty following directions
- solve problems by hitting, biting, grabbing or pushing
- have tantrums
- cling to adults
- avoid new tasks
- do not play with other children
- do not eat

Adults always respond supportively to children's distress.

### **Guidance for conflict management and resolving an incident:**

- Approach the situation calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
- Remain neutral rather than taking sides.
- Focus on the behaviour, rather than the child.
- Acknowledge the children's feelings with open statements, e.g. 'You seem upset...' and ask them if they agree with the observation and if so, do they want to talk about it? Start the negotiations with them by reflecting back their behaviour and involving them in checking out the details.



- Restate the problem, e.g. 'So you both want to play with the train at the same time ...'
- Ask for ideas for solutions and decide on them together, e.g. 'What can we do to solve this problem?' Encourage the children to think of a solution and check to make sure that the solution is acceptable to the children involved and realistically achievable. Clarify all the feelings with the children involved so that you are aware of anything that remains unresolved for them.
- If a child uses positive problem solving behaviour, reinforce this, for example by saying 'You solved the problem...' then state what they did.
- Stay near the child/children so that you are prepared to give follow up support and clarification.
- Follow through with your decisions but be prepared to change them if they prove inappropriate for the individual needs of the child/children.
- Explain the reasons behind why something cannot happen or why some behaviour is inappropriate.

### **Losing control**

- When a child becomes so angry, anxious or frustrated to the extent that they themselves and others have been unsettled, it is important that staff remain calm and settle the situation for this child and the others around.
- Staff will stop a child's aggressive or destructive behaviour such as biting, kicking or hitting and give a reason for their action such as 'biting must stop, biting hurts'.
- Staff model positive behaviour to the child and will never mirror the child's behaviour by raising their tone of voice or acting inappropriately.
- When the situation has been diffused, it is important that staff offer support, time and further discussion with the child, to reflect



on what happened and to plan an alternative coping strategy in case a similar issue arises again.

- A positive approach that the child may use in the future is reinforced such as walking away and playing elsewhere or by stating clearly that they don't like what is happening and/or it hurts.

### **Holding or restraining a child to prevent harm**

- Physical holding as prevention must only be used:
  - To prevent an accident such as a child running across a road.
  - To prevent injury, e.g. if a child is having a temper tantrum.
  - Used only as a last resort;
  - Ensures no pain is inflicted upon children;
  - Incident record is completed;
  - Parents/guardians to be advised;
  - Is an approved evidence based method;
- All staff working directly with children will receive training and certification in the method of physical holding of a child. This training will be given during each staff member's induction to the service.
- No matter what age the child is, physical restraint must only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time. The purpose of this intervention can only be to prevent injury to the child, another child or to an adult, or to prevent serious damage to property.
- Where a child is expressing feelings of anger, anxiety or frustration, in a way which is unsafe for themselves and others and where reasoning has not stopped the behaviour, a staff member may assist the child in re-establishing control by holding them, to contain their feelings safely, as a last resort and for the minimum length of time. This intervention will only be used in an



age appropriate way, e.g. it may be appropriate to pick a very young child up.

- Great care will be taken when holding a child with particular attention paid to their individual needs.
- The intent of this action is to keep the child and others safe until their self-control is regained and they feel contained, but it will only be used in exceptional and rare circumstances.
- A calm and caring attitude on the part of the adult is critical in ensuring that this is supportive and in no way a punishment.

Note: Staff giving comfort by holding a child when they are distressed is not physical restraint. This should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned.

**Time to one side with support of an adult:**

- In some very rare situations, it may be appropriate to use time to one side with the support of an adult, for short periods of time, to enable a child to calm down. This may follow an incident in which the child may have felt very angry, anxious or frustrated to the extent that they themselves and others have been unsettled.
- Adult support is needed throughout this time and the child can decide when they feel able to continue to participate in the activities.
- A child must never be isolated in any space or room without adult support.
- The use of the 'naughty step' or similar is never used as this can lead to feelings of isolation and stigmatisation of the child.
- Outdoor time will never be taken away as a form of punishment.

**Staff behaviour:**

- It is important to promote only limits that guide children's safety and security rather than any that might curb their play experiences, curiosity or creativity.



- Staff are aware of and understand that their own dispositions, values, attitudes, temperaments, expertise, reactions and responses to children impact on the behaviours that the children learn.
- Staff acknowledge that the emotions experienced by children are significant, e.g. an adult who is not scared of thunder will support a child not to overreact but will not trivialise the fear or anxiety the child expresses.
- Staff respond to and acknowledge children's feelings and emotions such as happiness, anger, pleasure, fear, anxiety, frustration, sadness, and pride and help children to learn to name their feelings and emotions.
- Staff understand that children may not yet have developed the appropriate ways to express emotions due to their age and/or stage of development.
- Staff attitudes and practice demonstrate an understanding and empathy towards children who display behaviours that are not always consistent with their level of development and/or general disposition.
- Staff are committed to nurturing and supporting children by suggesting alternative ways of responding and where possible giving children choice, rather than telling them how to behave.
- An atmosphere which fosters trust, security and comfort is created by giving children time and attention to enable them to talk and express their feelings.
- Children are in an environment that encourages caring and co-operative relationships, which supports them to relate with each other in more positive ways by learning through example from the adults and positive behaviour from their peers
- Staff model appropriate behaviour, so that children can see what to do and learn from positive examples, rather than simply instructing them to do things. An example of this is joining in and



encouraging children to clear up toys or paints after a session and making this fun, ending the session in a positive way

- Any limitations to a child's behaviour are phrased in a positive way, focusing on 'what to do' rather than 'what not to do'. By using these positive statements, staff reinforce for children appropriate and desirable ways of communication. It also decreases the likelihood of children responding with resistance or defensiveness.
- Explaining to children the 'why' of behaviour guidance and the limits which help them to internalise and learn the rules of positive social interaction.
- Minor incidents are best ignored. As long as their behaviour is not impacting negatively on others, adults sometimes need to step back, take a breath and decide not to speak or intervene.
- Staff listen to children and respond in a fair and supportive way, this gives them a greater sense of comfort and trust and encourages them to use the adult as a reliable source of advice by demonstrating that what they say is valued.

**Prohibited practices:**

It is important to note the following:

- Children are never ignored, spoken to sarcastically, humiliated, segregated, or have food withheld.
- Corporal punishment - Any physical force which is used with intent to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, such as hitting, spanking (refers to striking a child with an open hand on the buttocks or extremities with the intention of modifying behaviour without causing physical injury), shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, pinching, squeezing, or biting is prohibited.
- Practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful will not be carried out on any child while attending this service.



- Corporal or physical punishment
- Any practices that are disrespectful, exploitive
- Intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful
- The use of bolt chairs or time outs
- Bullying of any form
- Restraint of children by unapproved methods

### **SERIOUS BEHAVIOUR ISSUES:**

Serious behaviour issues may include:

- Any repeated pattern of behaviour that interferes with the child's learning or engagement in social interactions with peers and adults such as withdrawal
- Behaviours that are not responsive to the guidance procedures/approaches described above
- Prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive behaviour (e.g. screaming, property destruction, self-injury, persistent non-compliance).

When a child's serious behaviour issues are causing disruption and problems for the

other children in the group, the following approaches will be considered:

- Reviewing the programme to ensure that it is meeting the child's care ,learning and development needs
- Reviewing the service's approaches to addressing the child's behaviour
- Discussing with the child's parents/guardians to help to develop a specific plan for that child. The purpose of the plan will be to help ensure that the reason the child is having difficulty with regulating their behaviour, is identified if possible and addressed. It is also to provide whatever support they need to be able to relate well to other children and adults, make friends, feel secure and valued, explore and learn confidently and feel good about themselves.





An individualised plan that takes a positive, learning approach, will be developed. This plan may include:

- Observing and recording the behaviour
- Identifying the triggers for the challenging behaviour (best guesses about why and when the behaviour happens)
- Considering ways to make the events/interactions that the child seems to find difficult, easier to manage (e.g. less difficult, less confusing, more engaging)
- Skills to teach the child to be able to deal with the situation without resorting to the problem behaviour
- Ways in which the adults will respond when the problem behaviour occurs - to ensure a consistent response
- Ways that parents can help the child at home
- Ways to review and evaluate the plan.

Recurring problems are dealt with in an inclusive manner following observations and involving the child's parents/guardians and, where necessary, other appropriate adults (with parents'/guardians' consent).

Discussing a child's behaviour with staff or parents/guardians in front of the child or other children is to be avoided.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to maintain on-going communication with staff on the approaches being implemented.

When all reasonable attempts to support the child whose challenging behaviour is causing the difficulties have failed, it may be necessary to suggest to parents/guardians to seek professional advice, such as a psychologist or play therapist. The parent/guardian may then seek the advice or request referral to other professionals.



In partnership with parents, any programme designed for a child by an appropriately qualified specialist will be fully implemented as far as the resources of the service allow.

In exceptional circumstances and following specialised advice and guidance, it may be considered necessary for the child to leave the service to move to a service that can better meet their particular needs.

All staff team members will be provided with support to deal with stressful situations arising from dealing with challenging behaviour. (See Staff Supervision Policy.)

### **Recording incidents**

Records are kept of significant incidents to include:

- a) The child's name
- b) Time and location of the incident
- c) Events leading up to the incident
- d) The nature of the incident
- e) Others involved
- f) Witnesses
- g) How the situation was handled
- h) Whether restraint was used, what form of restraint and the reason for it
- i) Consequences
- j) Parents/guardians signature/s.

(See Accidents and Incidents Policy)

#### **1. Communication Plan**

Expectations and agreed codes of behaviour are accessible and communicated to all, using a variety of media, e.g. handbooks, posters and pictures. They are communicated in a way that ensures that they are understood according to the levels of literacy and understanding of every child.



All parents/guardians are informed of the Policy on Managing Behaviour on enrolment. Staff members check with parents/guardians that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

A summary of this policy is included in the Parents'/Guardians' Handbook. This policy will also be included in staff induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to all staff and to parents/guardians in the Policy Folder located in each classroom lobby and on our website: [www.mylittleacorns.com](http://www.mylittleacorns.com).

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the full policy at any time upon request. Parents/guardians and staff will receive written notification of any updates. All parents/guardian's will receive an updated copy of all policies and procedures annually via Little Vista App.

**Procedure to be followed if a child leaves the service unaccompanied, if and without, authorization:**

Every classroom has its own separate entrance and exit. Each entrance door is fitted with a thumb lock. Each entrance also has an internal locked lobby. During staff induction to our service they are made aware of the requirement that all entrances and exits must be kept locked at all times. Staff double check that they have successfully locked doors by testing the locking mechanism upon entrance and exit.

In the event that a child leave the service unaccompanied, if and without, authorization the following steps will be taken:

**(note that additional information is included in our services Critical Incident Policy and Procedure)**



1. All exits from the premises will be locked/guarded in a way which makes it impossible for a child to leave unobserved/unattended, while allowing rapid exit for the whole group in the case of an emergency.
2. An accurate and up to date register must be kept and both adults and children, including visitors, will be signed in and out whenever they enter and leave the premises.
3. Teachers of new children will take special care to ensure that both children and their parents know where they may and may not go. Teachers will also seek advice from parents new to the group so that they are forewarned about particularly adventurous children.
4. All children in the service will be introduced to the rules, and the reasons for them.
5. Prominent notices will alert any visitors to the need to keep doors closed and to the reason for this.
6. The service will conduct risk assessments in consultation with all the adults in the service so that they are aware of any potential dangers and can work together to avoid them.
7. Parents and staff will work together for the safety of all the children in the group. New parents will be helped to take an active role by being made aware of the group's safety procedures and being encouraged to alert a member of staff if they notice a child whose behaviour suggests that s/he might be thinking of trying to leave.

**In the best regulated situations, however, accidents can happen. These are the procedures to follow if you cannot find a child.**

**Staff will:**

**a. Head Counting:**



The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is soon discovered. Staff will routinely carry out head counts of children in their class and know how many children should be present and make someone responsible for regular counted checks.

**b. Search systematically**

The service is responsible for the missing child and also for the other children in the group. One advantage of the high adult:child ratio is that in any emergency some adults can be freed to respond to the new situation without neglecting the needs of the other children. Remaining children will be gathered into one large group -having a story perhaps while the other adults search.

- c. Without alarming them, ask the children themselves whether they have seen the child who is missing. They can sometimes be a useful source of information.
- d. Check that all the adults are present and that all know the problem. It is useful to establish, if you can, who last saw the child, when and doing what. It can also be helpful to have prepared in advance a checklist of possible hiding-places in and around the pre-school's premises.
- e. Check every room in the building and also any accessible outside area.

**Parents:**

Alarming them as little as possible, staff will call the child's parents to warn them that the child may be attempting to get home. If the child lives within walking distance of the group, one adult should make the journey on foot in order to catch up with, or intercept, the child if possible. Remember that as soon as parents are informed they will need advice and support.



### **Garda Siochana:**

If the above steps do not locate the child, the Gardai must be called. They have the resources to conduct a search and speed is important.

### **Informing other people**

The service makes regular checks to ensure that if an incident of this sort does happen. All parent's contact details are at hand and are kept up to date.

If the Gardai are informed a notification will be made to Tusla that the service has done so. The following details will be provided to Tusla:

- What systems do you operate to prevent such occurrences?
- What happened?
- What you did, at what time and in what order.
- Whom you informed, and when.

### **The accident and incident book**

Staff will from the beginning of the event start to build up a record of the event as soon as an adult has time to do so. This is important, even if, as is likely, the child is found safe within a few minutes. Our service's Accident & Incident book provides an invaluable ongoing record of potential hazards as well as actual accidents. The record will also include the last definite sighting of the child and anything unusual that day about the behaviour of that child or of any other children.



- Who Must Observe This Policy
  - Staff
  - Students
  - Volunteers

**Contact Details:**

For general queries / guidance / information regarding behaviour management issues, contact the Early Years Services office (Tel – 074 9123669)

Children with diagnosed additional needs and who have behaviour issues, queries or concerns should be directed to their named lead professional or through the Early Years Services office.

The Donegal ChildCare Committee support workers are also available to provide information and advice in developing policies on behaviour management training and on other childcare related issues (Tel 074 9123216).

Managers Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Reem', is written over a large, faint, stylized outline of a leaf or a similar shape.

20/07/2023