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PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY & PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Policy Statement

EDG Nursery promotes positive behaviour through **secure relationships, appropriate expectations, consistent boundaries, stimulating environments and respectful adult interactions**.

Young children are still learning how to communicate their needs, regulate their emotions, manage frustration, share, take turns, understand boundaries and interact with others.

Our approach is therefore based on **teaching and supporting appropriate behaviour**, rather than simply reacting when unwanted behaviour occurs.

All practitioners must use consistent approaches and language so that children experience predictable expectations throughout the nursery.

CONNECT → GUIDE → MODEL → SUPPORT → REINFORCE

1. Understanding Behaviour

Behaviour is a form of communication.

When unwanted behaviour occurs, practitioners should consider what may be contributing to it rather than simply focusing on stopping the behaviour.

Consider:

- What happened immediately beforehand?
- Is the child tired, hungry or uncomfortable?
- Are they frustrated because they cannot communicate what they need?
- Is the environment too busy or overstimulating?
- Is the activity sufficiently engaging?
- Has the child been waiting too long?
- Are expectations appropriate for their age and development?
- Are they seeking connection or adult attention?
- Are they struggling with sharing or turn-taking?
- Has there been a change at home or nursery?

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- Could there be a sensory or SEND-related nee
- Are adults being consistent?

Staff must **observe before assuming**.

A child should not routinely be described as "naughty", "difficult", "attention-seeking" or deliberately challenging without considering what their behaviour may be communicating.

2. Consistent Expectations

Children need predictable boundaries.

All staff working with a group must understand the expectations being promoted and use **consistent language and strategies**.

Room Leaders are responsible for ensuring their team has discussed:

- the room's expectations;
- appropriate language to use;
- children's individual strategies;
- how unwanted behaviours will be responded to;
- routines and transitions;
- any SEND Support Plans or behaviour strategies; and
- where additional support may be required.

Staff should not undermine each other's boundaries or repeatedly give children different answers.

Where an adult is unsure how to respond, they should seek guidance from the Room Leader rather than introducing their own consequence or approach.

3. Golden Rules

EDG's Golden Rules should be **few, simple, positive and appropriate to children's age and understanding**.

For example:

Our Golden Rules

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We use kind hands.
We use kind words.
We listen to each other.
We look after our nursery and resources.
We help to keep ourselves and others safe.

For younger children, expectations should be simplified further and supported through **modelling, pictures, gestures and repetition**.

Golden Rules should not simply be displayed on a wall.

Staff should:

- refer to them naturally;
- model them;
- notice when children demonstrate them;
- use the same wording consistently;
- revisit them through stories and group discussions; and
- help children understand **why** the expectations matter.

4. The Language Adults Use

Practitioners should communicate calmly, clearly and respectfully.

Instructions should generally be:

SHORT → CLEAR → POSITIVE → ACHIEVABLE

Instead of repeatedly saying:

"Don't run!"

consider:

"Walking feet inside, please."

Instead of:

"Stop shouting!"

consider:

"Use your indoor voice."

Instead of:

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"Don't snatch!"

consider:

"Amir is using that. You can have a turn when he's finished."

Instead of:

"You're being naughty."

say:

"I can't let you hit. Hitting hurts."

Staff should address the **behaviour rather than negatively labelling the child**.

5. Adults Must Not Shout Across the Classroom

Practitioners should not routinely shout children's names, instructions or corrections across the room.

Where possible:

MOVE CLOSER → GET TO THE CHILD'S LEVEL → GAIN ATTENTION → SPEAK CALMLY

Repeated shouting across a classroom:

- increases overall noise levels;
- can overstimulate children;
- may embarrass the child;
- encourages children to shout;
- can make adults appear less emotionally regulated; and
- is often less effective than direct interaction.

There may be occasions where a raised voice is necessary to prevent **immediate danger**.

This should be different from routinely managing behaviour by shouting.

6. Meaningful Praise

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Praise should help children understand **what they have** repeatedly saying "good girl", "good boy" or "well done" without explanation.

Make praise specific.

Instead of:

"Good boy."

Try:

"You waited while Maya had her turn. That was really patient."

Instead of:

"Well done."

Try:

"You kept trying even when that was difficult."

Instead of:

"Good sharing."

Try:

"You noticed that Sam wanted a block and you gave him one."

This helps children understand the behaviour or skill being recognised.

Staff should also recognise:

- effort;
- persistence;
- kindness;
- cooperation;
- problem-solving;
- communication;
- independence; and
- progress.

Praise should be **genuine and proportionate**, not constant or exaggerated.

Children should gradually develop pride in their own achievements rather than becoming dependent on adult approval.

Adults can therefore also ask:

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"How did you do that?"

"You look really proud of yourself."

"What helped you keep trying?"

7. Supporting Turn-Taking and Sharing

Young children are still developing the ability to share and wait.

Staff should not expect very young children to automatically understand:

"You need to share."

Instead, adults should actively **teach and support turn-taking**.

Useful strategies include:

- modelling turn-taking;
- using simple language;
- providing duplicates of highly popular resources where appropriate;
- using visual timers for older children;
- offering an alternative while waiting;
- acknowledging the child's frustration;
- supporting children to ask for a turn; and
- gradually increasing how long children are expected to wait.

For example:

"Aisha is using the bike now. You're next."

"You really want the digger. Let's find something to use while you're waiting."

Avoid forcing one child to immediately hand over something they are actively using simply because another child wants it.

Children need opportunities to experience **taking turns**, not simply having resources removed from them.

8. Supporting Unwanted Behaviour

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When unwanted behaviour occurs:

1. Stay calm

The adult's emotional response should not escalate the situation.

2. Make everyone safe

Intervene immediately where a child may hurt themselves or another person.

3. Set the boundary

"I can't let you hit."

"Blocks are for building. I won't let you throw them at people."

4. Acknowledge the feeling/need

"You wanted the bike and you're angry that it's not your turn."

5. Support an alternative

"You can say, 'My turn next.'"

6. Help children reconnect

Where appropriate, support children to resolve the situation and return to play.

Children should not be forced to say **"sorry"** without understanding what has happened. This is more important that just bearing satisfied that they have said sorry! Adults should instead help children recognise the impact of their behaviour and, developmentally appropriately, make things better.

9. Biting, Hitting, Pushing and Other Physical Behaviour

Physical behaviour must be responded to calmly and consistently.

The immediate priority is to **keep children safe**.

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STOP → COMFORT → SUPPORT → OBSERVE → RECORD/

The child who has been hurt should receive appropriate attention and reassurance.

The child displaying the behaviour also requires support.

Practitioners should consider possible triggers and patterns rather than simply applying consequences.

Repeated behaviour may require:

- focused observations;
- discussion with parents;
- review of routines/environment;
- communication support;
- individual strategies;
- SENCO involvement; and
- an individual behaviour/support plan where appropriate.

10. Routines Are Part of Behaviour Support

A well-organised routine can prevent many behavioural difficulties.

Children are more likely to become restless, frustrated or dysregulated when:

- waiting for long periods;
- hungry or tired;
- unsure what is happening next;
- required to sit for too long;
- activities are not sufficiently engaging;
- transitions are poorly organised; or
- adults are not prepared.

Staff should therefore **think ahead**.

Before transitions ask:

Are we ready before we ask the children to be ready?

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11. Avoiding Unnecessary Waiting

Children should not routinely be expected to sit and wait because adults are still preparing.

For example, before calling children for lunch:

- Is the eating area ready?
- Are tables prepared?
- Have children who need support been considered?
- Do staff know their roles?
- Is the food ready or arriving very shortly?

Before going outside:

- Have staff discussed deployment?
- Is the garden ready?
- Are required resources outside?
- Have coats/shoes been organised?
- Who is supporting children who require additional help?

Before group activities:

- Are resources prepared?
- Is the activity appropriate for the children?
- How long are children realistically expected to participate?

If there will be a delay, **keep children meaningfully engaged rather than making them wait unnecessarily**.

12. Staff Communication

Good behaviour support depends on good communication between adults.

Practitioners should communicate throughout the day about:

- transitions;
- staff deployment;
- children requiring additional support;
- significant incidents;
- changes in children's wellbeing;
- upcoming meals;
- outdoor sessions;
- sleep routines;

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- activities;
- breaks; and
- changes to the routine.

Room Leaders should ensure staff know **who is doing what**.

Poor adult communication should not result in children experiencing unnecessary waiting, inconsistent expectations or chaotic transitions.

13. Creating a Stimulating Environment

Staff should consider whether the environment is contributing to children's behaviour.

Ask:

- Are there enough meaningful resources available?
- Are children interested?
- Are resources accessible?
- Are there appropriate opportunities for movement?
- Are there quiet spaces?
- Are highly popular resources causing repeated conflict?
- Is the room excessively noisy?
- Are children being expected to remain in one area for too long?
- Does the environment reflect children's current interests?
- Are adults extending play?

Practitioners should **adapt the environment before repeatedly correcting children for behaviour the environment may be contributing to**.

14. Choices and Independence

Appropriate choices can reduce unnecessary power struggles and support children's independence.

For example:

"Would you like the red cup or blue cup?"

"Would you like to put your coat on yourself or would you like me to help?"

"Would you like to walk to the bathroom or hold my hand?"

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The adult maintains the necessary boundary while allc

Choices should be genuine and manageable.

15. Supporting Emotional Regulation

Young children often require an adult to help them regulate before they can respond to explanations.

When a child is highly distressed, lengthy instructions or repeated questioning may be ineffective.

Practitioners should:

REGULATE → CONNECT → THEN TEACH

This may involve:

- remaining close;
- speaking calmly;
- reducing language;
- acknowledging feelings;
- offering appropriate comfort;
- reducing stimulation;
- providing space where appropriate; and
- discussing what happened once the child is calm.

Calm spaces should support regulation and must **not become punishment areas**.

16. Developmentally Appropriate Expectations

Expectations must reflect children's age, stage of development, communication and individual needs.

Practitioners should not expect a two-year-old to demonstrate the same impulse control, waiting skills or emotional regulation as an older preschool child.

Before responding to behaviour, ask:

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Is this child refusing to meet the expectation — or are meet it without support?

17. SEND and Additional Needs

Behaviour may be linked to communication, sensory, developmental or additional needs.

Children with SEND must receive appropriate reasonable adjustments and individualised support.

Practitioners should follow relevant:

- SEND Support Plans;
- communication strategies;
- behaviour/support plans;
- sensory strategies;
- professional recommendations; and
- agreed interventions.

A diagnosis is **not required before staff begin adapting their approach**.

Where behaviour is persistent or significantly affecting the child's wellbeing, participation or safety, the Room Leader and SENCO should support the team to assess what additional help may be required.

18. Working With Parents

Parents are important partners in understanding children's behaviour.

Where concerns arise, staff should communicate respectfully and factually.

Discussions should focus on:

WHAT WE HAVE OBSERVED → POSSIBLE TRIGGERS → WHAT WE ARE TRYING → WHAT IS HELPING → NEXT STEPS

Parents should not simply receive repeated negative reports at collection.

Staff should also share children's progress and positive experiences.

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Where strategies are required, home and nursery shou
wherever appropriate.

19. What EDG Does Not Use

EDG does not use:

- smacking or physical punishment;
- humiliation;
- intimidation or threats;
- shouting as routine behaviour management;
- negative labels such as "naughty";
- withholding food or drink;
- withholding appropriate comfort;
- collective punishment;
- prolonged isolation;
- inappropriate restraint;
- forced apologies;
- punishment for toileting accidents;
- deliberately frightening children; or
- consequences that are unrelated or disproportionate to the behaviour.

Physical intervention should only be used where necessary to prevent a child causing harm, in accordance with EDG procedures and statutory requirements.

20. Staff Consistency and Reflection

Behaviour management is **everyone's responsibility**.

Room Leaders should regularly discuss practice with their teams and challenge inconsistent approaches.

Where a practitioner is finding a child's behaviour particularly difficult, they should seek support rather than allowing frustration to affect their response.

Ask:

What is happening for the child?

What are the adults doing?

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What could we change?

Is our environment/routine contributing?

Are we all responding consistently?

Do we need additional support?

Behaviour should not automatically be viewed as a problem located solely within the child

.Related EDG Policies & Guidance

- Caring for Babies and Toddlers Policy
- SEND Policy
- Inclusion and Equality Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Key Person Policy
- Curriculum/Teaching and Learning Guidance
- Outdoor Play and Physical Activities Policy
- Partnership with Parents Policy
- Physical Intervention/Restraint Procedure
- Staff Supervision and Deployment Procedures

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