

St Michael Steiner School Early Years

GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR IN THE KINDERGARTEN

Behaviour is the way we act and respond to people and situations we find ourselves in. All children learn and grow in their understanding of socially appropriate and desirable behaviour. During the kindergarten years, the child is developing into a social being and one of the tasks of the kindergarten teacher is to create and maintain an environment where the child can imitate and develop socially acceptable behaviour. As adults supporting the children's development, we encourage:

- respect and care of self, others, and the environment
- the development of self-regulation
- the development of high self-esteem and self confidence

Promoting positive behaviour

In the kindergarten environment children feel secure and safe through rhythm and routine in daily activities. We know that children learn through imitation, and the teacher and assistants endeavour to be role models worthy of imitation. We use respectful, clear language to each other, not shouting or raising our voices. We positively support each other in our activities around the children. We eat together on a daily basis, modelling good behaviour and helping the children learn to share, serve each other and eat socially. We have clear and consistent boundaries, although each child is treated individually and according to their age and stage of development. We use a number of simple verbal reminders for the children, for example 'hands are for work and play', 'kind voices', 'knock and you may enter', to provide consistency in the whole group of children.

Working with challenging behaviour

Most children experience social difficulties at some time in their development. Some behaviour is culturally affected, or may be due to the child's stage of understanding spoken English. At different stages of development, we may use any of the following methods to redirect a child's behaviour:

- Distraction – attract the child's attention with a new focus or activity;
- Gain the child's attention with a look, gesture or word to make him/her aware of our observations;
- Remove the child from the situation and engage him/her with an adult-led task. When appropriate the child returns to the group;
- Occasionally, and only for older children, they may be asked to help with a particular chore instead of joining a group activity.
- With older children, we may use phrases such as: "I don't want you to do that" or "Please don't do that" especially for a quick response to a child hitting or about to hit another for example. As long as it is said in a gentle authoritative way without anger it can be simple and direct.

The above needs to be consistent and practised over days or weeks with parental consent and co-operation. If the behaviour of a child requires more attention than what can be achieved by the daily efforts described above, other means may be implemented to ensure the most positive kindergarten experience for the child, classmates, and group as a whole. We do not support the use of corporal punishment in our school.

Approaches for consideration when behaviour of a child is consistently disruptive and/or there is a cause for general concern.

1. Parent notification and consultation on a regular basis
2. Teacher review on a regular basis (daily and/or weekly)
3. Discussion with parents, teachers and child where appropriate
4. Undertake a 'Child Study' * in weekly teachers' meetings
5. Implementation of an action plan to target a particular problem or concern
6. Recommendation to consult with other professionals for help and support.

A number of other factors may influence a child's inappropriate behaviour, as well as simply their age and stage of development:

- Lack of consistency
- Lack of care/nurture
- Physical environment
- Medical/physical medication
- Poor attachment
- Settling or separation anxiety
- Needs not met

PARENTAL SUPPORT

We work closely with a child's family in order to support the child's development. A clear and flexible settling-in time is followed by home visits, 1:1 times with parents and parents evenings. Parents are regularly invited to family festivals, and we provide parent education through talks on aspects of early childhood from a Steiner perspective including indoor and outdoor play, health and development, temperaments, puppets and stories, use of technology, and festivals and their meanings. In keeping with our philosophy of supporting positive behaviour, we ask that parents agree to support us by considering the appropriateness of toys and clothing available to their child. Electronic games, weapons, cartoon or superhero images and their actions are not considered helpful in social integration and may work actively against what we are doing in the kindergarten. We find that television does not support positive behaviour in the kindergarten and ask for parents' thoughtful consideration.

Each new child comes to the kindergarten on the basis of a term's trial, with a discussion/ review at the half term. If at the end of this term the child has not settled, the trial may be extended if the teachers deem it appropriate, and a plan of action is created to help the child and look at specific needs and issues alongside our colleagues, the College of Teachers, and the parents. If the child has been at the kindergarten longer and a problem arises, every effort will be made with parent support to reintegrate the child into the group. If we are unable to provide the necessary support to meet the child's developmental needs, we may ask the

child to leave, but this would only be after all other avenues have been explored, both in house and outside agencies.

Lead practitioner for behaviour in the Early Years (including EYFS): Katie Sharrock

In house: Early years practitioners
College of Teachers

In-house therapists: Eurythmy Therapy
School doctor

Outside agencies: Hounslow Early Years Advisory team
Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship Advisory Service

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