



**Leasowe**  
Nursery School  
& Family Centre

## **Understanding Behaviour Why Do Children, Do What They Do?**

*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.' (EYFS)*



*All staff should be familiar with this policy. This policy is available to parents/carers, visitors and other professionals involved in the care of the children in the Centre.*

This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly.

Next review date: 2017

## CONTENTS

- Mission Statement
- Practitioners and the Key Person Role
- Promoting Good Practice— Positive Strategies for encouraging good behaviour
- Promoting Good Practice—when supporting children who are experiencing difficulties and thereby expressing it through challenging behaviour
- Unacceptable, Unprofessional Practice for Understanding Behaviour
- Working in partnership with parents
- Working in Partnership with other professionals
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014
- Complaints and Significant Incidents
- How can we Improve?
- Practice Examples

### **Appendices**

- *Appendix 1: ABC Chart*
- *Appendix 2: Biting Understanding Why!*
- *Appendix 3: Supporting Children who are suffering extreme anxiety*

## **Mission Statement**

At Leasowe Nursery School and Family Centre, we understand that behaviour is a form of communication. Through their behaviour, children tell us how they are feeling, what they want to learn, whether they like their surroundings and if they feel cared for. We recognise that children's expression of emotions and how they make friends with other children is a part of child development. Children go through many stages of development and there will be times when children feel happy, safe, frustrated, confused, angry and afraid. Such emotions will be expressed through their behaviour.

We aim to ensure:

- the safety and wellbeing of children, staff and families,
- that children feel safe to explore and express their emotions,
- that children are supported by caring and sensitive staff,
- that practitioners consider the reason for all behaviours as an expression of the child's learning and development,
- that children begin to learn that behaviour can have consequences and when appropriate in terms of development they begin to learn to take responsibility for their actions,
- that adults provide positive role models as they engage with each other, parents/carers, visitors and the children.

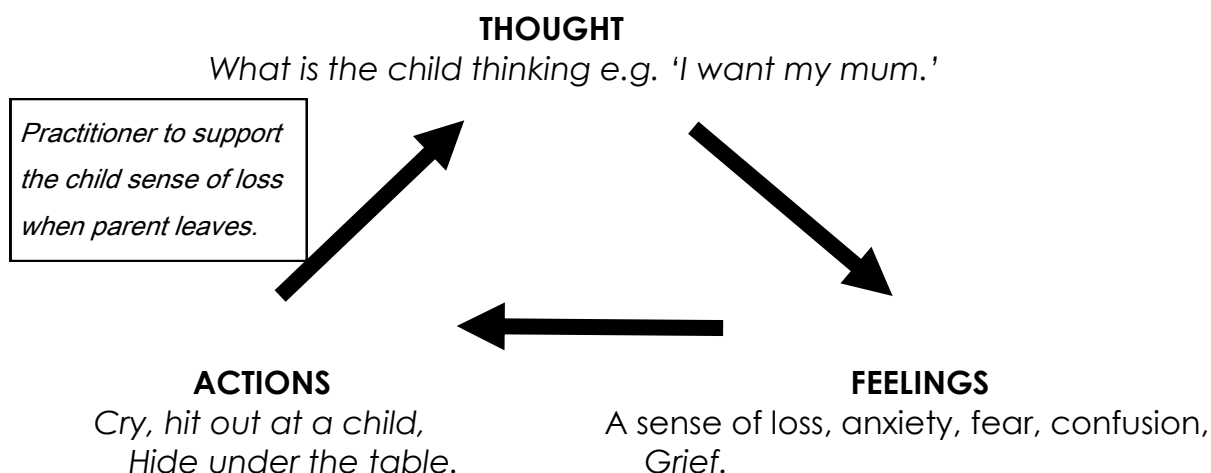
Cathy Hughes is the named practitioner for Understanding Behaviour.

## **Practitioners and the Key Person Role**

- All practitioners model high expectations of behaviour through encouraging and praising good behaviour. We encourage children to respect themselves, each other, adults and the environment. We apply simple rules fairly and consistently and aim to provide a happy, caring environment with challenging learning experiences. Each learning environment follows a set of routines which are reinforced through visual and other sensory cues to support children's understanding of what is expected. When children feel safe and understand what is going to happen next, their anxiety levels reduce, thus providing them with a secure base from which to explore their ideas.
- All children are supported by their key person. Their role is to ensure each child's needs are met. If a parent has any concerns regarding their child's behaviour we welcome them coming to our centre to chat and work with their child's key person.

## Promoting Good Practice — Positive Strategies for encouraging good behaviour

- At Leasowe, practitioners provide positive examples of behaviour, such as, respecting themselves and others and understanding the unique needs of individuals, for children, parents/carers, students and visitors to follow.
- Practitioners understand that behaviour is an expression of the child's thoughts and feelings based at their unique stage of development using the thoughts, feeling and action triangle framework below.



- Practitioners must be sensitive to the emotions displayed by the children. It is important that children can freely express their emotions, as it is only through the expression of feelings that children can begin to self-regulate and become aware of how they feel as they engage with others.
- Practitioners should always consider why a particular behaviour occurs and if possible seek out patterns to the behaviour, by using 'ABC Chart' (Appendix 1), thus enabling practitioners to prevent, anticipate potential learning challenges for children.
- We aim to provide a calm and safe environment in which children can learn and develop by providing well-planned areas for them to play in, duplicate popular toys and large group sets of equipment.
- Praise or reward is used by offering explicit praise for good behaviour, for example turn taking, co-operation, sharing and listening (according to child's developmental level) by drawing attention to the positive.
- Practitioners will set clear, fair and consistent boundaries of acceptable behaviour that are appropriate to the child's understanding using visual and sensory cues to reinforce routines. (For further information see Promoting Good Practice—Using visual timetables and other sensory cues.)
- Ensure planning of the prime and specific areas of learning meets the child's individual needs.
- In certain circumstances, such as racist language, physical abuse or dangerous behaviour, an instant adult response is required.

### **Promoting Good Practice—when supporting children who are experiencing difficulties and thereby expressing it through challenging behaviour**

- Understand why the child is exhibiting challenging behaviour and consider the child's developmental stage. Consider if further understanding of the behaviour is required by using the 'thought, feelings and action' triangle framework.
- If behaviours such as biting persist refer to 'Biting Understanding Why' - Appendix 2.
- Practitioners to review their own practice, and learning environment.
- Redirection – distract to another activity or be invited in with the activity.
- A firm 'Stop' and a clear explanation of why the behaviour is unacceptable.
- Speak calmly, clearly and firmly to gain control.
- Give warning of the consequences ( according to child's developmental level) if the behaviour does not stop. Then use the consequence, for example, removal from the situation or removal of the toy.
- Ignoring the behaviour if appropriate and safe to do so.
- Always ensure a fresh start afterwards.
- Consider if children's behaviour is due to 'thought and feelings' centred around extreme anxiety. For further information refer to Appendix 3.
- Very rarely, physical intervention may be used for the purposes of averting immediate danger of personal injury to any person including a child.

### **Unacceptable, Unprofessional Practice for Understanding Behaviour**

The following should never be used and if seen, should be reported immediately to the team leader, so that practitioners have opportunity to develop good practice.

- Shouting, criticism and comparison. Shouting conveys a loss of control.
- Labelling the child, rather than the behaviour, as 'naughty' .
- Using inappropriate language to describe behaviour such as 'He/she is off on one', 'He/she has got a right one on him/her today', or 'He/she is very hands on today.'
- Practitioners must not give corporal punishment including smacking, pinching, poking or rough handling, verbal aggression, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images to a child in their care, or allow any other person working on the premises to do so.

### **Working in partnership with parents**

- At Leasowe, we positively work in partnership with parents as we recognise the parent is the most significant adult in the child's life. It is important that a child's achievements at home and in the setting are recognised. These moments are reflected in the child's Learning Journal. ( For further information see, 'Promoting Best Practice—Learning Journeys.')
- If a parent is concerned about their child's behaviour they should feel free to speak to their child's key person, or our named practitioner responsible for 'Understanding Behaviour' - Cathy Hughes.
- If we are concerned about any changes in a child's behaviour we will speak in confidence with the parents/carers of the child concerned. We aim to work together with parents to understand how their child is feeling.
- If challenging behaviour persists we will, with the parents permission, work with the school SENCO and Early Years Intervention Officer who can offer more specific advice.

### **Working in Partnership with other professionals**

- Practitioners engage positively with their Local Health Visitors and other professionals such as Portage, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Family Support teams, by ensuring they are welcomed into the setting, have areas within the building that practitioners, professionals and parents can talk while respecting confidentiality. and that relevant paperwork is accessible at all times.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014**

- Practitioners understand that behaviour is a form of communication. It may be the only way the child can express their communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health, and/or their sensory /physical needs. Thus, it may be appropriate to consider their behaviour as an indication of an area of need and provide appropriate support to the child not only through high quality teaching and differentiated teaching and learning, but also by preparing Person Centred Plans or Play Plan , or an Early Years Additional Support Plans. (For further information see Inclusion Policy and provision Mapping for SEND Information Report/Centre Offer.)
-

### **Complaints and Significant Incidents**

- If any parents or practitioners have any concerns about a child or a member of staff they should report these to our Centre Manager, Cathy Hughes as soon as possible. This will give everyone the opportunity to work together to resolve the problem and support all concerned.
- In the event of a staff member having to physically intervene to protect a child from either harming themselves, another child or damaging property, a significant incident record will be completed and shared with the parent when collecting their child.

### **How can we Improve?:**

If any parents/carers have any concerns about the provision for their child, we want to know so that we can improve our practice. Please contact either your child's key person or Centre Manager Cathy Hughes. We are here to help.

**Practical example 1:**

I am concerned about a child's behaviour. It is becoming very challenging. What should I do?

You need to observe when and where the behaviour occurs. Does something trigger it off. Use the ABC chart in appendix 1. You also need to consider when and where the behaviour does not occur. This information may begin to help you to understand why the child is behaving in this way. Remember behaviour is about communication. The child is telling you something about how they think and feel. You can then begin to plan appropriate activities to support the child.

**Practical example 2:**

Children come to me and put their hands up to be picked up and hugged. Should I pick them up?

Young children are very tactile and appropriate physical contact is important for cognitive and emotional development. However there can be safety issues when picking up children. To begin with it can sometimes be easier to kneel down to the child and allow them to hug you and you can appropriately hug them. You can also sit down and allow them to sit on your knee.

**'Practical example 3:**

We are made aware of the importance of not shouting, but how can I get a child's attention, particularly when a child is in danger or hurting another child?

A child's behaviour is always influenced and moulded by how we relate to them. Our practice shapes the behaviour of the children in our care. Shouting can indicate a loss of control on the part of the adult. If possible always get child's attention by kneeling down to face them. Say the child's name ( you can stroke their cheek or touch their hand to get their attention), then clearly and simply explain what you want the child to do. It is often more effective to say 'STOP' rather than 'NO' as it tells the child exactly what you want them to do.

Sometimes distraction can be enough o redirect a child to a different activity or away from a situation they are finding difficult to cope with.



#### **Practical Example 4:**

A child is having a tantrum, what should I do?

Young children feel emotion very deeply. Tantrums often occur when the child is tired, confused, frightened, hungry, stressed or frustrated. Tantrums occur when the child has an increase in the stress hormone cortisol. When it gets to a certain level the brain just can't cope. The child may then scream, kick, pinch, scratch, remove themselves to an area in the room and refuse to move. Check the child is safe and other children are safe. It is important that you do not shout. Remain calm. If the child is in a safe place, let the child 'cry it out'. Don't try and rush it. Remember the brain is learning to regulate emotions when a child has a tantrum. It is important to reassure the child. Use a quiet voice and tell them they are Ok. When they begin to calm down they may be ready for a hug. Some however, may not and will want to be left until they have completely calmed down. Some children from the very start of a tantrum want to be held close to you. When the tantrum is over, if they are able to understand talk to them that they felt very cross and they were getting their cross out. It is Ok and they are still special. Some children may need somewhere to sit quietly or even sleep as children can feel very tired after a tantrum. Others just need to be reassured and then they can be redirected to another activity, or you can help them to return to the activity they found difficult.

#### **Practical Example 5:**

A child is biting in the setting. What should I do?

Remember biting like any behaviour is a form of communication, Children bite for a reason. They may be tired, frightened, jealous, threatened, confused, hungry or frustrated. You need to consider why. Refer to the thoughts, feelings and action triangle. What is motivating the child to bite. Discuss with the team, when it occurs and when it does not occur. You can then begin to introduce appropriate strategies. Refer to appendix 3 for additional ideas as to why children bite and how we can help them and how we support parents and help the child who has been bitten.

## **Appendices**

- *Appendix 1: ABC Chart*
- *Appendix 2: Biting Understanding Why!*
- *Appendix 3: Supporting Children who are suffering extreme anxiety*

Appendices will be found with the policy kept with each team leader, SENCo's, Headteacher