

General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

Children's behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs.

Equality of opportunity

1.15 Achieving positive behaviour

Policy statement for St Joseph's Pre-school

St Joseph's Pre-school believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.

Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This is a developmental task that requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

The Pre-school's moto is "gentle hands, gentle feet and friendly words".

Procedures

We have a named person, **Natalie Finn-Powers**, who has overall responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour.

- We require the named person to:
 - keep her/himself up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support;
 - access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development; and
 - check that all staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour. We keep a record of staff attendance at this training.
- We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of - and respect - those used by members of the setting.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to challenge racist language used by a child or adult in the setting. We will provide support/training in this respect.
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the setting's behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
- We expect all members of our setting - children, parents, staff, volunteers and students - to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
- We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their key person. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records¹ to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

¹ ABC chart

- We encourage children to develop positive character traits through personal, social and emotional development (PSED)² and promoting fundamental British values.

Strategies with children who engage in inconsiderate behaviour

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable, and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- Staff also use the restorative process to encourage children/give them skills to be able to resolve problems independently as they grow up.
- We ensure that there are enough popular toys and resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns.
- We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- We provide a calm area for when children display big emotions. If a big emotion is displayed the practitioner and child will agree that time to regulate will support them.
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- In situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and children, eg. in games or PE or in the supervision of children, it may be appropriate to place a very young child on the knee of an adult if the child is very distressed or ill. At all times members of staff will act as a responsible parent would.
- We may use physical intervention to divert a child from a destructive or disruptive action, eg. guiding or leading a child by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force. Staff will clearly and calmly communicate to the child what is happening, why, and explain what the child needs to do.
- The setting recognises that with any form of restraint, including seated and standing, that there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, this will be avoided where possible.
- In assessing whether physical contact is appropriate in a given situation, staff will use their judgement and have regard to:
 - St Joseph's Pre-school's Safeguarding and Child Protection (or any other relevant) policy;
 - the applicable circumstances;
 - the child's age;
 - any other material factors, including but not limited to whether:
 - the pupil has SEND or other vulnerabilities;
 - any alternative strategies that do not include physical contact can be used.

² Page 9 of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers

- We will use physical intervention/reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to children, staff or risk of significant damage to property. However, we will endeavour to minimise the need to use restrictive interventions by employing prevention and de-escalation methods.
- Staff will use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time required to reduce the relevant risks.
- Some children with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. St Joseph's Pre-school will utilise staff who know the individual child well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. They will also work with the child's parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies. In addition, a child's parent will be consulted should a behaviour support plan be necessary.
- Details of physical contact, physical intervention and/or reasonable force will be recorded on the setting's Record of Physical Intervention Form (see Appendix 1). All incidents will be brought to our Lead Practitioner's attention and are recorded in the child's file. The child's parent/carer will be informed the same day.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.

Children under three years

- When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
- We recognise that babies and very young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them do this.
- Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of young children include tantrums, biting or fighting. Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
- If tantrums, biting or fighting are frequent, we try to find out the underlying cause - such as a change or upheaval at home, or frequent change of carers. Sometimes a child has not settled in well and the behaviour may be the result of 'separation anxiety'.
- We focus on ensuring a child's attachment figure in the setting, ie their key person, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

Rough and tumble play, hurtful behaviour and bullying

Our procedure has been updated to provide additional focus on these kinds of inconsiderate behaviours.

Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes – such as superhero and weapon play; some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying, although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.

- We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or aggressive.
- We will develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
- We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, blowing up, shooting etc., and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

Hurtful behaviour

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying'. For children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.

- We recognise that young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
- We will help them manage these feelings as they have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.
- We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.
- Therefore, we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her own feelings.
- We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage as that will have the opposite effect.
- Our way of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them through holding and cuddling. Verbal children will also respond to cuddling to calm them down, but we offer them an explanation and discuss the incident with them to their level of understanding.
- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. "Adam took your car, didn't he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn't like it when he took it, did you? Did it make you feel angry? Is that why you hit him?" Older children will be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour.
- We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. "When you hit Adam, it hurt him and he didn't like that and it made him cry."

- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy. “I can see you are feeling better now and Adam isn’t crying any more. Let’s see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one.”
- We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. In order for both the biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
- We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- We help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt.
- When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together. We may refer them to the Early Help advice line run by Gloucestershire’s Family Information Service (01452 427362 or 0800 542 0202 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm³), who will support them through early prevention work, thus reducing issues from escalating and becoming very serious. The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are that:
 - they do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs – this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting;
 - their parent, or carer in the setting, does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger;
 - the child may have insufficient language, or mastery of English, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated;
 - the child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse;
 - the child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.
- Where this does not work, we use the Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support Team where necessary.

Bullying

We take bullying very seriously. Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterised by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour. Bullying is about a pre-meditated act, which relies on a stage of cognitive development in order to think the process through. Some examples of bullying are:

- Physical : pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats;
- Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing;
- Emotional: excluding, tormenting, ridicule or humiliation:
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti or gestures;
- Social: unwanted physical contact or abusive comments;
- Homophobic: any hostile or offensive action against lesbian, gay males or bisexual or those perceived to be these above;
- Cyberbullying: the use of information communication technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

³ Alternatively email on earlyhelp@gloucestershire.gov.uk

A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress in another. Bullying can occur in children five years old and over and may well be an issue in after school clubs and holiday schemes catering for slightly older children.

If a child bullies another child or children:

- we show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them;
- we intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children;
- we explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable;
- we give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;
- we help the child who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions;
- we make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour;
- we do not label children who bully as 'bullies';
- we recognise that children who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstance causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others;
- we recognise that children who bully are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they say sorry unless it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done. Empty apologies are just as hurtful to the bullied child as the original behaviour;
- we discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour; and
- we share what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

Child sexual violence and sexual harassment

St Joseph's Pre-school takes this form of abuse very seriously. Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Ultimately, any decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) (or a deputy (DDSL) taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required.

The Pre-school's initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. The starting point regarding any report will always be that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. We recognise that such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation. We will ensure that:

- a victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment;
- nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Our Safeguarding children and child protection policies, together with those advocated by the Gloucestershire Children Safeguarding Partnership (GSCP) will dictate exactly how reports

should be managed. We will follow the guidance outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version)⁴.

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or DDSL) will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. The risk assessment will be recorded (written or electronic) and kept under review. At all times, St Joseph's Pre-school will be actively considering the risks posed to all their children and putting adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.

The DSL (or DDSL) will ensure they are engaging with children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required.

As always when concerned about the welfare of a child, all staff will act in the **best interests** of the child. In all cases, St Joseph's Pre-school will follow the general safeguarding principles as set in Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version). Immediate consideration will be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted).

Early Help

St Joseph's Pre-school may decide that the children involved do not require statutory interventions, but may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. For more information on this see Policy 1.2 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection.

Further guidance

- [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) (latest version)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (latest version)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (latest version)
- DfE: [The Prevent Duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation](#) (latest version)
- DfE: [Behaviour in schools : advice for headteachers and school staff](#) (latest version)
- DfE: [Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools](#) (latest version)

Associated Policies and Procedures

- 1.2 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
1.0	K Coupe	Policy created	Sept 2014
2.0	Committee	Reviewed and updated as necessary	Sept 2015
3.0	K Coupe & N Powers	Updated and version controlled	23 Jan 2019

⁴ Part 5: Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
4.0	K Coupe	Update re Child sexual violence and sexual harassment as per Keeping Children safe in Education 2018	27 Feb 2019 Committee Meeting
5.0	H Elliott	Reviewed and updated with more information on what “bullying” is.	29 April 2021 Committee via email (quorate)
6.0	K Coupe	Mention of Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) updated to Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP)	14 July 2021 Chair (A Hitchings)
7.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and updated as follows: • Amendment to Lead Practitioner’s surname due to marriage; • “Further Guidance” checked and updated. Hyperlinks included; and • Inclusion of “Associated Policies and Procedures” section as per EY Safeguarding Audit 2023 s175/157	5 Dec 2023 Committee Member (S Webb)
8.0	N Finn-Powers	Changes to reflect current practice at the setting	23 July 2024 Committee Member (L Finn-Powers)
9.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and updated to include reference to anti-racist practice	6 Oct 2025 Committee Member (G Ind)
10.0	K Coupe & N Finn-Powers	Reviewed and updated to: • wording updated in light of recent training and the use of “kind” re hands, feet and words. • reflect changes in Keeping Children Safe in Education; • reference to DfE’s guidance on restrictive interventions in schools; • Appendix 1 reviewed in line with DfE guidance	24 March 2026 Committee Member (B Wheeler)

Appendix 1

**St Joseph's Pre-school
RECORD OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION FORM**

Child's name: Date:

Staff involved:

.....
Any relevant needs or circumstance of the child, eg SEND (include SEN status code)?
.....
.....

Duration and time of incident (approximately):

Where did the incident occur?

Briefly describe what happened⁵:

Brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance:

⁵ brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained

Who witnessed the incident? (names of staff)

.....
.....

Reason for intervention:

- 1. Immediate danger of personal injury to child
- 2. Immediate danger of injury to another child/person
- 3. To avoid damage to property
- 4. Disruption to other children

What was the immediate response from the adult(s) involved?

.....
.....
.....
.....

What happened next?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Was an injury sustained? Yes/No (please delete). If yes, please indicate to whom and/or what:

.....
.....

What steps have been taken as a result of the incident?

Short term:

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Long term:

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.....
Any other relevant information:

.....
.....
.....
Parent/carer must be notified by the end of the day (*by phone/when collecting child) *
please delete

Parent/carer's signature:

.....
Member of staff notifying parent:

..... Date:

Name of person reporting:

.....
Position:

Signature:

Name and position of person checking (Lead Practitioner/Deputy Practitioner)

.....
Signed:

Date: