

Behaviour Management

Policy & Procedure

(Including Biting, Superhero & Weapons Play, Anti-Bullying and Physical Intervention)

1. Policy Statement

At Goldilocks Nurseries, we believe that children flourish best when their personal, social, and emotional needs are understood, supported, and met. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where there is clear, fair, and developmentally appropriate expectations for behaviour.

We understand that all behaviour is a form of communication. As children grow, they begin to learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and how to consider the views, feelings, needs, and rights of others. They also begin to understand the impact their behaviour has on people, places, and objects.

The development of these important life skills requires adult guidance. Our staff team actively models positive behaviour and provides gentle intervention and support when children struggle with emotional or social situations. We support children in recognising and managing their feelings, resolving conflict, and learning to self-regulate in a developmentally appropriate way.

Key staff members work closely with children to identify triggers for behaviour, offering consistent strategies to help them reflect, manage, and adjust their actions. A named Behaviour Coordinator oversees and advises on the team's responses to challenging behaviour, ensuring our approach is consistent and sensitive to each child's needs. The Nursery Manager has overall responsibility for behaviour management within the setting.

This policy outlines our approach to managing behaviour, including specific guidance on biting, superhero and weapons play, and bullying. It supports our aim of fostering a respectful and emotionally secure environment where all children and staff feel safe, valued, and able to thrive.

2. Principles

- All children have the right to learn and play in a safe environment free from fear, bullying, or discrimination.
- Behaviour is a form of communication and should be understood in context.
- Staff model respectful, calm, and positive interactions.
- Partnerships with parents/carers are essential to support consistent behaviour strategies.
- Physical intervention is only used as a last resort to maintain safety.
- Children's dignity, privacy, and rights are respected at all times.
- Behaviour management supports children's social and emotional development, aligned with EYFS outcomes.

3. Promoting Positive Behaviour

- We use praise, encouragement, and positive reinforcement to promote desirable behaviours.
- Clear, simple expectations and routines help children understand boundaries.
- Activities and environments are planned to reduce frustration and conflicts.
- Staff observe children to anticipate and prevent challenging behaviour.

- Children are supported to develop skills in sharing, turn-taking, empathy, and problem-solving.

4. Behaviour Support

Our approach is structured in three steps, designed to meet all children's needs appropriately:

Step 1: Universal Support

- Embed EYFS guidance to create environments that promote positive behaviour.
- Annual audits of practice and environment with all staff to ensure the environment supports children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Provide staff training on behaviour management and child development.
- Use positive reinforcement and clear boundaries consistently.
- Work closely with families to share positive feedback and any initial concerns.

Step 2: Targeted Intervention

- Use consistent strategies to respond to specific unwanted behaviours.
- Apply the ABC (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence) analysis to identify triggers and outcomes.
- Collaborate with key persons, SENCO, and Behaviour Coordinator to develop personalised behaviour support plans.
- Regularly review progress with staff and parents.
- Introduce calm, supportive interventions such as time to regulate emotions with adult support, sensory breaks, or adapted routines.

Step 3: Specialist Support

- For persistent or complex behaviour challenges, refer to external agencies such as health professionals, educational psychologists, Early Help, or Children's Services.
- Implement recommendations from specialists into action plans.
- Maintain safeguarding vigilance and report any concerns immediately.

5. Intervention Strategies

Initial Intervention

- Staff respond calmly, with empathy and respect, acknowledging the child's feelings and viewpoints.
- Gather facts without rushing to judgment.
- Support children to understand what happened and find peaceful solutions, using methods such as the HighScope Conflict Resolution Model.
- Focus on restoring relationships and teaching positive social skills.

Focused Intervention (ABC Method)

- Observe and record the antecedent (what happens before), the behaviour itself, and the consequence (what happens after).
- Analyse patterns to identify triggers such as environment, routines, interactions, or unmet needs.
- Adapt environment or routines to reduce triggers.
- Use consistent positive responses to redirect and support children.

6. Managing Challenging Behaviour

- Challenging behaviour is addressed promptly with calm, consistent responses.
- Staff seek to understand underlying causes such as communication needs, emotional distress, or environmental triggers.
- Restorative approaches support children in understanding consequences and repairing harm.
- Behaviour incidents are documented and monitored to identify patterns and inform support plans.
- Collaboration with parents and external professionals ensures tailored support where needed.

7. Rewards and Sanctions

- Focus on self-motivation, helping children feel good about doing the right thing.
- Use encouragement and praise to reinforce positive behaviour.
- Avoid over-reliance on tangible rewards, which may create dependence or inequity.
- Never humiliate, label, or isolate children as punishment; this includes avoiding “naughty corners” or exclusionary tactics.
- Time away or “calm down” spaces are used sensitively, always with adult support and never for extended periods.

8. Specific Behavioural Issues

a) Anti-Bullying

Goldilocks Nurseries are committed to preventing and addressing bullying in all its forms. We recognise that bullying:

- Is deliberate, repetitive, and intended to cause harm or distress.
- Can be physical, verbal, emotional, or online (cyberbullying).
- May include discriminatory bullying based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, or other protected characteristics.

Our anti-bullying approach includes:

- Creating a nursery culture that promotes kindness, respect, empathy, and inclusion through planned activities, stories, and discussions.
- Staff are trained to recognise signs of bullying and respond immediately and effectively.
- Ensuring children know they can talk to trusted adults about their concerns.
- Using restorative practices to resolve conflicts and support positive social development.
- Involving parents early to address concerns collaboratively and maintain consistent messaging between nursery and home.
- Maintaining confidential records of bullying incidents and monitoring trends to inform preventative strategies.
- Referring persistent or serious cases to external support agencies or safeguarding teams as necessary.

b) Rough and Tumble, Superhero & Weapon Play

Play involving superheroes, pretend weapons, and rough-and-tumble activity is acknowledged as:

- A normal, healthy part of child development, allowing children to explore social roles, test boundaries, and develop physical skills.
- Important for fostering creativity, imagination, confidence, and social negotiation skills.

Guidelines:

- Allowing this play under close adult supervision to ensure it remains safe and respectful.
- Encouraging children to express emotions, bravery, and problem-solving through their play in a positive way.
- Setting clear boundaries about what is and isn't acceptable, ensuring no real weapons or dangerous objects are used.
- Teaching children to respect others' feelings and personal space during play.
- Redirecting any play that becomes too rough, aggressive, or exclusionary in a calm and constructive manner.
- Discussing themes of fairness, kindness, and cooperation linked to their imaginative play.

c) Biting

Understanding that biting is a common behaviour in young children, Goldilocks Nursery approaches it with:

- Compassion and an understanding that it often stems from frustration, teething pain, or communication difficulties rather than deliberate aggression.

Procedures when biting occurs:

- Immediate attention to the child bitten, ensuring they are comforted and cared for.
- Calm but firm intervention with the child who bit, explaining that biting hurts and encouraging use of words or other forms of expression.
- Detailed incident documentation including context, the child's behaviour before and after, and any triggers observed.
- Parents of all children involved are contacted on the same day, with confidentiality maintained. If the incident results in broken skin, both the child who has been bitten and the child who bit are advised to seek medical attention.
- Increasing supervision and environmental adjustments where needed to reduce triggers (e.g., providing teething toys, changing groupings, or modifying routines).
- Behaviour support plans developed in collaboration with parents and professionals if biting persists or escalates.
- Ongoing staff training on recognising early signs and preventing biting incidents.

9. Managing Challenging Behaviour Towards Others

- Immediate and sensitive intervention by staff to de-escalate situations and ensure safety for all.
- Recognise that such behaviours are often expressions of distress, unmet needs, or communication difficulties.
- Support children involved by listening to their perspectives, helping them understand consequences, and guiding restorative practices such as apologies and reconciliation.
- Incident details are carefully recorded, including context and follow-up actions, to identify triggers and patterns.
- Parents of all children involved are informed promptly and sensitively, maintaining confidentiality.
- Staff conduct ongoing observations and assessments to develop individual behaviour support plans if necessary.
- Where behaviours indicate risk of harm or safeguarding concerns, referrals to external professionals or safeguarding agencies are made following nursery safeguarding procedures.
- Group dynamics are reviewed regularly to adjust routines, adult supervision, and environment to reduce incidents.

10. Physical Intervention

Physical intervention will only be used as a last resort to ensure the safety of a child or others around them. At Goldilocks Nurseries, the safety and dignity of all children are paramount.

Any physical intervention:

- Must be proportionate, necessary, and the minimum force required to prevent harm.
- Is used only to prevent injury to the child, other children, or adults, or to prevent serious damage to property.
- Is never used as a form of punishment, discipline, or to enforce compliance.
- Is carried out in a calm and controlled manner, always ensuring the child's dignity and respect.
- Must be recorded in detail immediately after the incident, including what led to the intervention, the actions taken, and the outcome.
- Parents are informed verbally and in writing on the day the intervention occurred.
- Staff involved receive debriefing and support following an incident to ensure well-being and learning for future prevention.
- Staff receive training on de-escalation techniques and safe physical intervention methods consistent with current guidance (e.g., Team Teach principles).

For more information regarding physical intervention please see out physical intervention policy.

11. Inappropriate Behaviour from Adults

Goldilocks Nurseries maintain a zero-tolerance policy for inappropriate behaviour from any adult (parents, carers, visitors):

- Any verbal aggression, intimidation, discriminatory language, or threatening behaviour towards staff, children, or other adults is unacceptable.
- Such incidents are documented, with witness statements where applicable, and reported to the Nursery Manager immediately.
- The Nursery Manager will address the issue promptly, which may include warnings, mediation, or restricting access to nursery premises.
- In serious cases, or where there is a threat to safety, the nursery reserves the right to involve the police or other authorities.
- Staff are supported to manage difficult adult interactions professionally and safely, with escalation procedures clearly outlined.
- Clear communication is maintained with all parties, emphasising the nurseries commitment to a safe and respectful environment.

12. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

- All information relating to children's behaviour, incidents, and interventions is treated with strict confidentiality.
- Records are factual, objective, and stored securely in line with data protection regulations.
- Information is shared only with relevant nursery staff and parents/carers directly involved in the child's care or support.
- Staff respect children's privacy and dignity when discussing behaviour issues.
- Behaviour records support continuous monitoring and review of strategies to meet individual children's needs.

- Parents have the right to access information concerning their child's behaviour and support plans, in accordance with nursery procedures.

13. Partnership with Parents

Strong partnerships with parents are essential for effective behaviour management.

We:

- Communicate openly and regularly with parents about their child's behaviour, progress, and any concerns.
- Share positive developments and celebrate improvements, not just challenges.
- Encourage parents to share insights about their child's home behaviour, preferences, and triggers.
- Work collaboratively with parents to develop consistent behaviour support strategies.
- Offer support and signposting to external agencies if additional help is needed.
- Provide clear guidance on nursery expectations and policies around behaviour, including anti-bullying and biting.
- Welcome parent feedback and involvement in shaping nursery practices.

14. Monitoring and Review

- Behaviour management practices are monitored regularly to ensure effectiveness.
- Staff receive ongoing training and support.
- The policy is reviewed annually or in response to legislative changes or incidents.
- Feedback from staff, parents, and children informs continuous improvement.

15. Further Guidance

This policy is informed by:

- EYFS Statutory Framework 2025 (3.73-3.75)
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (where relevant)