# PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

**Policy effective from:** September 2026

**Review date:** September 2027, or sooner where legislation, guidance or practice changes

**Applies to:** All children, staff, agency staff, students, volunteers, parents/carers and visitors

**Responsible persons:** Nursery Manager / Deputy manger Manager / SENCO / DSL

## Purpose and Principles

At St.Nicholas Nursery we believe children flourish when they feel safe, secure, valued and understood. Positive behaviour is developed through warm, respectful relationships, consistent boundaries, effective communication, appropriate expectations and responsive adult support.

We recognise that young children are still developing their emotional regulation, communication, social understanding and ability to manage impulses. Behaviour is therefore understood in the context of the child's **age, stage of development, individual needs, communication, experiences, environment and emotional wellbeing**.

Our approach is based on **co-regulation leading towards self-regulation**. Adults support children to recognise and understand their feelings, regulate their responses, repair relationships and develop the skills they need to make positive choices.

We do not label children as "naughty", "bad" or "difficult". We distinguish between the child and the behaviour and seek to understand what the behaviour is communicating.

We promote:

- safety and emotional security;
- positive and respectful relationships;
- children's voice and participation;

- emotional literacy and self-regulation;
- empathy, kindness and respect;
- inclusion and equality;
- high but developmentally appropriate expectations;
- positive role modelling by adults;
- consistency across the nursery;
- partnership with parents/carers;
- early identification of additional needs;
- a non-punitive, restorative approach to behaviour;
- safeguarding and the welfare of every child.

Our approach supports the EYFS areas of learning and development, particularly **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), Communication and Language and Physical Development**.

**Legislative and Guidance Framework**

This policy should be read alongside the nursery's safeguarding, SEND, inclusion, equality, child protection, physical intervention, complaints and whistleblowing policies.

It is informed by:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers – September 2026**;
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026**, where applicable to the setting and organisational safeguarding arrangements;
- **SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years**;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures;
- current Ofsted early years inspection arrangements.

The EYFS 2026 framework continues to require providers to support children's behaviour and have appropriate arrangements for children with special educational

needs and disabilities. The 2026 framework also strengthens safeguarding and welfare requirements.

KCSIE 2026 reinforces that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, that practice must remain child-centred and that concerns must be acted upon and recorded appropriately.

Where behaviour may indicate a safeguarding concern, this policy must **not** be used as a substitute for safeguarding procedures.

**Aims**

At St.Nicholas Nursery Nursery, we aim to:

1. Create an environment where every child feels safe, secure, valued and included.
2. Help children understand their own feelings and recognise the feelings of others.
3. Support children to develop emotional regulation and self-regulation.
4. Teach children appropriate ways to communicate their needs.
5. Develop empathy, cooperation, kindness and respect.
6. Establish clear, consistent and age-appropriate boundaries.
7. Recognise and respond to individual differences and additional needs.
8. Identify possible barriers to positive behaviour at an early stage.
9. Work collaboratively with parents/carers and other professionals.
10. Ensure behaviour management never compromises a child's dignity, safety or wellbeing.
11. Maintain high expectations for behaviour while making appropriate developmental adaptations and reasonable adjustments.
12. Ensure staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities where behaviour may indicate that a child requires help or protection.

**Understanding Behaviour**

We recognise that behaviour is communication.

Children may communicate a need, feeling, difficulty or experience through behaviour, particularly where they do not yet have the language or emotional maturity to express themselves.

*Possible factors include:*

- tiredness;
- hunger;
- illness or discomfort;
- frustration;
- communication difficulties;
- sensory processing differences;
- changes to routine;
- transitions;
- separation from parents/carers;
- difficulty sharing or waiting;
- developmental stage;
- emotional regulation difficulties;
- additional needs or SEND;
- neurodevelopmental differences;
- environmental factors such as noise, space or overstimulation;
- changes or difficulties at home;
- experiences of trauma, stress or other adverse experiences;
- difficulty understanding expectations.

Staff must avoid making assumptions about the reason for behaviour.

Where behaviour changes significantly, is persistent, unusual for the child or raises concern about the child's welfare, staff must consider whether there may be an underlying **health, developmental, SEND, emotional or safeguarding need**.

**Co-Regulation and Self-Regulation**

Adults play a central role in helping young children regulate their emotions.

Staff should:

- remain calm and emotionally available;
- use a warm and respectful tone;

- acknowledge the child's feelings;
- name emotions where appropriate;
- provide simple choices;
- use clear and consistent language;
- give children time to process instructions;
- reduce unnecessary verbal demands when a child is distressed;
- offer appropriate comfort and reassurance;
- help children identify what they need;
- model appropriate emotional responses;
- support children to return to a calm state;
- revisit situations when the child is ready to learn from them.

For example:

> *"I can see you are very upset. I won't let you hit. I'm here to help you."*

The adult should communicate that **the child's feelings are acceptable, but unsafe or harmful behaviour is not**.

Children should not be expected to demonstrate self-regulation skills independently before they are developmentally ready.

**Positive Behaviour Through the Curriculum**

Positive behaviour is taught through everyday experiences rather than only addressed when difficulties occur.

Practitioners provide opportunities for children to develop:

- emotional vocabulary;
- turn-taking;
- listening;
- sharing and cooperation;
- problem-solving;
- empathy;
- friendships;

- independence;
- confidence;
- resilience;
- conflict resolution;
- understanding of boundaries;
- awareness of how actions affect others.

Stories, role play, songs, small-group experiences and everyday interactions are used to explore feelings, relationships, kindness, difference and respectful behaviour.

Children are supported to contribute to age-appropriate expectations and decisions about their environment.

**Positive Role Modelling**

All adults working at St.Nicholas Nursery are expected to model:

- respect;
- patience;
- kindness;
- calm communication;
- professional boundaries;
- inclusive language;
- active listening;
- appropriate conflict resolution;
- emotional regulation.

Adults must not use sarcasm, ridicule, humiliation, threatening language or inappropriate labels.

Staff must never discuss a child's behaviour in front of other children, parents or visitors in a way that could embarrass or stigmatise the child.

The same expectations apply to staff behaviour towards one another.

Any concern about an adult's conduct towards a child must be treated as a safeguarding concern and managed through the nursery's safeguarding procedures.

**Expectations and Boundaries**

Nursery expectations are kept simple, consistent and developmentally appropriate.

Children are supported to understand that:

- we keep ourselves and others safe;
- we use kind and respectful behaviour;
- we use words, gestures or other communication to express our needs;
- we care for people, resources and the environment;
- we listen to others;
- we seek adult help when we need it.

Expectations are adapted according to age and stage.

For babies and younger children, adults provide greater physical and emotional support.

For older children, adults increasingly encourage children to recognise the impact of their actions and participate in resolving difficulties.

**Responding to Behaviour That Challenges**

When behaviour presents a challenge, staff should:

*Step 1* – Keep everyone safe

The immediate priority is the safety and welfare of all children and adults.

Staff should calmly intervene and remove hazards where necessary.

*Step 2* – Regulate

The adult supports the child to become calm.

This may include:

- moving to a quieter space;
- reducing stimulation;
- offering reassurance;
- giving processing time;

- using familiar calming strategies;
- offering a trusted adult.

*Step 3* – Understand

When appropriate, staff consider:

- What happened?
- What was happening immediately before?
- What was the child trying to communicate?
- Was there a trigger?
- Was the child tired, hungry, unwell or overwhelmed?
- Was there a communication or sensory difficulty?
- Was the expectation developmentally appropriate?
- Could SEND or another additional need be contributing?
- Is there a possible safeguarding concern?

*Step 4* – Teach

Once the child is regulated, staff support them to understand:

- what happened;
- how others may have felt;
- what they can do differently;
- how they can repair relationships where appropriate.

*Step 5* – Reflect

Staff consider whether changes are needed to:

- the environment;
- routines;
- adult support;
- communication;
- transitions;
- activities;
- sensory experiences;

- staffing;
- the child's individual support strategies.

**SEND and Inclusive Behaviour Support**

Behaviour must always be considered within an inclusive SEND framework.

A child must not be considered "naughty", "non-compliant" or "challenging" simply because they communicate, regulate or respond differently from other children.

Staff must consider whether behaviour may be associated with:

- communication and interaction needs;
- cognition and learning;
- social, emotional and mental health needs;
- sensory or physical needs;
- developmental differences;
- neurodivergence;
- speech, language and communication difficulties;
- hearing or visual impairment;
- physical discomfort or health needs.

Where additional support may be required, the nursery will work with the **SENCO, parents/carers and relevant professionals**.

The nursery will use a graduated approach:

*Assess*

Gather information through observation, assessment, discussion with parents/carers and consultation with relevant professionals.

*Plan*

Agree clear outcomes and identify strategies, adaptations, reasonable adjustments and support.

*Do*

Implement the agreed strategies consistently and ensure practitioners understand their responsibilities.

*Review*

Review the impact of the support, children's progress and wellbeing and determine whether strategies need to be continued, adapted or escalated.

The graduated approach is consistent with the SEND Code of Practice and DfE early years SEND guidance.

Where appropriate, an individual **Behaviour Support Plan / SEND Support Plan / One Page Profile** may be developed.

*Plans should identify:*

- the child's strengths;
- communication preferences;
- known triggers;
- early signs of dysregulation;
- successful strategies;
- environmental adaptations;
- reasonable adjustments;
- adult responses;
- prevention strategies;
- safety measures;
- child and parent/carer views;
- review arrangements.

SEND support should **remove barriers without lowering expectations unnecessarily**. Current inspection guidance specifically expects practitioners to consider individual needs and circumstances, including SEND, while maintaining high expectations for behaviour.

**Equality, Inclusion and Reasonable Adjustments**

St.Nicholas Nursery is committed to ensuring that behaviour support is fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

Staff must consider whether a child's behaviour may be affected by:

- disability;
- SEND;
- communication needs;
- cultural or linguistic differences;
- trauma or adverse experiences;
- sensory needs;
- developmental stage;
- other protected or individual characteristics.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where appropriate.

Children must not be disadvantaged because they require additional support to understand expectations or regulate their behaviour.

However, reasonable adjustments do not remove the nursery's responsibility to keep other children and adults safe.

**Behaviour and Safeguarding**

Behaviour may sometimes be an indicator that a child needs help or protection.

Staff must remain alert to:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour;
- sexualised behaviour that is not developmentally expected;
- significant emotional withdrawal;
- extreme or persistent aggression;
- unexplained fear or distress;
- changes in attendance;
- concerning comments or disclosures;

- behaviour associated with possible abuse or neglect;
- injuries or other indicators of harm;
- behaviour that may suggest exploitation or other safeguarding concerns.

Staff must not attempt to investigate safeguarding concerns themselves.

Any concern must be reported promptly to the **DSL or Deputy DSL** in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

KCSIE 2026 emphasises a child-centred approach, immediate action where concerns arise, appropriate reporting to the DSL and accurate records of concerns, actions, decisions, rationale and outcomes.

Information must be shared appropriately where necessary to safeguard a child. Data protection must not be treated as a barrier to necessary safeguarding information-sharing.

**Physical Intervention**

Physical intervention is **not a behaviour-management technique or punishment**.

Physical intervention may only be used where it is necessary and proportionate to prevent:

- immediate injury to the child;
- injury to another child or adult;
- serious damage to property;
- an immediate safety risk.

Staff should use the least restrictive response appropriate to the circumstances.

Physical intervention must never be used:

- to punish;
- to humiliate;
- because a child is refusing an instruction;
- for staff convenience;

- as a routine behaviour-management strategy;
- because staff are frustrated or angry.

Any physical intervention must be recorded in accordance with nursery procedures and parents/carers informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Where physical intervention is repeated or foreseeable, the nursery will review the child's individual support arrangements and consider whether a risk assessment, behaviour support plan, SEND support or specialist advice is required.

Where an incident raises a safeguarding concern about the actions of a member of staff, the nursery's safeguarding allegations procedure must be followed.

**Prohibited Punishment**

St.Nicholas Nursery does not use or threaten to use corporal punishment.

Staff must never:

- smack;
- hit;
- slap;
- shake;
- push;
- pull;
- pinch;
- physically intimidate;
- threaten;
- humiliate;
- shame;
- ridicule;
- deliberately isolate a child as punishment;
- use food or drink as a reward or punishment;
- remove comfort or emotional support as punishment.

The EYFS framework requires providers to take reasonable steps to ensure corporal punishment is not used.

**Time Away / Quiet Spaces**

A child may sometimes need a quieter environment to regulate.

This must not be used as punishment or exclusion.

Any quiet or reduced-stimulation space must:

- remain appropriately supervised;
- be proportionate to the child's needs;
- not be used to isolate or humiliate;
- allow the child to return to the group when regulated and ready;
- take account of the child's age, developmental stage and SEND.

Children must never be left unsupervised as a consequence of behaviour.

**Biting, Hitting, Kicking and Other Physical Behaviours**

Physical behaviours such as biting, hitting, kicking, pushing or throwing may occur during early childhood development.

They must nevertheless be responded to consistently because they can cause harm.

*Staff should:*

1. intervene calmly;
2. protect the child who has been hurt;
3. support the child who has displayed the behaviour;
4. acknowledge feelings;
5. use clear language such as: > "I can see you are angry. I won't let you hit."
6. identify possible triggers;
7. teach alternative ways to communicate;
8. record the incident where required;
9. inform parents/carers in accordance with nursery procedures;

10. review support if the behaviour is persistent, escalating or presents a significant risk.

The child who has been hurt must receive appropriate comfort and care.

**Aggressive or Repeated Behaviour**

Where behaviour is persistent, escalating or presents a risk to others, the key person, room leader, Behaviour Lead and/or SENCO will consider:

- patterns and triggers;
- observations;
- the child's developmental stage;
- communication;
- sensory needs;
- environmental factors;
- relationships;
- health;
- SEND;
- safeguarding;
- strategies already tried;
- the child's views where developmentally appropriate;
- parental information.

An individual support plan may be introduced.

*The nursery may seek advice from:*

- SENCO;
- Area SENCO;
- health professionals;
- speech and language therapists;
- educational psychologists;
- occupational therapists;
- inclusion advisors;

- children's social care;
- other appropriate agencies.

Parental consent will be sought where appropriate, except where information-sharing is necessary to safeguard a child or where another lawful basis applies.

**Bullying and Discriminatory Behaviour**

St.Nicholas Nursery does not tolerate bullying or discriminatory behaviour.

Children are supported to understand that hurting, excluding or deliberately upsetting others is not acceptable.

In early years, staff recognise that children may not yet understand the meaning or impact of their actions and therefore behaviour must be considered developmentally.

Where repeated behaviour causes another child to feel unsafe or distressed, staff will intervene and provide appropriate support to all children involved.

Discriminatory language or behaviour, including behaviour relating to disability, race, culture, religion, sex, gender or other protected characteristics, must be addressed promptly and appropriately.

Adults must challenge discriminatory behaviour and model respectful and inclusive language.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 also reinforces expectations around inclusive, anti-discriminatory cultures and challenging racism and discrimination.

**Children's Voice**

Children should be given appropriate opportunities to express:

- how they feel;
- what they need;
- what helps them feel safe;
- what they think happened;

- what could help next time;
- how they would like to repair a relationship.

Children's views should be considered in behaviour support planning wherever developmentally appropriate.

For children who use alternative communication methods, staff should use their established communication system.

**Working with Parents and Carers**

We recognise parents/carers as important partners in supporting children's emotional development and behaviour.

Parents/carers will be informed where:

- their child has been hurt;
- their child has hurt another person;
- there is repeated or significant behaviour;
- an individual support plan is being considered;
- there are concerns about developmental or additional needs;
- external support may be appropriate.

Conversations with parents should be:

- respectful;
- factual;
- non-judgemental;
- solution-focused;
- confidential;
- centred on the child's needs.

Staff should avoid labels and describe observable behaviour rather than making judgements about the child's character or parenting.

Where appropriate, strategies can be agreed between home and nursery to promote consistency.

**Recording and Monitoring**

Significant behaviour incidents will be recorded appropriately.

Records should be factual and include:

- date and time;
- context;
- what happened immediately before;
- observable behaviour;
- action taken;
- injuries or risks;
- support provided;
- outcome;
- parent communication where applicable;
- further action required.

Records must not contain judgemental or stigmatising language.

Where behaviour may have safeguarding implications, records must be made through the appropriate safeguarding system and shared with the DSL.

KCSIE 2026 expects safeguarding records to capture the concern, actions taken, decisions made, rationale and outcomes.

Behaviour records will be monitored to identify patterns and determine whether additional support, environmental changes, staff training or safeguarding action is required.

**Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Information about a child's behaviour and support needs is confidential.

Information will only be shared with those who need it to support the child, protect others or fulfil safeguarding, legal or professional responsibilities.

Where information indicates that a child may be at risk of harm, safeguarding procedures take priority.

Staff must not discuss individual children or behaviour concerns in public areas or with people who do not have a legitimate need to know.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Nursery Manager / Acting Manager

The Nursery Manager/Acting Manager is responsible for ensuring that:

- this policy is implemented;
- staff understand their responsibilities;
- behaviour practice is monitored;
- safeguarding concerns are acted upon;
- staff receive appropriate support and training;
- parents are involved appropriately;
- patterns and trends are reviewed;
- appropriate external support is sought.

*Behaviour Lead*

The Behaviour Lead:

- advises staff on behaviour support;
- supports consistent practice;
- monitors behaviour patterns;
- works with the SENCO where additional needs are identified;
- supports individual behaviour plans;
- keeps up to date with relevant guidance and research;
- supports staff reflection and development.

*SENCO*

The SENCO:

- supports identification of possible SEND;
- advises staff on appropriate adaptations;
- supports the assess, plan, do, review process;

- works with parents/carers;
- liaises with external professionals where appropriate;
- ensures behaviour is not viewed in isolation from a child's developmental needs.

*DSL / Deputy DSLs*

The DSL and deputies are responsible for ensuring that behaviour-related safeguarding concerns are:

- recognised;
- recorded;
- reported;
- assessed;
- escalated appropriately;
- referred to relevant agencies where necessary.

*Room Leaders and Practitioners*

All practitioners must:

- follow this policy consistently;
- maintain high expectations;
- use positive and respectful interactions;
- understand individual children's support needs;
- implement agreed strategies;
- record significant incidents accurately;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- seek support when behaviour is beyond their level of expertise.

**Staff Training and Reflection**

Staff will receive appropriate training and guidance in:

- positive behaviour;
- co-regulation;
- emotional development;
- SEND and inclusion;

- safeguarding;
- physical intervention;
- communication;
- de-escalation;
- equality and anti-discriminatory practice;
- recognising behaviour that may indicate safeguarding concerns.

Staff will be encouraged to reflect on their own responses to behaviour.

Where a pattern of behaviour indicates that staff responses are inconsistent, managers will provide coaching, observation, supervision or additional training.

**Monitoring and Quality Assurance**

Leaders will monitor:

- behaviour incidents;
- physical interventions;
- repeated incidents;
- patterns by room, time or activity;
- individual support plans;
- SEND-related behaviour;
- safeguarding referrals;
- parent feedback;
- staff consistency;
- training needs.

Monitoring will be used for **learning and improvement rather than blame**, while maintaining clear accountability where practice does not meet required standards.

**When Additional Support Is Required**

Where behaviour remains a concern despite appropriate strategies, the nursery will consider whether further assessment or specialist support is required.

The nursery may:

- review the child's development;
- involve the SENCO;
- implement the graduated approach;
- seek advice from the Area SENCO;
- involve health professionals;
- request specialist advice;
- review the environment and staffing;
- review the child's individual plan;
- consider safeguarding thresholds where appropriate.

The nursery will not wait for a formal diagnosis before making reasonable adjustments or providing appropriate support.

**Relationship to Safeguarding**

This policy does not replace the nursery's safeguarding procedures.

Behaviour must be considered alongside the possibility of:

- abuse;
- neglect;
- domestic abuse;
- exploitation;
- trauma;
- online or other harms;
- significant changes in circumstances.

Where there is a concern that behaviour may be an indicator of harm, the matter must be referred to the DSL without delay.

Where a concern relates to the behaviour of a member of staff, agency worker, volunteer or other adult, the nursery's safeguarding allegations procedure must be followed.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where:

- legislation changes;
- EYFS requirements change;
- safeguarding guidance changes;
- SEND guidance changes;
- inspection findings identify an area for improvement;
- incidents or learning indicate that the policy requires amendment.

Staff, parents/carers and, where appropriate, children will be invited to contribute to the review.

*Appendix 1 – Quick Reference for Staff*

When a child is dysregulated:

**STOP → SAFEGUARD → REGULATE → UNDERSTAND → TEACH → REVIEW**

Remember:

- **Connect before correcting.**
- **Feelings are acceptable; unsafe behaviour is not.**
- **Behaviour is communication.**
- **Do not label the child.**
- **Use calm, clear language.**
- **Consider SEND and individual needs.**
- **Maintain high expectations but make appropriate adjustments.**
- **Never use punishment or humiliation.**
- **Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately.**
- **Record significant incidents factually.**
- **Work with parents/carers.**
- **Ask for help when behaviour is persistent, escalating or unusual.**

*Appendix 2 – Examples of Positive Adult Language*

Instead of:

***"You're being naughty."***

Use:

***"I won't let you hit. I can see you are angry. I will help you."***

Instead of:

***"Stop crying."***

Use:

***"You're upset. I'm here with you. Let's work out what you need."***

Instead of:

***"Say sorry."***

Use:

**"*Let's think about how they are feeling and what we can do to help."***

Instead of:

***"You know better than that."***

Use:

***"Let's remember our safe hands. Show me what you can do instead."***

Instead of:

***"Why did you do that?"***

Use:

***"I saw what happened. Let's work out what happened before that and how I can help."***

Policy Statement

St.Nicholas Nursery Nursery is committed to creating an environment where children are **safe, respected, included and supported to develop the emotional and social skills they need to thrive**.

We recognise that positive behaviour is developed through relationships, consistent boundaries, effective teaching, co-regulation and understanding.

Our approach maintains **high expectations for every child**, while recognising that children may require different levels of support and reasonable adjustments to achieve those expectations.

We will always consider the whole child, including their development, communication, SEND, emotional wellbeing, family circumstances and safeguarding needs.

| **This policy was adopted on** | **Signed on behalf of the nursery** | **Date for review** |
|---|---|---|
| *Sept 2026* | Anjana Shah | *August 2027* |

- 