

The TLC Nursery Federation



Behaviour Regulation Policy

Policy reviewed and updated:	January 2026
Date of next review:	January 2027
This policy will be subject to ongoing review and may be amended prior to the scheduled date of the next review in order to reflect changes in legislation where appropriate.	

Introduction

This behaviour regulation policy has been created with advice, training and guidance from an Educational Psychologist to ensure it is 'trauma informed/attachment aware' and founded on effective practice for meeting the needs of all children. It is also based on guidance from Slough Borough Council and the Department for Education. In keeping with the recent reforms to the EYFS, our policy focuses on self-regulation through which non-cognitive and cognitive skills are developed. This is based on evidence that self-regulation is a predictor of pre-reading skills and impacts outcomes in maths and literacy.

Policy Links

This behaviour regulation policy links to the following other policies we hold in school:

- Equality statement and objectives
- Health and safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Restraint policy
- E-Safety policy

Purpose and Scope of the Policy

The TLC Federation is committed to the social and emotional well-being of its staff, pupils, parents and carers. The purpose of this policy is to outline our approach to supporting children regulate their behaviour in the nursery and beyond.

It is acknowledged that members of the school community may have very different parenting experiences and views on behaviour. However, the aim of our behaviour regulation policy is to bring us all together to adhere to some basic key principles and practices that reflect our school ethos. We also recognise the difficulties adults face if they are working with children with complex social, emotional and mental- health needs and behaviours that challenge. We therefore aim to implement a whole school approach founded on evidence-based principles shown to work in helping children regulate their behaviour.

Our aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure members of staff feel supported and equipped in helping children to regulate.
- For all staff to have consistent expectations and approaches to children's behaviour.
- Strengthen relationships between staff, children, parents and carers and members of the wider school community.
- Ensure children feel safe, secure and ready to learn.
- To promote positive behaviour, support the development of emotional regulation, positive well-being and mental health.
- For parents to know there is a well evidenced, consistent and equitable approach.

Roles and Responsibilities

We strongly believe that responding to the social, emotional and mental health needs of individual children is a **shared responsibility**.

The adults in our nursery will be: Reflective and self-aware, respectful and non-judgmental, resilient and robust, a good role model (calm and non-reactionary) and responsible and mature.

We will help the children to be: Reflective and self-aware, communicative, resilient and resourceful, enthusiastic and motivated to learn, able to learn from their mistakes.

We will encourage and support families to: Engage with the school community, be supportive of the school's ethos and values, be supportive of their child's learning, have an understanding of their child's progress and achievement, be communicative, encourage excellent attendance and punctuality.

Ethos and Approach

We recognise the diversity in childhood experiences and the impact this has on children's behaviour regulation and readiness to learn. Traditional behaviourist approaches to behaviour management can work for the majority of children but are not successful for all. This is especially true for those who have experienced childhood adversity. We aim to embed a holistic approach to behaviour regulation. We strive to be a trauma informed practice school through adopting the new view using strategies underpinned by the following evidence-based principles.

Traditional view (behaviourist)	New view (trauma informed)
Behaviour management	Behaviour regulation
Enforced sanctions	Restorative and reparative approaches
Rewards and incentives create motivation	Relational influence create motivation
External controls (star charts, removal of privileges)	Internal controls (sense of self, sense of accomplishment, self-acceptance, self-love)
Time out	Time in
Expectation based on chronological age	Expectation based on emotional/social age
Individual focus	Community/family focus
Outcome based (focus on behaviour itself)	Process based (focus on feelings and emotions that drive behaviour)
Intervention	Prevention
Major transitions identified	All transitions identified
Behaviour viewed as a difficulty	Behaviour viewed as a need
Child to fit environment and system	Environment and system to fit the child
Behaviour is a matter of choice	Emotional need drives behaviour
All children treated the same (equality)	All children get what they need (equity)

Adults are controlling	Adults are in control
Time-out	Time-in
Expectation based on chronological age	Expectations based on emotional/social age
Individual focus	Community/family focus
Outcome based (focus on the behaviour itself)	Process based (focus on feelings and emotions that drive behaviour)
Major transitions identified	All transitions identified
Behaviour viewed as a difficulty	Behaviour viewed as a need
Child to fit the environment and system	Environment and system to fit the child
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Trauma Informed Practice

This is an approach to working with children that takes into consideration any experiences of adversity. It focuses on establishing a sense of safety and security that may be missing for some children. Trauma informed practice is an effective way of supporting all children, including those with behavioural challenges by focusing on developing empathetic relationships and allowing for the modelling of effective behaviour regulation skills.

Principles into practice

We take a holistic view of each child, taking into account their learning, social, emotional and mental health needs. We recognise that each child is unique and has different experiences that they bring to nursery and that all children develop at their own pace and in their own individual ways.

We are aware that many different factors can influence how a child behaves at particular times (a new baby, changes at home, illness etc) and that all behavior is a form of communication and not necessarily a matter of choice. Some behavioural incidents are caused by a child's frustrated attempts to express emotional needs, such as feeling loved and cared for, being included, feeling important and valued, having friends, feeling safe and secure. At other times, children simply don't have the skills and experience yet to cope in different situations or manage everyday interactions in a positive manner.

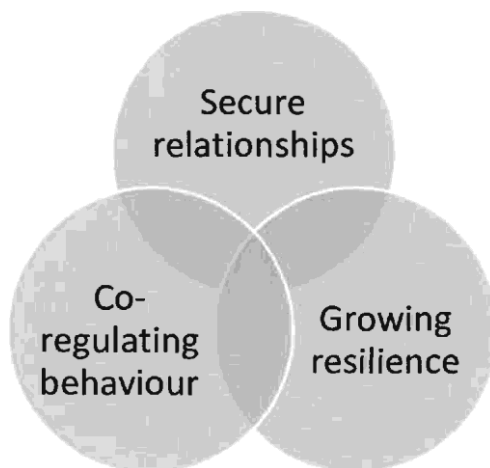
We are an inclusive school and must have realistic expectations for all children and understand

that children need to be taught how to behave in different situations and manage their emotions to develop self-regulation and be successful in their interactions with others and their environment.

We work to help children learn the skills they need to manage a range of everyday situations, through careful guidance and modelling. We recognise that it takes much practice to fully embed this learning and be able to apply it successfully in a range of everyday situations and sometimes mistakes will be made while children are learning; this is perfectly normal and to be expected

We also recognise that we will need to sometimes differentiate our expectations so that we do not set up children to fail. This is the same for the way we respond to children's behaviour too. Flexibility in our responses is necessary in different circumstances to avoid behaviour escalating.

We believe three key elements to be central to implementing trauma informed practice:



How we develop secure relationships

We are strong believers in the 'connection before correction' approach and know that secure relationships and a **sense** of connection are pivotal in helping children develop internal behaviour regulation frameworks. The key aspects of secure relationships include safety, connection and understanding.

We adopt a key person approach at nursery. We work hard to ensure each child has a strong relationship with their key person. In turn the key person can help the child develop a wider network of relationships with other children and the wider staff team.

Key people will:

- Work closely with each key child, starting with the home visit and settling in procedure, to help each child feel safe, secure, valued and feel that someone knows about them as a unique child.
- Be aware of and seek out children who don't approach them.
- Relate positively to each key child every day.
- Make time to listen to and take an interest in each child every day.

All staff will:

- Smile and welcome children so they feel liked, valued and respected.
- Strive to be 'emotionally attuned' to children, valuing and accepting their emotions and being non-judgmental e.g. 'I can see you're sad about that, shall I help you (or a moment) rather than 'Don't cry, you're a big girl now.'

- Praise good behaviour
- Praise good efforts
- Show disapproval of the behaviour, not the child
- Model how to deal with and sort out difficult situations
- Show empathy towards children and each other e.g. 'I understand you feel.....but.....'. 'Are you feeling?'
- Establish agreed routines and expectations; act as a role model of these.
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Nursery Expectations:

- Look after yourself, others, toys and belongings.
- Put things away where they belong when finished with them.
- Quiet voices indoors.
- Walking indoors.

We recognise that not all children will have the social and emotional skills to access these expectations in a uniform way. We advocate nurture and empathy alongside consistency. Structure and boundaries are essential tools to provide safety and containment for children, particularly those who have experienced trauma. We consider them to be tools of attachment rather than weapons of punishment.

Nursery Boundaries:

- Physical hurting - hitting, biting, scratching, pushing
- Emotional hurting - using unkind words toward another child, swearing, racist or any other prejudiced comments, mocking another person's appearance, clothing, home, family or (dis)ability
- Spitting

Where a child crosses one of these boundaries, staff respond by taking the child to one side or away from the incident and saying clearly *'there is no hitting...spitting....swearing)* at nursery.

Further actions and responses will depend on the professional judgement of the member of staff. We understand that behaviour is a communication of emotional need (whether conscious or unconscious) and will aim to respond appropriately. We will take a non-judgmental, curious and empathetic attitude towards behaviour and respond in a way that focuses on the feeling and emotions that might drive the behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself. All staff will consider context when interpreting behaviour. If a staff member has any concerns or is not sure what to do, they must liaise urgently with a senior member of the school staff.

When addressing **situations where boundaries have been crossed** it is important that the adult **always remains in control of** their **own** emotions. If they feel **angry, they will give themselves** time out (this is good emotional modelling). They **may ask** another member of staff **to support** in this instance.

Natural rewards and consequences can be made explicit without the need to enforce sanctions that may serve to shame, re-traumatise or ostracise children from their peer group. We favour restorative and reparative approaches in which children are supported to develop insight into their emotions and behaviours. We want

children to be able to regulate their behavior effectively because they are internally able to do so not simply to avoid 'sanctions.'

It is recognised that for some children (especially those who have experienced trauma) we may need to adjust our ideas of justice - not every action needs a consequence. Rather than being worried about 'they'll get away with it', our goal is to heal trauma and equip children with the skills they need to function successfully. When we focus on that goal it is easier to choose techniques and strategies based on what the child needs, rather than our own personal sense of justice. Emotions should always be addressed first before we start problem solving, giving advice or consequences. Any consequences, if given, should be logical, natural as possible and also short term. They will be restorative or reparative and non-punitive.

(see Appendix A for further details of how staff typically **support** children in a **range of** daily conflict situations and address everyday behaviours for this age group applying the above principles).

How we develop co-regulation behaviour

It is normal for children to experience strong emotions and overstep boundaries. Some children may have more difficulty identifying **emotions** and dealing with emotional dysregulation and find it harder **to meet** behavioural expectations. Staff at nursery are pivotal in co-regulating **behaviour** and supporting children to begin to internalise **behaviour** regulation **strategies** and manage difficult situations with independence.

At nursery we use a relationship based approach called 'PACE' (Dan Hughes, 2016). It helps children to label their emotions, regulate behaviour and feel a sense of safety and calm without disrupting the adult-child relationship.

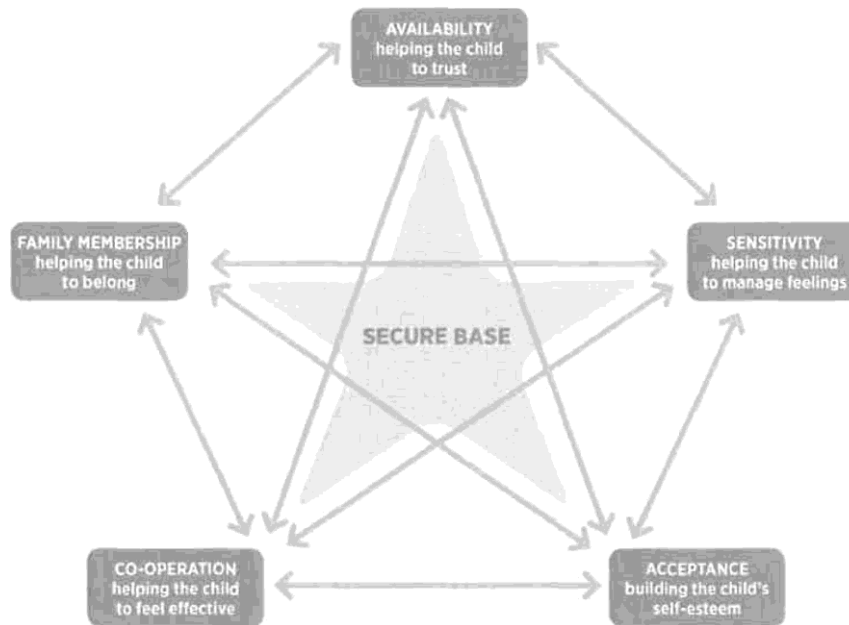
P layfulness	Is about creating an atmosphere of lightness and interest when you communicate. It is an open, ready, calm, relaxed and engaged attitude.
A cceptance	Is about actively communicating to the child that you accept the wishes, feelings, thoughts, urges, motives and perceptions that are underneath the outward behaviour. Unconditionally accepting a child makes them feel secure, safe and loved.
C uriosity	Is wondering about the meaning behind the behaviour for the child. Curiosity lets the child know that the adults understand. Without judgement, children become aware of their inner life.
E mpathy	Is the adult demonstrating that he or she knows how difficult an experience is for the child. The adult is telling the child that he or she will not have to deal with the distress alone. Empathy gives a sense of compassion for the child and their feelings.

How we grow resilience

Resilience refers to the individual's capacity to overcome the effects of challenging experiences (including experiences of adverse childhood circumstances). By adopting a resilience-based framework it helps us to identify a child's existing strengths and identifies opportunities to develop their resilience through the provision of positive caregiving, preparation, trust and the facilitation of appropriate learning experiences.

We use the 'secure base model' (Schofield and Beek, 2014)

Research has demonstrated that, over time, positive **caregiving across the five dimensions** provides a secure base from which the child can explore, learn and develop in a positive direction.



A Graduated Approach

We are committed to meeting children's social and emotional and mental health needs and supporting them to overcome any difficulties they experience in nursery. If concerns arise these should be shared with the class teacher in the first instance, then if further support or assistance is required with the SENDCo and following that the headteacher.

For most children at nursery the quality first teaching provided through the trauma informed practice using the three key elements (developing secure relationships, co-regulation and growing resilience) already described within this policy that are universally available to all our children will meet their needs sufficiently. However, children in nursery will have experienced a range of early life experiences and for some, these will have been particularly challenging.

The graduated approach provides a framework to ensure the school can differentiate their responses and support for those children we have identified with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

This is a system whereby the school assesses a child's needs with involvement from the family, and then provides support at an appropriate level to meet their needs. The system follows four stages, often referred to as 'the cycle: 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review'. The teacher creates a baseline assessment by which progress will be measured. A plan of additional support is drawn up for the pupil, which is shared with the child's family. The child is then given the support outlined in the plan. Finally, it is reviewed. After the review, a second or third cycle may start, each aiming to improve the support for the child.

There are three stages of identification and support:

Quality first teaching	Provided through the trauma informed practice using the three key elements (developing secure relationships, co-regulation and growing resilience)	➤ Behaviour regulation policy ➤ Circle time and PALS programme ➤ Staff trained in 'attachment theory' and 'PACE frameworks'
Internal SEN support	Provided through the delivery of evidence-based intervention and additional support	➤ Identify SEMH needs through recognising externalising and internalising behaviours Monitor SEMH needs ➤ Deliver preventative or early intervention evidence-based support programmes and review progress ➤ Involve parents in the process
External SEN support	Provided through additional support from external agencies	➤ Seek advice from specialist (e.g. Educational Psychologist, SEBDOS etc.) Involve parents in the process alongside the external professionals

Support for staff

We understand that relationships are central to a sense of belonging and emotional well-being. To build effective relationships between staff the nursery will provide training for staff on new approaches and strategies, provide allocated time for reflective group discussions and planning, engage in collaborative problem solving and have an open door policy for discussions with senior staff.

Policy Review

This policy functions as a practice guide and is therefore reviewed whenever issues arise which generate new ways to articulate our approach, and otherwise annually.

Appendix A

How staff address 'typical' and 'everyday' behaviours with children at nursery

Tantrums

- Children who are having a tantrum are angry, confused and frustrated. Whilst the child will need time to calm down, an adult should stay near (or with them if needed) throughout.
- The adult should reassure other children within hearing of the distraught child that you understand the anger being expressed by this child and that the child will calm down when ready, then the child will be comforted.
- The child should be given responsibility for saying when he or she is feeling better and comfort and reassurance given.
- Sometimes it may be necessary to remove the angry child to a quieter place to help the child calm down and avoid distressing other children.

Sharing and Turn Taking

- Staff will think developmentally - if a child is at an early stage of development, then sharing resources will be very challenging.
- Make sure we have enough **resources** for **everyone**.
- Setting up experiences for 2-3 children, to avoid large groups crowding round.
- Modelling language/approaches like "me next", "can I have a turn", "wait a minute", "you can have it next, when **I've** finished"
- Model sharing and learning like "I'll do one, you do the next."
- Support and promote open-ended experiences that promote collaboration, e.g. block play.

Interrupting Behaviour

Learning to wait for a turn in conversation is an important skill and some children need more support with this than others. Staff will consider children individually when determining how long that should have to wait for a turn

- If children are confident communicating the staff member will say something like "I'd love to hear about... when I'm finished..."
- If a child needs simplified language in order to understand the staff member could simply say "waiting" (supplemented by the Makaton sign).
- If stopping to **say** either **of these** things would **adversely** affect the child who the adult is already interacting with, the adult will continue listening, but acknowledge that they have noticed the child waiting; they will get eye contact and signal non-verbally that they should wait (perhaps by holding up a hand to indicate stop).

- Children finding it challenging to wait for a turn in conversation will be discussed in planning/reflection **time so** that consistent **strategies** can be put in **place to support** the child waiting for a turn.

Conflict over toys and resources

- The adult should stop both children and take hold of the disputed object.
- If children are able to talk about it, the adult will discuss with them how the situation can best be resolved.
- If children need support resolving the situation;
 - Remind both children of the need for sharing and suggest taking turns.
 - *Get a sand timer* (the duration of the time depends on the age and development of both children).
 - Explain to both children that it is one child's turn until the timer is finished. When the timer is finished it will be the other child's turn.
 - Encourage the child waiting to hold the sand timer.
 - When the timer is finished support the child with the time to say to the other child "the timer is finished and now it's my turn."
 - If necessary support the child with the toy to pass it across to the other child.

Dealing with other forms of conflict between children or children who have been hurt

Encourage children to be assertive and to clearly say/sign "no" or "stop it, I don't like it" etc. Where a child appropriately asserts "no" or "stop" and the other child responds, it is not usually necessary for an adult to get involved.

If adult support is needed to help resolve the conflict, our approach is:

- Listen to both children.
- Encourage the child to look at the facial expression of the upset individual.
- Encourage children to say how they feel ("it hurt" or "I'm sad" etc) or voice this for the child if needed and explain the reasons too so the child can begin to connect and understand the effect of their actions on others and develop empathy.
- Ask the children how they could solve the problem and try to find a solution based on their ideas. If necessary, impose a solution and explain why.
- Children who have been hurt by another child's actions or behaviour need to be comforted. If necessary, they need an opportunity to talk about the experience with their key person.
- If necessary, state the expectation or a clear boundary "Remember, no hitting in nursery."

- If necessary move one child away from other's play or a stimulating situation. The adult should sit with the child until they have calmed down (you may need to help them calm down if they are feeling dysregulated. Otherwise you should aim to be present but boring). This should be viewed as time set aside to calm down (time-in) rather than an implemented separation for discipline.
- The child who performed the behavioural actions that lead to the conflict or upset should be helped to explain the reasons for his or her behaviour. If they are unsure, they may need this to be suggested by the adult to help them begin to understand their emotions and begin to learn to self-regulate.
- The child should be helped to think of a way of making the other child feel better. This could involve saying "sorry", comforting the other child or agreeing to be friends etc. Avoid a situation where a child expresses a grudging "sorry."
- The child whose behaviour lead to the conflict could be encouraged to comfort or assist with minor first aid, if needed, whilst the adult soothes and helps restore a positive relationship between those concerned. It also provides the adult with the opportunity to praise and be positive towards what had originally been a negative activity.
- It is important to then spend time settling children back into positive play - don't deal with the incident and walk away too soon.
- Where possible, notice positive behaviour shortly afterwards and praise it "I can see you are playing nicely now, that's good to see you sharing."
- Bilingual staff play a key role in helping with incidents where children are at early stages of learning English.

Destructive behaviour

- If a child destroys another child's play, the child should be encouraged to assist in putting matters right.
- It can on occasion be helpful to steer the child towards a legitimate "set up and destroy" activity, for example making a tower to knock down.
- Encouraging a child to mop up water he or she has deliberately poured on the floor or helping them to Sellotape a page ripped from a book will help them to understand cause and effect and to acknowledge that he or she is capable of creating order.