

Behaviour Policy & Practice

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Key References: In addition to this policy Cobham Montessori School takes due regard for, and refers to, any additional details found in the following publications:

[The Equality Act, 2010](#)

[SEND Code of Practice, January 2015 \(DFE-00205-2013\)](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2019 \(DFE-00129 -2019\)](#)

[Behaviour and Discipline in Schools, January 2016 \(DFE-00023-2014\)](#)

[Getting the Simple Things Right, Charlie Taylor's Behavioural Checklist](#)

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying, July 2017 \(DFE-00160-2017\)](#)

[Use of Reasonable Force in Schools, July 2013 \(DFE-00295-2013\)](#)

For further information please refer to our full policy list for related policies.

Montessori Background

Refer to Montessori writings on Normalisation and the Three Stages of Discipline.

1.0 Introduction

At Cobham Montessori School we believe that children flourish best when their developmental needs are supported and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations and standards for their behaviour which are applied consistently. Our aim is to support each child's journey toward self-discipline.

These standards apply to all children and adults who may occasionally or regularly be part of the school's activities both on and off site.

2.0 Aims

1. To help the children to learn to behave in socially acceptable ways, to encourage self-discipline, tolerance, responsibility and consideration & respect for the needs and rights of self, others, property and the environment.
2. By promoting positive behaviour, to create a caring, family atmosphere where learning can take place in a safe and happy environment. We state clearly that bullying is always unacceptable in the School.
3. To create an environment in which all children can achieve their potential in terms of appropriate self-esteem, academic achievement, aesthetic appreciation and spiritual awareness.
4. To promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and
5. To treat problems when they occur in a caring and sympathetic manner in the belief of achieving an improvement in behaviour.

3.0 Methods

In order to achieve these aims the following strategies will be used:

3.1 Behaviour Lead

A nominated member of staff will be designated Behaviour Lead with overall responsibility for supporting personal, emotional and social development, including issues concerning behaviour. The named person will:

- keep him/herself 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 and training on promoting positive behaviour;
- ensure all staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour;
- ensure Behaviour Management plans or Individual Education plans are developed and monitored for effectiveness to support persistent problematic behaviour.

3.2 Promoting Positive Behaviour

- All children need freedom to experiment, learn, develop and to be valued and respected as individuals.
- We ensure all staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour which may incorporate sharing of information at weekly team meetings or one to one training.
- All staff, volunteers and students will provide a positive model for behaviour by treating children, parents, one another and property with respect, friendliness, care and courtesy and by complying with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Staff.
- We will use positive language to convey desirable behaviour, for example, 'Thank you for leaving the door open' rather than 'don't close the door'.
- We will respect diversity and recognise that codes for interacting with other people may vary between cultures.
- We will acknowledge good behaviour such as kindness and a willingness to share, doing one's best, appropriate classroom behaviour (sitting, looking and listening well) and caring for the environment. This may be at a personal level, through acknowledgement of desirable action (not the person or result) or through peer recognition. We will not issue rewards such as stickers.
- We will encourage responsibility where appropriate such as older children helping to support younger children.
- We will convey our expectations of behaviour neutrally and avoid the personal (such as: do it for me, I would like you to...). We use the requirements of the environment as the basis for the need (such as: the book is on the floor; it needs to be on the shelf).
- We have high expectations of children's and adults' behaviours.
- We try to offer an appropriate suggestion to a child rather than a dictate to allow the child to make the final decision to do the right thing.
- We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories.
- We build self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them. We encourage a growth mindset and we help children acknowledge their individual achievements.
- At all times the teaching staff will endeavour to work with parents and/or carers in partnership to aid the child's development.

3.3 Clear Expectations

- All new staff and volunteers will be made aware of the Behaviour Policy and the Guidelines for Behaviour as part of the induction process.
- Day to day behaviour in the school is expected to be in line with specific Guidelines for Behaviour. Guidelines for Behaviour may include, inter alia, codes of conduct or rules for use of snack area, use of the garden areas, use of resources, behaviour in the classroom, behaviour during lunchtime, behaviour during group time etc. The guiding force for establishing the codes of conduct is to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all members of the school community.

The codes of conduct may be developed through discussion with the children which is appropriate to their age and understanding. Guidelines must be clear and realistic. Guidelines may be changed following discussion with children or at staff team meetings. Some codes of conduct are written in formal policy documents, some guidelines may not be written but must be clearly understood by all those affected by them.

- We expect all members of the school (children, parents, staff, volunteers and students) to keep to the guidelines and we require them to applied consistently.

3.4 Prevention

- We will provide enough resources and make sufficient activities available so that the children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing or waiting for resources. However, the Montessori environment deliberately limits some resources to create opportunities for pro-social development (waiting, sharing, turn-taking).
- We will provide stimulating and appropriate activities to prevent boredom which may cause some forms of difficult behaviour and we will minimise times of 'waiting', for example, during transition periods, at an age appropriate level.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- We may limit attention or even ignore certain types of attention seeking behaviour unless the behaviour involves another child. However, if persistent, we will endeavour to establish the reason for the attention seeking behaviour.
- We will avoid creating 'stand-off' situations with a child and will always try to avoid inflaming a challenging situation.

4.0 Dealing with Undesirable or Hurtful Behaviour

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children will, at some stage, hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time. It is not always helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying' unless the behaviour is repetitive or intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, and where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. For younger children, hurtful behaviour is often momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.

4.1 General Approach

- Any behaviour problems will be handled in a developmentally appropriate fashion, respecting the individual child's level of understanding and maturity. In dealing with inconsiderate or hurtful behaviour we are aware of the many factors which may impact on behaviour including:
 - child development and what is appropriate behaviour for the age and stage of the individual child
 - other factors that may impact on behaviour for example tiredness, hunger, boredom etc;
 - behaviour being a way of communicating needs and feelings;
 - children's emotional needs or
 - changes in behaviour that may be linked to safeguarding/child protection concerns.

- It is recognised that reasons for bad behaviour are often complex and high emotions can make immediate resolution difficult. In all the following strategies we acknowledge that a child will only be receptive to learning from the situation after any distress, frustration or anger has subsided.
- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use an ethos of positive guidance for handling any inconsiderate behaviour. We will seek to find the antecedent to unwanted behaviour and address this, encouraging children to find a solution for disagreements themselves. We will seek to turn challenging behaviour into an opportunity for learning.
- One of the great benefits of the Montessori approach is that children have the opportunity to learn how to behave in a social situation from other children slightly older than themselves. Here are some techniques that we use when dealing with challenging behaviour:
 1. Positive intervention and distraction.
 2. Modelling good behaviour.
 3. Practising social skills through drama and role play.
 4. Talking things through.
 5. Time-out observing other children with adult.
 6. Time-out to calm down.

4.2 Sanctions will not include:

- Threatening or using corporal punishment or any form of punishment which could have an adverse impact on the child's wellbeing. Parents and carers must be aware that we have a legal duty to intervene in the event of us seeing a child being subjected to corporal punishment.
- Children being deprived of food or drink.
- Children being sent out of a room by themselves; however, some children may wish to spend some time apart to calm down;
- Other than as an attempt to prevent imminent harm, shouting or raising our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour (see below).
- Language intended to single out and humiliate individual children. At no time and in no way is a child labelled by using negative words or deeds.
- We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage, as that will have the opposite effect.

4.3 Initial Response

- All children and situations are different; These suggestions give the tone of our response - calm, kind, consistent, having faith in the child's ability to do the right thing.
- There will be occasions where the best response is to do nothing, especially if there is no danger involved, allowing the children a chance to resolve the situation themselves and learn from it.
- If there is any imminent danger to a person or property then a loud CHILD'S NAME (to catch their attention) then STOP should be called out.
- Otherwise, if a child is doing something undesirable go over to the child, get to the child's level and in a normal tone we suggest the appropriate behaviour to them allowing the child to choose to do the right thing. If feasible, walk away,

to allow the child to consider his response. Observe unobtrusively and acknowledge good behaviour. (You put that back so nicely etc.)

- If a child doesn't alter their behaviour return and stop the unwanted behaviour - perhaps removing materials; We never use any form of direct physical restraint or raised voice, unless there is danger to person or property. [Note: Care should be taken when offering a young child a hand to guide them away from the location, as the child may suddenly resist and 'drop' leading to risk of injury. Perhaps offer a finger for a child to hold if such security might be helpful.]
- If a child runs away, we ignore it and follow through as soon as the child has calmed. Always follow through.
- Avoid interfering with a situation when another member of the team is dealing with it. Offer support to a colleague if you think they are at their wits end! Discuss afterwards if you have strong feelings about how a situation was handled.

4.4 Redirection

- If a child is misusing equipment or behaving inappropriately, we may seek to offer a productive outlet for the observed behaviour. For example, if a child is pouring all of the drinks at snack table, we will redirect them to the pouring exercises of Practical Life. If a child is throwing things in the classroom, we may suggest an outdoor ball game. If a child wants to bash some of the materials, we can offer the hammering activity or a drum to make music etc.
- For younger children, distraction and redirection will often be the most appropriate response.

4.5 Consequences

- When children fail to comply with the Guidelines for Behaviour they will be reminded of the desired behaviour and asked to correct the situation.
- We do not punish a child but, where the children are sufficiently developed to understand cause and effect, we respond to failures to comply with the school codes of conduct by applying logical consequences linked to the behaviour if it seems helpful to the situation. For example, removing a toy which has caused a fight; asking a child to come inside if they are not ready to work productively outside; if a child runs through the classroom they might be asked to return and show us their walking feet; a child may not be invited to join a new activity if they have not replaced their previous activity on the shelf etc.
- In group activities, if a child is disruptive they may be invited to sit beside the teacher who can offer greater support, or they may be asked to leave the group and find another activity to do if they are demonstrating a complete lack of interest in the group work.

4.6 Resolution and Discussion

- If a child has already done something undesirable, we attend to a victim first, offering comfort. At an appropriate moment soon afterwards, when the misbehaving child is calm, discuss the behaviour and try to help the child understand their feelings in the moment; what was wrong with their action and what behaviour would have been better in the situation - using their words, asking for help from an adult etc. Sometimes it will be more appropriate to have this conversation with a small group of children as a Grace and Courtesy group so as not to single out one child - i.e. giving extra attention.

- We can acknowledge poor behaviour witnessed by other children, explaining to them that the misbehaving child is still learning how to behave nicely.
- If a child has lost control of their emotions, it is a judgement call whether to stay with the child to help them find a calm state or whether to leave them to calm down themselves. Our aim is to help the child recover. 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 to be able to manage his or her own feelings.
- We will offer the children language that they may need to help them communicate their feelings and needs to their peers and adults and, where appropriate, use visual aids such as pictures or social stories to help understanding of how to behave together.
- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy through use of language. We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings experienced. 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. e.g. '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? It made you feel angry, didn't it'. '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 help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings - e.g. 'When you hit Adam, it hurt him, and he didn't like that, and it made him cry'.
- 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.
- 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 convey to the children that it is negative behaviour that is unacceptable and not the children themselves.

4.7 Removal and Physical Restraint

- Where an immediate response is necessary; for example, to stop a child from hurting themselves or others, damaging property or stopping other children playing/working, then our only measure may be to remove the child from the situation.
- The adult will invite the child to move away from the situation by offering an alternative activity. If the child refuses, the child may then be offered the choice of walking or being helped by the adult. (Would you like to walk or would you like me to help you/carry you?)

- Physical Intervention must be implemented in accordance with this policy.
- When removed from the immediate situation, the adult will endeavour to find out the reason for the behaviour and help the child come to terms with their feelings.
- When the child feels they can play nicely and kindly they are welcomed back to continue their activity or re-join their group.

4.8 Children Under Three

- 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.
- 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 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.
- Where there are issues of biting or pinching which may be linked to jealousy and frustration, we will spend a moment with the victim checking the severity of injury and ensure that we provide adult support nearby with sufficient attention and activities to prevent a future occurrence. (Biting is often very impulsive and telling the biter off will not necessarily prevent another bite)
- 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 also offer them explanation and discuss the incident with them to their level of understanding.)
- Whenever appropriate we will distract and re-direct children's activities using positive language.

5.0 Dealing with Persistent or Serious Behaviour issues

When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic (including aggressive, physical or persistent disruptive behaviour), we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together.

The main reasons for 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 is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse; and
- the child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.

By working closely in partnership with our parents, we will be aware that some kinds of behaviour may have arisen from a child's special needs, effects of change such as home circumstance, a new baby, house move, care arrangements, divorce, illness or lack of sleep.

In the event of recurring problems, we may carry out a series of formal observations to help establish an understanding of the cause of the behaviour. These will be recorded using an ABCC form.

We will work in partnership with our parents with their being involved in any process that may require the implementation of an IEP (Independent Education Plan) or Behaviour Management Plan to help normalise behaviour. If the behaviour of a particular child is expected to necessitate regular physical intervention, then a written protocol must be prepared for that child including:

- A description of the behaviour requiring intervention
- A risk assessment
- A record of the views of the parents/carers
- A note of previous methods which have been tried without success
- A description of physical intervention techniques which are sanctioned, with a date for review
- Named staff competent to use these methods
- Dates and procedures for reviewing the protocol.

Where this does not work, the Behaviour Lead will seek expert advice and guidance from outside professionals if ordinary methods of managing behaviour are not effective with a particular child.

In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes.

Aggressive/physical or very disruptive behaviour may be recorded in the Accident and Incident file and shown to parents on collection.

6.0 Physical Intervention

Physical Intervention should only be used to prevent or halt damage to any person or property. This includes a child causing significant distress to another child whether physical force is involved or not, for example verbal aggression. Any use of physical intervention should be consistent with the principle of reasonable minimal force and should only be used if the child has refused to respond to verbal requests. Restrictive physical interventions should always be designed to achieve outcomes that are in the best interest of the child, balancing the risk of intervention with the risk of not doing so.

Where it is judged that restrictive physical intervention is necessary, staff should:

- Aim for side-by-side contact with the child. Avoid positioning themselves in front (to reduce the risk of being kicked) or behind (to reduce the risk of allegations of sexual misconduct)
- aim for no gap between the adult's and child's body, where they are side by side. This minimises the risk of impact and damage
- aim to keep the adult's back as straight as possible
- beware in particular of head positioning, to avoid head butts from the child

- hold children by “long” bones, i.e. avoid grasping at joints where pain and damage are most likely
- ensure that there is no restriction to the child’s ability to breathe. In particular, this means avoiding holding a child around the chest cavity or stomach.
- avoid lifting children.

A person will not be taken to have used corporal punishment (and therefore will not have committed an offence), where physical intervention was taken for the purposes of averting immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child’s behaviour if absolutely necessary.

A record must be made of any occasion where physical intervention is used, using the Restrictive Intervention Record form and parents and/or carers must be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable. Recorded information should include: the names of the staff and child/children involved, the reason for using physical intervention, the type of intervention, the date and duration, and whether the child experienced any distress or was injured and if so what action was taken.

Staff are required to follow the guidelines of Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) when dealing with cases of suspected child abuse. Our Safeguarding Policy has more information on this issue.

7.0 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.

8.0 Removal at Request of School

If the child’s behaviour is persistently disruptive or potentially puts other children or members of staff at risk the School will advise the Parent. If no effective

remedial steps are available and if, in the professional judgement of the Head of School and after consultation with the parents, it is decided that the School cannot provide adequately for a child's behaviour, the parent will be asked to withdraw the child without being charged Fees in lieu of notice.