



## **Afterschool Behaviour Management Policy**

### **Policy Statement:**

We work very hard in Ballybrack/Killiney Montessori & Afterschool to promote positive behaviour in all our pupils. We prefer to praise and try to point out the differences between the positive and negative behaviour of the children.

We use the approach that everybody is an individual and as such has rights, but those rights must work within the group and we must all respect each other. Taking turns, sharing, helping each other and good manners are all actively encouraged.

Ballybrack/Killiney Montessori & Afterschool's aim is to support and guide all children to manage their own behaviour and learn to resolve conflicts that arise. Children attending our services are here for new learning experiences which may test their own coping strategies. All staff are trained and certified in behaviour management and will support the children to regulate their behaviour and will have a number of strategies to deal with both positive and challenging behaviour.

### **Principle:**

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

### **Procedure for Supporting Positive Behaviour:**

Parents are encouraged to read this Promotion of Positive Behaviour Policy on enrolment. Staff will keep open lines of communication with families on an on-going basis in relation to maintaining behaviour guidance strategies and practices. When a child commences in our Afterschool the general rules are communicated to them by staff members so that the child understands to treat others with respect, etc. A child friendly format of this Behaviour Management Policy is made available to the child and may be discussed again during the year if the occasion arises.

- The learning curriculum is designed with the age and developmental stage of the child in mind.
- Our Afterschool staff are responsible for building up a special relationship with the children and their family. This helps with getting to know what the child enjoys and some of the situations he/she may find difficult.
- Staff will be the role model of positive behaviour and how they play, speak and interact with the children is a key part of their role.
- Role modelling will include: explaining feelings, using a calm tone of voice, getting down to the child's eye level, giving choice to the children, using language to help children understand positive decisions, waiting and checking for the child's understanding.
- Positive social behaviours among children will be recognised and encouraged.



- Staff expectations for children’s social behaviour will be developmentally appropriate – children’s level of understanding and maturity will be taken into account.
- Children’s efforts, achievements and feelings will be acknowledged by sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Books and storytelling are used to talk about feelings and what we can all do when we are angry, upset or frustrated.
- Schedules, routines and transitions serve as a framework from which children gain trust, security and order and are a pathway to positive behaviour management.
- The play environments will be laid out into specific learning spaces which support children’s natural curiosity encouraging them to become engrossed in their play and develop their own interests.

### **Anticipating Inappropriate Behaviour:**

Our Afterschool staff will carry out observations through the process of ‘tuning-in’ and playing alongside the children getting to know their likes and dislikes and emerging interests. Through their key role they are in a position to begin anticipating a child’s reaction and behaviour knowing what is likely to upset a child’s mood or behaviour, knowing when to step-in or just observe from a safe distance.

### **Strategies for Supporting Children:**

It is recognised that all children’s behaviour has some meaning to the child, however, at times this behaviour may be difficult or pose a danger to the child or other children. Minor behaviour problems are behaviours in line with the child’s age and stage of their development. Negative behaviour incidents are unwelcome behaviour responses such as temper tantrums, fighting, hitting, screaming, biting, kicking, refusing to co-operate etc that occur on occasions, for short period of time, in keeping with the developmental stage. Minor behavioural incidents should only result in minimal or short-lived negative impact on the child itself or on others around them. Staff will assess each situation and use their best judgement in dealing with the matter, in line with the guidelines set out in this policy.

### **6 Step Conflict Resolution:**

1. Approach calmly – put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child’s eye level.
2. Acknowledge feelings – describe how the child/ children are feeling, children often don’t have the language to explain how they feel, leading to more frustration. Help the child by describing it for them “you both look very sad and upset”.



3. Gather information (in a way that is appropriate to the age of the child) – remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to express their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words or actions out so take your time and remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations.
4. Restate the problem – after listening to the children simply describe what the problem is so both/ all can understand both sides of the story.
5. Ask for ideas for solutions & choose one together (or for younger children give a solution) - give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit of time but gives the children lots of practice compromising with one another, which is a vital skill for the future.
6. Be prepared to give follow up support – it is important the staff member follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.

Age of Child	Examples of behaviour meriting positive intervention – Minor Level
Under 1 year	Cries to seek attention Anger in response to removal of toy
1 – 3 years	Tantrum when required to share a toy Biting others Tendency to be stubborn and wilful Hitting, scratching, pinching or pushing their friends
3 – 5 years	Verbally challenges rather than hits out Tantrum when being required to share a toy Biting others Tendency to be stubborn and wilful Pushing their friends Hitting, scratching, pinching or pushing their friends May be bossy Name calling Use of in-appropriate language

### **Moderate Behaviour Problems:**

This type of behaviour can be recognised when the inappropriate behaviour outlined above is becoming a more regular occurrence.

Staff will discuss the reoccurring behaviour and put a plan in place.

When the behaviour happens the 6 Step Conflict Resolution Plan will be used with the child.

The matter will be discussed with the child's family. If deemed appropriate a record of child's behaviour will be kept over a period of a week and parents will be consulted and asked to sign the record. Staff will carry out observations on the child when the moderate behaviour problems are recognised to try and identify specific trigger points.



## **Managing Severe and Challenging Behaviour Problems:**

Challenging behaviours are frequent and repeated actions by a child that impacts significantly on other children or the child himself/herself, or their ability to engage in the daily activities, and which fails to improve under the usual behaviour management strategies or requires ongoing intensive one-to-one management to keep under control. The behaviours may have been present from the start, gradually worsening as the child gets older or involve a deterioration of their behaviour from a previously normal pattern.

- Our staff are trained and certified in an approved evidence-based method on how to manage challenging behaviours.
- If a child's behaviour is considered dangerous to themselves or others, the staff member will carefully remove either the child or the other children from the situation. This is in order to protect all using the Afterschool service and any physical intervention must only be used as a last resort.
- The staff member will ensure that no pain is inflicted on the child. Methods such as the use of a barrier to prevent harm (e.g. lock doors to prevent child running out, etc or use of equipment such as a cushion to restrict movement) are considered appropriate methods of preventing harm to a child or others.
- The child will be given time to become calm and the staff member will help guide him/her with his/her behaviour.
- The staff member will record the incident and discuss it with the family.

## **If a child's behaviour is ongoing or becomes severely challenging the service will implement the following strategies:**

- The Afterschool staff member and Manager will meet the parents to discuss the behaviour and develop an action plan for going forward to help the child overcome the issues.
- Staff will carry out a number of observations at different times of the day to try to establish a trigger for the behaviour. All observations will be noted and discussed with the family.
- If necessary, the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.
- If the behaviour is a child protection concern, the Child Protection Policy will be implemented.
- All information gathered and discussed will be stored securely and all conversations are confidential.
- All meetings, plans and observations will be recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.
- The staff will always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in situations which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.



## **Examples of Severe and Challenging Behaviour At any age.**

- Repeated openly aggressive actions.
- Child is considered a danger to themselves or others.
- Repeated contained aggressive actions.
- Destructive behaviour.
- Impaired or disordered responses.
- Poor coping skills.
- Impaired social skills.
- Unusual behaviour.

In order to ensure that the Afterschool environment is a place where positive behaviour is fostered and affirmed the following practices are at all time prohibited:

- The use of corporal punishment.
- The use of, or threat of, any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, isolating, emotionally or physically harmful to the child or neglectful of the child.
- Bullying of any form – please refer to our Anti-bullying Policy which includes Cyber-bullying.

Staff interactions with children are aimed at promoting their well-being and development. This includes their social and emotional development. Adequate and appropriate stimulation is provided for each child and any inappropriate or challenging behaviour is dealt with sensitively and appropriately without threats or punishment.

## **Holding or restraining a child to prevent harm**

Physical holding as prevention must only be used:

- To prevent an accident such as a child running across a road.
- To prevent injury, e.g. if a child is having a temper tantrum.
- No matter what age the child is, physical restraint must only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time. The purpose of this intervention can only be to prevent injury to the child, another child or to an adult, or to prevent serious damage to property.
- Where a child is expressing feelings of anger, anxiety or frustration, in a way which is unsafe for themselves and others and where reasoning has not stopped the behaviour, a staff member may assist the child in re-establishing control by holding them, to contain their feelings safely, as a last resort and for the minimum length of time. This intervention will only be used in an age appropriate way, e.g. it may be appropriate to pick a very young child up.
- Great care will be taken when holding a child with particular attention paid to their individual needs.
- The intent of this action is to keep the child and others safe until their self-control is regained and they feel contained, but it will only be used in exceptional and rare circumstances.
- A calm and caring attitude on the part of the adult is critical in ensuring that this is supportive and in no way a punishment.



Should a child leave the service unaccompanied and without authorisation the missing children procedures will be followed as set out below:

### **Lost or Missing children policy:**

All practitioners at Ballybrack Killiney Montessori & Afterschool have the highest regard for the safety of the children in our care. The Afterschool team will always be extremely aware of the potential for children to go missing during sessions and will ensure that exits and entrances are kept secure and that locks are in working order.

Even when all precautions are properly observed, emergencies can still arise. Therefore, practitioners will undertake periodic head counts, especially at the transition points in the session (in addition to the registration procedures set out in the Arrival and Departures policy).

If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session at the setting, the following procedure will be activated:

- The Manager or person in charge and the rest of the Afterschool team must be informed that the child is missing.
- A thorough search of the entire premises will commence.
- The staff will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- The manager or person in charge will nominate as many staff as possible to search the area surrounding the premises.
- All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the preschool grounds.
- If after 10 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the manager or person in charge will inform the police and then the child's parent/carer.
- While waiting for the Gardai and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, other staff members will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children attending the setting.
- The manager or person in charge will be responsible for meeting the Gardai and the missing child's parent/carer. The manager or person in charge will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the Gardai and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.
- Once the incident is resolved, the manager or person in charge and the preschool team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes (paying particular note to the relevant provisions of the settings Risk Assessment policies).



- All incidents of children going missing from the setting will be recorded on an Incident Record Sheet, and in cases where either the police or social care have been informed, Tusla and preschool inspector will also be informed, as soon as is practicable.

**Review:**

Management, in consultation with staff, monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy yearly or as required.