

The Apple Tree

Steiner inspired home education cooperative

Behaviour Policy

“A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living.”

-Rudolf Steiner

Introduction

Our aims are to:

- Maintain a safe and secure learning environment by creating a purposeful, relaxed and happy working atmosphere for children, teachers and volunteers.
- Encourage mutual respect and trust among all those working together here.
- Value the contribution each person may make to the well-being and learning of others in the initiative.
- Involve and enlist the support of everyone in encouraging appropriate behaviours.
- Encourage self-discipline so that appropriate behaviour is maintained both in the education setting and in the wider community.

In this learning environment everybody has the right:

- To feel safe and secure.
- To be able to learn and play without threat or disruption from others.
- To know that bullying is unacceptable and will be dealt with seriously.
- To be listened to and treated fairly and sensitively.
- To know that any issues arising will be addressed and resolved quickly and fairly.

Our policy is underpinned by the principles of equality, diversity and interdependence. It is the responsibility of everyone involved with the initiative to ensure that these rights are upheld. Children and adults are always expected to behave appropriately and follow behaviour guidelines and expectations.

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Rules

Rules are formulated and agreed by the group as the need for them arises. We aim to keep rules to a minimum. Rules are to ensure the safety and well-being of all. Some guidelines:

- Respect and understand the needs of others.
- Help and encourage others.
- Be polite and kind.
- Be honest and fair.
- Take responsibility for actions and behaviours.
- Move around the learning spaces sensibly and safely.
- Respect other people's property and that of our shared learning environments.
- No use of mobile phones or electronic devices during learning hours.

- A desire to be in the group and a willingness to learn

- To care for the community as individuals regardless of friendship or differences

Strategies for promoting positive behaviour

- Good quality teaching.
- Interesting and exciting learning experiences.
- Clear and consistent high expectations as led and modelled by the tutor, assistants and other adults in the community (*Each group to draw up their own 'contract' in an age appropriate way*)
- Use of descriptive praise.
- Group time invested in discussing behaviours and children being asked to consider the effect that behaviours may have on others.
- Children being involved in making any necessary rules.
- Children being involved in agreeing consequences.
- Children are listened to and given the opportunity to discuss issues relating to behaviour so that they can adapt behaviour and learn from their mistakes.
- Giving children responsibility for tasks or helping adults.

Strategies for dealing with troubled behaviour

We recognise that there may be times when children present their adults and peers with behaviours that can be challenging to experience, and to manage, and which are an expression of distress or unmet needs. We will endeavour to manage such behaviour in a positive and supportive way, involving parents where appropriate. Reasonable adjustments may be made depending on the capacity of the group to contain these behaviours. It is, however, not the primary task of this initiative to provide a therapeutic environment for such distress and therefore clear boundaries need to be maintained.

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Troubled behaviours include (*not limited to*):

- Any intimidation, physical or verbal aggressive or threatening behaviour by a group or an individual towards others
- Sexist misogynistic/misandry behaviours and sexual harassment including gestures, drawing or sharing images, innuendo, unwelcome comments of a sexual nature
- Bullying including physical, verbal, social and cyber
- Racist abuse
- Homophobic and Transphobic abuse
- Targeting difference such as disability, *family or economic situation, religion or beliefs*
- A lack of regard for the feelings, health and safety of other members of the class and wider AT community
- Lying
- Swearing
- Rudeness
- Disrupting other people's learning
- Any intentional damage to or theft of property
- Any dangerous behaviour which puts children's or adults' health and safety at risk

Consequences include (not limited to):

- Time to calm down and reflect
- Time spent with Tutor at break and lunch times
- Group discussion with peers, facilitated by an adult
- Conversation with an adult about the behaviour
- Redress for any mess/damage caused
- Informing parents and/or involving parents in discussion
- Being sent home
- Temporary or permanent exclusion from the group

Strategies for dealing with troubled behaviour may include:

- Discussion with children and parents.
- Providing opportunities to make reparation
- A team of adults working closely together to support the child.
- Personalised consequences to deal with an individual's very specific behaviour.
- Restraint: where a child could cause serious harm to themselves or others. (De-escalation will always be a first strategy and handling children will only be used as a last resort.) Parents will always be informed.
- Children asked not to attend for a *specified* length of time.
- Children being asked to leave *their group*.

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Exclusion

Serious incidents including violence, verbal abuse, behaviour threatening the health and safety of others or damage to property are likely to result in the child being excluded for a period.

In severe cases where we feel we are unable to meet the needs of the child or that the group cannot accommodate their needs, parents may be asked to withdraw their child permanently.

Behaviour from parents/carers and visitors to tutors and helpers

We rely upon close links with parents and believe that children benefit when the relationship between home and the learning environment is a positive one.

Parents and other visitors are expected to show respect and concern for others and support our respectful ethos by setting a good example in their own speech and behaviour towards others.

Behaviour Management Procedure

On joining the Apple Tree, every family is required to read, understand and sign our behaviour agreement.

If an incident occurs in group time OR in person between group members (even if not in Apple Tree time) OR online between group members

1: *Child reports to parent/carer or tutor OR parent/carer or tutor finds out*

2: *Parent/carer informs the tutor in the first instance. If this is unsatisfactory, parent/carer can go direct to member of Oversight Group*

3: *Tutor informs Oversight Group if parent has not already done so*

4: *Tutor uses their discretion to decide if the incident is minor / more serious / continued / ongoing / serious - see below for different courses of action.*

5: *Record kept by tutor*

6: *Tutor contacts parent/carer of all involved*

7: *Oversight Group and Tutor and Parent/Carers decide immediate actions and follow up actions with reference to Behaviour Policy, including timeframe for review of actions*

8: *Records kept by Oversight Group of incidents and responses*

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Minor or first-time incident

If a child behaves in a way that doesn't follow our behaviour code, the tutor will remind them (informally) about it and ask them to change their behaviour. This gives them the chance to think and to plan how they could behave differently, with support from tutor and parents/carers.

More serious or continued incident(s)

If someone continues not to follow the code of behaviour after their first reminder, or if the first behaviour is more serious, they will be given a formal caution by the adult running the activity (in an age appropriate manner). This person will make a record about what happened. They will inform the main lesson tutor (or other adult), and parents or carers. They will also talk with the child about what happened and agree what support is needed to improve their behaviour in the future. It might be decided, in discussion with parents/carers, that further steps should be taken, such as restricting the child from taking part in some activities or not having free time at break and lunch times. Oversight Group will be kept informed. A timeframe for review will be set.

Serious incidents or ongoing challenging behaviour beyond review

If the support put in place isn't helping to change the behaviour, a final caution will be given by the Oversight Group. Again, this will be recorded and parents or carers and tutors will be involved in discussion. At this point, Oversight Group and tutor might need to talk with the child and parents or carers about other settings that might be more able to give the support needed.

Contact

Please contact a member of the oversight team if you have any suggested changes to this policy or comments or questions related to it, at theappletreebristol@gmail.com

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