

**Garretts Green Nursery School
and
Resource Base**



**Staying Positive:
Strategies for Behaviour Management**

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Behaviour that we, as adults, consider to be inappropriate can be a source of stress for many parents and teachers alike.

This behaviour may be a result of stress or anxiety and identifying the triggers is often a good starting point in the search for a solution. Sometimes the triggers are clearly evident but when triggers are unclear it may help to use some simple strategies for managing behaviour. Avoiding difficult situations is the key to maintaining calm behaviour.

This booklet identifies some common behaviours and triggers and suggests some strategies for modifying those behaviours.

Remember that some strategies need time and repetition to become effective: stay calm and don't give in!

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Behaviour trigger: Change of routine at home or on route to school.

- Breakfast was rushed.
- School uniform was lost or not laid out according to routine.
- New items of uniform were rough or hard.
- Toothpaste or soap was a different brand.
- Route to school was disrupted by traffic.
- Road-works caused change of route/direction/side of road.
- Bus was missed.

Strategy for parents:

- Prepare your child in advance if you know of any disruptions.
- Ask staff for Social Stories to deal with response to disruptions showing how to behave in different situations.
- Try to contact the school to give a warning so that staff are prepared to support the child on entry.

Strategy for teachers:

- Be aware that changes in routine may affect the child later in the session.
- Prepare in advance by using social stories to explore behaviour in different situations.
- Have back-up plans that children understand.

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Behaviour trigger: Change of routine at school.

- Timetable is changed due to an event such as a workshop.
- Visitors are in school.
- New equipment is delivered during or before the session.
- A member of staff is absent.
- A new member of staff is in the room.

Strategy for parents:

- Prepare your child in advance if you know that there will be changes in staffing or if there is to be an event.
- Give repeated warnings of changes that you are aware will happen.
- Remain calm and talk to your child about the changes.
- Use social stories at times that are calm to explore the possibilities of change so that responses are learnt.

Strategy for teachers:

- If changes are known in advance, share information with parents the previous day.
- Pre-prepare the children, giving repeated warnings of changes.
- Use the visual timetable to explore changes and refer to this frequently.
- Explain what the changes are and how they will affect the child.
- Teach strategies for coping with change, both expected and unplanned.

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Behaviour trigger: Environmental issues.

- Labels furniture, visual timetables are all different and uncoordinated.
- The spaces are cluttered and untidy.
- The environment is constantly changed or reorganised.
- Resources are not always stored in the same place.
- Heating, lighting, noise levels are not consistent.
- There is no 'safe place' for children to feel secure.

Strategy for parents:

- Use a photograph book of the classroom/school so that the children know where everything is or belongs.
- Always follow a routine on entry to school so that the child follows the same route through the spaces to ensure security.

Strategy for teachers:

- Display photographs or photograph books of the classrooms and spaces indoors and outside.
- Maintain consistency within the environment with a space for resources that does not change.
- Involve children in any changes to furniture or position of furniture.
- Maintain an uncluttered, tidy space.
- Avoid 'busy' displays and spaces and use limited colour ranges or neutral tones.
- Teach children where resources are stored and involve them in putting away resources.

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Behaviour trigger: Staff interactions.

- Staff are inconsistent in their approaches.
- Explanations are unclear.
- Staff assume children understand.
- Staff and pupils 'clash'.

Strategy for parents:

- Share known triggers with staff.
- Share strategies that are effective at home with school staff.
- Request a copy of the Behaviour Policy and how ask how staff manage behaviour.
- Give clear explanations and clarify any uncertainties with staff .

Strategy for teachers:

- Be consistent in approach to behaviour management for individual children.
- Make explanations clear, unambiguous and concise.
- Repeat explanations, using symbols or pictorial clues.
- Remain calm and consistent.
- Have high but realistic expectations.
- Be prepared to be flexible if a child cannot meet the expectations but be consistent within those expectations.
- Be persistent.
- Take nothing personally.
- Accept that the child is not naughty but may be anxious or unable to comply due to lack of understanding.

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Behaviour trigger: Pupil interactions.

- Friendships are not formed or change.
- There are personality clashes.
- A child is ill or feels unwell and/or medicines are affecting the child.
- The child is experiencing a 'bad mood'.
- Emotions and feelings are difficult to express or may be expressed in ways that we find challenging or inappropriate.

Strategy for parents:

- Request a home-school communication book and find out about friends.
- Talk about what it means to be a friend and how we behave towards friends.
- Address situations immediately and provide reassurance.
- Give child a 'way out' of difficult situations.

Strategy for teachers:

- Teach about feelings and about how we behave towards friends.
- Display pictures to show acceptable ways of being a friend.
- Teach children how to greet each other appropriately.
- Provide quiet areas.
- Use distraction techniques.
- Provide consistent sanctions when/if children behave inappropriately towards each other.
- Display sanctions.

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Behaviour trigger: Extreme or Challenging Behaviours.

- Kicking, biting, hitting, spitting, pulling hair, head-butting, head-banging, trashing spaces, throwing.

Strategy for parents:

- Try to identify the triggers for these behaviours and avoid situations where behaviour may be affected.
- Use simple direct language, such as, 'Stop!'
- Use sign or symbol to reinforce language.
- Allow time for the child to think and process your command or instructions.
- Remain calm and consistent and try to avoid losing your temper.
- Remember that every day should be fresh start.

Strategy for teachers:

- Understand the cues or triggers for individual children.
- Find out what soothes the child or settles an outburst and use that strategy consistently.
- Use strategies identified in the IEP and share this information with all staff.
- Use direct language, supported by signs and symbols.
- Be consistent.
- Do not allow other staff to become involved unless requested.
- Remove other children rather than a distraught child.
- Allow distressed pupil space and time to settle.
- Distract the child and de-escalate the situation.
- Use quiet areas and sequences of actions that settle the child.

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What may help in an angry outburst?

- Try to avoid becoming angry or making threats particularly threats that you cannot carry out.
- Play soft music or favourite soothing music.
- Speak softly so that the child has to pay full attention and listen carefully.
- Try to redirect the child to a positive activity as soon as possible.
- Show a sand timer and give a clear direct warning about expectations so that the child knows that he/she must stop.
- Sit or stay close to the child and begin reading an age-appropriate book.
- Sing a favourite song or a silly song.
- Use quiet areas or sensory areas.
- Put on the headphones and dance around the room (unexpected behaviour that the child may be startled by or find funny)
- Play snowball fights with cotton wool balls.
- Count out loud asking the child to join in.
- If necessary, remove the child from the area or remove yourself.
- Stay consistent at all times.
- Never give in to the child's demands as this reinforces the effect of the outburst.
- If sanctions are in place for specific actions or behaviours, ensure that the sanctions are imposed consistently.
- Try to avoid the child seeing that you are upset or disturbed by the behaviour.
- Use Team Teach systems or minimal handling wherever possible.