

Michael Hall

a Steiner Waldorf School

Promoting Positive Behaviour in the Early Years

Policy Owner	Early Years Assistant Principal
Formally endorsed by	Council of Trustees
Endorsement Date	September 2020
Next Review Date	September 2021

Safeguarding; we are all responsible

POLICY STATEMENT

Our Kindertartens aim to provide a warm, home-like atmosphere and an opportunity for the children to learn through imitation, free play, rhythm and repetition.

It follows from our approach that we strongly believe in giving children the free space to develop their creativity, fostering a life-long love of learning, which in turn helps to lay the foundation for a healthy adult life. In our Kindertartens we aim to create an environment, which encourages cooperation, sociability, and reverence and respect for life and nature.

Inside the Kindergarten

All pupils learn and grow in their understanding of socially appropriate and desirable behaviour. In the Kindergarten the teachers/assistants continually work with social behaviour by endeavouring to be role models worthy of imitation. Teachers/assistants treat the children in an age appropriate way and also have behaviour expectations that are in accordance with their age and stage of development.

As the children play and learn, the teachers encourage:

- Respect and care of self, others, and the environment.
- The learning of self-control.

Parental support will be sought in minimizing exposure to screens including TV, film, laptops, computers and smartphones. *see Appendix B*

Challenging Behaviour

Most pupils experience social difficulties at some time in their development. There are many ways that the teachers help pupils to better integrate into the Kindergarten.

For example:

1. Using distraction. Redirect the pupil to a new focus or activity. Gain the pupil's attention with a look, gesture or word to make him aware of our observations.
2. Remove the pupil from the situation and engage him/her with an adult-led task.
3. If the disruption continues, the assistant may take the pupil out of the room for a short period of time and engage the child in tasks such as tidying the lobby or sweeping the patio.
4. Tell a therapeutic story to help the child shift behaviour 'out of balance' *see Appendix A*
5. If the child misbehaves during the Kindergarten morning on several days and the above steps have not been helpful, parents may be asked to be available to collect the child. (This strategy will form part of the Challenging Behaviour Risk Assessment)

It is paramount that all the children's needs in the group are met and if the behaviour of a pupil requires more attention than can be achieved by the daily efforts described above, particularly when aggressive or dangerous behaviour is exhibited, then it may be deemed necessary to implement other means to ensure the most positive experience for the pupil and the class.

Safeguarding; we are all responsible

1. The EYSENCo may be contacted and possible learning differences investigated.
2. Implementing an Individual Educational Plan.
3. Implementing a Challenging Behaviour Risk Assessment.
4. Stay in close communication with the Parents/Carers.
5. Regular teacher reviews.
6. Organise a “Child Study” and bring it to the weekly Early Years Faculty meeting for consultation.

In the rare instance where behaviour strategies and procedures have been unable to help a child, and where it has been identified that more individualised support is required (that is beyond which the school can reasonably provide) the school may judge that a child is likely to thrive better in a different academic environment.

Please refer to Admissions Policy.

Related Policies and Documents

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Kindergarten Positive handling and physical intervention

Appendix A

Therapeutic Stories

Story telling is an integral part of kindergarten pedagogy. Metaphor and imagery are used to help children understand emotions and be directed to do the right thing, for example: “Your words sound quite cross, let’s try to make them as quiet as a mouse and as soft as a feather.” Carefully selected therapeutic stories can heal, comfort, reassure and help to shift out-of-balance behaviour. The young child will open up to a story through their feelings and receive the true moral of the story without ever having to be lectured or shamed: shaming can be damaging to a young child’s self-esteem and is not tolerated in our practice.

Stories are written and adapted for individual children so the images and characters reflect the child’s own interests and so have greater efficacy and meaning for that child

Margo Sunderland, the Director of the Centre for Child Mental Health in London, is passionate about story language. She sees this as an important but under-used therapeutic modality. She claims that story is the language of young children and that literal rational language is often sensorially too dry and there are many times when, by using the language of the imagination, we are doing children a great favour—we are reaching into their world instead of expecting them to stretch up to our adult world! *The Healing Power of Story Language Susan Perrow, Gateways Issue 73*

Appendix B

Screen Time

Watching television, videos and other screens, regardless of content, has been shown to negatively affect a growing child's development. Like all electronic media, television lacks the direct human presence, which is so vital to the sensory and emotional nourishment of the child. Furthermore, children's need for creative play is inhibited and their ability to create images from within is suppressed by the electronically produced imagery, characters and narratives. Watching screens is essentially a passive activity whereas research shows that face-to-face contact, creative play, hands-on activities, and physical movement are the building blocks of healthy brain development.

Important *studies* of the *impact* of screen time on children's development, especially at early ages, have demonstrated a link with lower academic performance, increased sleep problems, obesity, behavior problems, increased aggression, lower self-esteem, depression, and increased high risk behaviors. These include the 2016 study, which linked increased screen time with poor sleep quality and behavior problems 1 and delayed development². 1Parent J, Sanders W, Forehand R. *Youth screen time and behavioral health problems: the role of sleep duration and disturbances*. *J Dev Behav Pediatr* 2016; May. <https://www.nhs.uk/news/pregnancy-and-child/screen-time-linked-delayed-development-young-children/> 29 Jan 2019

A guide to support parents in navigating their children's screen use by the Royal Collage of Paediatrics Child Health (RCPCH).

https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-12/rcpch_screen_time_parent_fact_sheet_-_final.pdf

https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-12/rcpch_screen_time_guide_-_final.pdf