

Promoting Positive Communication

Policy statement

At Kamelia Kids we believe that children flourish best when their personal, social, and emotional needs are understood, supported, and met and where there are clear, fair, and developmentally appropriate expectations. As children develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and to consider the views and feelings, and needs and rights, of others and the impact that this has on people, places, and objects. The development of these skills requires adult guidance to help encourage and model appropriate communication and to offer intervention and support when children struggle with conflict and emotional situations. In these types of situations key staff can help identify and address triggers and help children reflect, regulate, and manage their actions.

Procedures

To support children in an appropriate way we will

- attend relevant training to help understand and guide appropriate models of behaviour.
- implement the setting's communication procedures including the stepped approach.

Stepped approach

Step 1

- We will ensure that Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance relating is incorporated into relevant policy and procedures.
- We will be knowledgeable with and apply the setting's procedures on Promoting Positive Communication.
- We will ensure that all staff are supported to address issues relating to communication including applying initial and focused intervention approaches (see below).

Step 2

- We address communication using the agreed and consistently applied initial intervention approach. If this does not reoccur or cause concern, then normal monitoring will resume.
- Communication that results in concern for the child and/or others will be discussed between the key person, Lead Practitioner and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or/and Nursery Operations Director. During the meeting, the key person will use their knowledge and assessments of the child to share any known influencing factors (new baby, additional needs, illness etc.) to place the communication into context. Appropriate adjustments to practice will be agreed and if successful normal monitoring resumed.
- If the communication continues to reoccur and remain a concern, then the key person/ Lead Practitioner will liaise with parents to discuss possible reasons for the behaviour and to agree next steps. If a cause for the communication is not known or only occurs whilst in the nursery then the SENCO will suggest using a focused intervention approach to identify a trigger for the communication.
- If a trigger is identified, then the SENCO and key person will meet with the parents to plan support for the child through developing an action plan. If relevant, recommended actions for

dealing with the communication at home should be agreed with the parent/s and incorporated into the plan. Other members of the staff team should be informed of the agreed actions in the action plan and help implement the actions. The plan should be monitored and reviewed regularly by the key person and SENCO until improvement is noticed.

Step 3

- If, despite applying the initial intervention and focused intervention approaches, the communication continues to occur and/or is of significant concern, then the SENCO will invite the parents to a meeting to discuss external referral and next steps for supporting the child in the setting.
- It may be agreed that the Early Help process should begin, and that specialist help be sought for the child - this support may address either developmental or welfare needs. If the child's communication is part of a range of welfare concerns that also include a concern that the child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, follow the Safeguarding and Children and Child Protection Policy. It may also be agreed that the child should be referred to the Health Visitor/ Doctor for assessment.
- Advice provided by external agencies should be incorporated into the child's action plan, with regular meetings held to review the child's progress.

Initial intervention approach

- We use an initial problem-solving intervention for all situations in which a child or children are distressed or in conflict. All staff uses this intervention consistently.
- This type of approach involves an adult approaching the situation calmly, stopping any hurtful actions, acknowledging the feelings of those involved, gathering information, restating the issue to help children reflect, regain control of the situation, and resolve the situation themselves.

Focused intervention approach

- The reasons for some types of communication are not always apparent, despite the knowledge and input from key staff and parents.
- Where we have considered all possible reasons, then a focused intervention approach should then be applied.
- This approach allows the key person and SENDCO to observe, assess and to reflect on support action plans.
- We follow the STAR (Situation Trigger Action Response) method which uses key observations to identify an event or activity that occurred immediately before a particular communication, what communication was observed and recorded at the time of the incident, and what the action and response were following the communication. Once analysed, the focused intervention should help determine the cause (e.g., ownership of a toy, fear of a situation, loss of space) and function of the communication (to obtain the toy, avoid a situation, gain personal space) and suitable support will be applied.

Use of rewards and sanctions

- All children need consistent messages, clear boundaries, and guidance to intrinsically manage their communication through self-regulation.
- Rewards such as excessive praise and stickers may provide an immediate change in the communication but will not teach children how to act when a 'prize' is not being given or provide the child with the skills to manage situations and their emotions. Instead, a child is taught how to be 'compliant' and respond to meet adult's own expectations to obtain a reward (or for fear of a sanction).
- If used, then the type of rewards and their functions must be carefully considered before applying.

Unacceptable Procedures for Managing Communication

These should never be used and if seen, reported immediately to the Nursery Operations Director.

- Children should never be labelled (label the communication), criticised, compared to another, humiliated, punished, shouted at (this conveys a loss of control and tone of voice is more effective than the volume) or isolated/ excluded by removing them from the group and or left alone in 'time out' or on a 'naughty chair'. The word 'naughty' is not to be used.
- However, if necessary, children can be *accompanied* and removed from the group to calm down and if appropriate helped to reflect on what has happened.
- Use of any form of physical punishment including smacking, pinching, shaking, poking or rough handling.
- Use of any other humiliating and frightening punishment including name calling, isolation, exclusion, or offensive language.

Use of physical intervention

- The term physical intervention is used to describe any forceful physical contact by an adult to a child such as grabbing, pulling, dragging, or any form of restraint of a child such as holding down. Where a child is upset or angry, staff will speak to them calmly, encouraging them to vent their frustration in other ways by diverting the child's attention.
- Staff should not use physical intervention - or the threat of physical intervention, to manage a child's communication unless it is necessary to use "reasonable force in order to prevent children from injuring themselves or others or damage property" (EYFS).
- If "reasonable force" has been used for any of the reasons shown above, parents are to be informed on the same day that it occurs. The intervention will be recorded as soon as possible within the child's file, which states clearly when and how parents were informed.
- Corporal (physical) punishment of any kind should never be used or threatened which could adversely affect a child's well-being.

