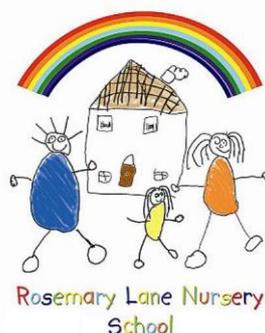


# ROSEMARY LANE NURSERY SCHOOL



## **EMOTIONAL REGULATION POLICY AND GUIDELINES to support with promoting positive behaviour and relationships**

### **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

At Rosemary Lane Nursery School we are proud to promote a love of learning within a welcoming, safe and secure environment, in which every child matters. We embrace a culture of positivity, where we prioritise the well-being of each child and their family. We recognise and nurture the unique strengths and qualities that each child brings with them. We aspire to cultivate an inclusive and inspiring atmosphere that empowers children to thrive in all aspects of their learning including their personal, social and emotional development.

We know that clear, consistent and developmentally appropriate environments, routines and expectations provide children with the stability to flourish. All children gain a sense of belonging within our safe and nurturing environment where they feel confident to develop positive relationships both with adults and their peers.

Children need to understand they have different emotions and to recognise these emotions can make them feel and act differently. Children will need to experience emotions and be supported by competent adults who can articulate this for them. Children will learn that all emotions are valid but that the response to an emotion may not be acceptable.

Ultimately the end goal is for our children to recognise how they feel, react to this feeling and respond in a manner that is safe and regulating to themselves, others and the environment around them. This is a developmental task that requires encouragement, teaching and supportive adults who are available to coregulate. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate relationships exist within the area of learning - Personal, Social and Emotional Development but extends to the development of the whole child across the school curriculum.

Our policy is based on the latest brain research and provides a developmental and trauma-sensitive approach to meeting the emotional and social needs of young children. By supporting the parts of the brain which develop in early childhood and control babies and children's emotional health, well-being and behaviour.

## PRINCIPLES

1. The Policy applies to everyone who comes into the school – children, parents, carers, staff, governors, students, volunteers and visitors.

2. Everyone has

The right to:	The responsibility to:
Feel safe Feel respected Be supported Be treated fairly Have their property kept safe Move freely and safely	Ensure the safety of others. Show respect for others. Assist and support others. treat others fairly care for the property of others

3. Nursery staff understand that behaviour exhibited by a child is a form of communication.

Challenging behaviour may be present as an indication of:

- o sensory overload
- o a sense of feeling unsafe
- o fear and or anxiety
- o A response to separation
- o A need to be noticed
- o tiredness

To be able to promote positive behaviour and relationships we need to be able to understand our children, their individual circumstances and apply this when coregulating with them. Children have a right to be treated as individuals and their developmental needs taken into consideration.

4. We accept and understand that our young children come from a variety of homes and cultures and do not yet know the routines that we have, the boundaries that we hold, and how to 'be' alongside other children and adults from different homes and cultures.

5. We talk openly about neurodiversity and racial difference in our school so that all children are supported to develop attitudes of acceptance and a pride in themselves as an individual within our school community.

6. Our understanding of children's neurological responses when angry or fearful suggests that we should calm the child who is angry/afraid/sad as well as the one who has been hurt, in the knowledge that they will not be able to reflect on the motivation behind their own response whilst their 'thinking' brain is impaired by the stress chemicals that have been activated.

7. We believe children flourish when there are clear developmentally appropriate expectations that are consistently implemented

For example:

- o To be gentle with one another.
- o To begin to understand about my turn and your turn.
- o To look after our nursery.
- o To begin to listen to each other, to support working together.

Strategies include: policies, a welcoming environment, a developmentally appropriate curriculum with progression to support all children to achieve their very best, high quality staff professional development, well organised induction into the nursery and well-resourced areas of provision to promote enquiry.

8. Children, parents, carers, staff and Governors work together to develop positive relationships. Together they create the foundation for children to be aware of their regulatory system and teach them practical ways to express this and manage it.

9. We understand that as a Prime area we will devote much of our teaching time to supporting children to learn how to co-exist with one another so that they feel safe and cared for by adults and each other in school.

## **AIMS**

We aim to promote awareness of our four main emotions – anger, sadness, happiness and worry/excitement. For children to understand what it is like to feel these different emotions within their bodies. For adults to help to label these emotions and respond to how they are making the child react in a clear and consistent way.

We aim to foster a flexible approach to emotional regulation in the same way that we differentiate for children's learning needs.

We will use consistent strategies to support the development of children's emotional vocabulary in order that they are able to learn to manage their own emotional responses, be kindly and respectfully towards others and feel safe and secure.

We will be mindful of using the right level of clear language, keeping in mind what we know about each child's level of understanding of spoken language and the type of communication that they use e.g. communication board, Makaton.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementing a coregulation approach helps us to support all children to deal with their emotional responses. This can be from saying goodbye to parents at the start of the day, to helping children to cope with extreme feelings which can result in challenging behaviours or children being overly passive.

### Co-regulation with supportive adults

Through co-regulation adults can support all children at all developmental stages to become more aware of their emotions and how these emotions make them feel. Adults can

1. Connect with the child. Identify they are experiencing a feeling. (*Joy, excitement, sadness, anger.*)
2. Label how the child is feeling to validate this emotion through verbal language and use the emotion symbols. (*I can see you're upset and angry because ...*)
3. Ask the child if they would like to be held, put your arms out to demonstrate this. (*If you accept me I can manage your feelings. I can keep you safe.*) Or encourage the children to seek out a mindfulness technique.

We must remember...When a child is dysregulated, they need a calm tone, safe touch and eye contact. A child needs to be soothed to learn how to self soothe.

In addition to coregulating, we teach the children a range of strategies to empower them to begin to self-regulate.

This includes

- o Developing the understanding of how emotions feel in your body through small group work e.g. When I am smiling and excited my tummy feels all fizzy.

- Introducing mindfulness techniques to help children self soothe. Initially through adult guided sessions, modelling and repeated practice. E.g. developing the ability for children to understand about controlling their breathing through using an expanding and contracting ball to signify taking a big breath in and breathing out.
- Progressively developing the language of emotions and feelings through adults modelling this. The end goal is for children to be able to use this language to articulate to an adult when they are experiencing an emotion and to describe how they might respond to this. E.g. my daddy was shouting this morning, I think he is feeling angry. I think he needs a hug to make him feel happy again.

*(We have a self-regulation policy that details our stages approach)*

The aim for our children is to help them to be able to independently recognise and respond, in a calm and measured way to the emotions they feel.

This takes time, patience and consistency if the child is to develop strong, positive emotional health and well-being.

## **RESPECT**

We teach children the importance of being positive, polite, kind and considerate to others. We encourage children to be assertive and to say (or sign) “no” clearly to signify that they do not like that and for their peers to respect this. We provide children with supportive strategies to help them to independently manage conflict, such as sharing by saying “I can see you would like a turn. X is playing there now, when they have finished then it will be your turn”. This may take lots of modelling and require the adult to stay alongside to support.

Children are encouraged not to retaliate but to tell nursery adults if they are unhappy or are being hurt in any way. We teach children how to understand the impact of their emotional response on others by providing the voice for the child. For example, if a child has hit out at another child, we will calmly say... “I see you are feeling red (and angry), it is ok to feel red (and angry) if you want the train. It is not ok to hit.”

Children need their emotions to be validated. They need to understand that the reaction to how an emotion makes them feel is not always acceptable.

As a staff team we use a consistent script with our children and adjust the language depending upon the developmental ability of the child.

We work in partnership with parents and carers to share our policy and asked them to reinforce the importance of talking about resolving disagreements and solving problems through the appropriate systems and not by retaliation.

### *Respecting others*

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if they are emotionally dysregulated at the time. **We DO NOT label this behaviour as bullying** as our knowledge of neurotypical brain development suggests that very young children are not truly capable of the pre-meditated thought process and understanding of the cause and effect necessary for this level of action. Hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without the ability to judge the impact.

### *Respecting resources and property*

If a child has been destructive towards resources, furniture, walls or flora and fauna in the nursery garden they will be encouraged to repair, tidy or clean this property in so far as they are able to safely and in accordance with their individual capabilities. We will talk to them and show them how to use and care for resources appropriately.

### *Respecting personal space and safety*

Occasionally children will bite. Babies and young children bite to explore. Young children sometimes bite as an instant reaction to a frustration or in anger.

For some children their neuro-type might mean that they have sensory traits that mean they seek the feedback that biting provides. In these instances, we would work in partnership with professionals and families to determine the specific sensory need and utilise a sensory diet as necessary to re-direct sensory seeking behaviours e.g. providing chew buddies.

We work very hard to support children's needs and investigate all avenues of support both internally and from external agencies as part of our commitment to meet the needs of all our children. On rare occasions we may need to remove a child from a situation of conflict or seek further support and advice from senior staff. We will, at all times, avoid unnecessary physical contact or actions.

We may offer a reduced timetable across transition points, for a limited time, for the best interest of the child e.g. for a child undergoing hospital treatment etc.

#### Strong attachments to key people

Nursery children require supportive adults to coregulate and model strategies to help restore their inner emotional equilibrium. Developing strong attachments to key people, on entry to nursery, is an important part of this. Children need to feel safe, secure and able to engage in co-regulation alongside familiar adults to begin to address their big feelings and emotions.

(We have a key person policy that describes the rationale and role in more detail.)

#### The importance of recognising the emotion and behaviour not the child

We should always be aware the language adults use should talk about actions resulting in a feeling, not the blaming the child for the feeling. For example, "when Ben gets hurt it makes me feel blue (and sad)" versus "you made me blue and sad because you hit Ben". We are emphasising the unacceptable action not the children themselves.

We do not want children to feel they are defined by an action. We want them to see what has happened as a choice and this can be something they can change in the future.

Date: March 2026

Headteacher: Jill Jones

Signed:



Chair of Governors: Mrs Rachel Stirman

Signed: R Stirman