



Whitecross Nursery School Behaviour & Wellbeing Policy

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Date of last review	March 2026
Date of next review	March 2027
Ratified by the Governing Body	March 2026

This policy will be reviewed sooner if there is a change to legislation or guidance that may affect it. Any changes will be communicated to all stakeholders.

Whitecross nursery school expects, encourages and supports positive behaviours from everyone, children, parents/carers, governors and adults. We value happy outcomes to help all children to develop a sense of self, build self-esteem, and promote respect for others and their surroundings at all times.

Here at Whitecross, we understand that all behaviours are a form of communication. Our very young children express their needs, emotions, and experiences through their behaviour – especially before children have the language or skills to articulate how they feel. All the adults at Whitecross approach all behaviours with kindness, curiosity and empathy. We endeavour to support children and families to feel safe, regulated, and understood. This supports our very young children to understand emotions and relationships in healthy, respectful ways. It is through responsive and caring adults supporting and modelling positive interactions with children and each other, that our children are supported to develop high levels of emotional well-being which leads to positive behaviour. This enables all children to feel their best and therefore achieve their best.

Our Whitecross values underpin how we deal with behaviours within nursery.

Our Whitecross Values

- I am kind
 - *I have kind hands, kind feet and I use kind words to everyone. I am valued and respected and I know we all belong here together.*
- I am curious
 - *I want to learn about and understand things. I know how to take care of my friends, understand my personal space and know how to care for and sustain my environment.*
- I am independent
 - *I can make choices, create, take risks, solve problems, process experiences, ask questions and lead my own learning.*
- I am resilient

- *I am empowered, I keep trying, I advocate for myself, I pick myself up, I do what is right.*

Links to Early Years Statutory Guidance

Statutory Framework for the EYFS published on 1st September 2025 identifies four overarching principles that should shape practice in early years. These are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.18). The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

These guiding principles support our ethos and positive approach to supporting behaviours and wellbeing at Whitecross.

All behaviour is communication

A regulated child is able to begin to understand what is expected of them and to start to appropriately communicate their wants and needs to others.

A dysregulated child is asking for support to help them regulate themselves. Dysregulation (resistance, meltdowns, shutting down) needs a trusted adult supporting to help them calm and regulate safely through co-regulation.

Adults will always:

- Remain near by
- Name and validate what the child is feeling
- Show empathy without judgement
- Be a calm presence with no punishment

This co-regulation will lead to self-regulation

Restorative practice

If a child, an adult, resources or the environment, is harmed in any way, then once the child is fully self-regulated the focus moves to reflect, repair and reconnect. We do not shame, or exclude or take time out alone.

All adults in nursery support children to

- Take responsibility for their actions

- Understand the impact of what happened
- Make amends where appropriate with adult support
- Are supported to rebuild trust and connection.

There can be a number of reasons for dysregulation

- Sensory needs

Our nursery environment can feel busy and sometimes loud to a number of children. We have calm spaces around the nursery where children can go. We teach all children skills of self-regulation and the adults have lots of training on sensory processing and the use of sensory circuits.

- SEND

Children with SEND may have hugely varying developmental needs and will have individualised learning plans. The expectations and support of their behaviour will be defined by their needs.

Where a child is identified as having SEND, the graduated approach will be used to assess, plan, deliver and review the impact of support being provided.

The school will aim to anticipate likely triggers of needs and support put in place to limit them. Measures the school will implement where appropriate include, but are not limited to, the following:

Sensory breaks in different spaces in nursery

Sensory circuits on arrival

- Ensuring a children with visual or hearing needs are seated facing the adults in group times
- Use of a first and then board
- A visual timetable
- Countdown stars to support transition times
- Training for adults in understanding autism and other conditions

- Emotional needs

Some children arrive at nursery with a full emotional cup. Events at home may have affected and impacted on their emotional wellbeing, even at a very young age. All nursery adults know which children are vulnerable, and they have the skills to support and regulate making them feel safe and ready to learn.

- Understanding the boundaries and expectations of being in nursery

When a group of children are together in a nursery setting, to keep everyone safe, we have age appropriate expectations of all children. We are, at this age, currently learning to share wait and take turns. Our values and our five golden rules underpin our expectations that are embedded across our nursery, set around physical and emotional safety. We actively encourage children to be independent and advocate for themselves and we ensure this is respected by everyone

1. I use my kind hands,
2. I use my listening ears,
3. I use my walking feet inside,
4. I can put things back where they belong,
5. I can say STOP if I don't like it.

Some children find the expectations of independence, tidying up, listening when they don't like what they are being asked tricky at first.

The role of all adults

- Stay calm and grounded in moments of challenge
- Observe and identify underlying needs
- Use language that is non-judgmental and emotionally literate
- Scaffold and model self-regulation skills through their daily interactions
- To reflect on their own triggers or emotional responses. Only a regulated adult can calm and support a dysregulated child.
- Share with all adults any support that they have needed to offer, to allow all adults to understand the needs of all children. Then together we can consider whether the child needs further support from the SENCO.

Working with Families

We work closely with families, recognising that parents and carers are their child's first and most important relationship. We home visit every family before they start at Whitecross Nursery to meet and observe the children at home. This shows the children that adults and parents have a relationship of trust and that we work together. It is the start of building our close working relationships with families in an approachable and supportive way.

We pride ourselves by having an open-door policy where all families are encouraged to talk to us about parenting styles, behaviour needs and concerns. We can listen, support, advise and signpost to professionals if necessary.

Adults always speak to parents if a child has been supported with any dysregulation in nursery. It is important that adults and families work together to support each child whatever they need.

Inclusive Practice

Our approach is inclusive of all children. We adjust our environments, expectations, and teaching strategies to meet each child where they are. All children are supported to flourish – not just to comply.

In Practice, This Looks Like:

- A child struggling emotionally is supported by a calm adult who stays close and regulates with them.
- A child who hits out is helped to explore safer ways to express frustration, and is supported to reconnect with peers when ready.
- A child in sensory overwhelm is observed and understood so their sensory needs are met appropriately.
- Adults use reflective language naming the feeling, "I can see you're really angry, sad, cross, hurt etc. I'm here with you." We do not use the word upset as children do not understand what that means.
- Adults have a variety of strategies and interventions they use consistently to support children to have high levels of well-being and meet our behavioural expectations. These support children to be proud of their behaviours and include using reflection, visual aids, first/then boards, social stories, countdown stars and sand-timers to support transitions throughout the day.

- Adults phrase all language positively –for example “Feet on the floor” rather than “Don’t stand on the chair.”
- Adults use distraction and redirection.
- Adults give clear directions using simple, age appropriate, key language, signs and visuals widely used. For example, “Stop!” showing an open hand or a red cross.
- Adults may lead the child from the situation or move other children away to ensure safety at all times.
- Adults use social stories to explain and model feelings and strategies to support understanding.
- Restorative conversations once the child is calm to help the children to understand the consequences and effects of their behaviour on others.

The role of our children

We have five core rules that are embedded across the nursery, set around physical and emotional safety. We encourage children to be independent and advocate for themselves and ensure that this is respected by adults and other children.

6. I use my kind hands,
7. I use my listening ears,
8. I use my walking feet inside,
9. I can put things back where they belong,
10. I can say STOP if I don’t like it.

Praise

Rewards can promote positive behaviour and help children to see that positive behaviour is valued. Rewards encourage the children to take responsibility for their actions and promote self-esteem. All children have a need for positive affirmation and most respond well to verbal praise and social approval. Praise and positive feedback will be the basis of the rewards at Whitecross, with Nursery adults using kind words and super praise along with stamps, stickers and certificates.

Individual supporting plans

Where more regular dysregulation occurs, individual support plans will be developed following a period of assessment to meet the specific needs of the child. Assessments and potential strategies are recorded using risk assessments. The plans will include identification of known and potential triggers leading to dysregulation and how these can be supported.

Parent and Carers are consulted if we feel a support plan is necessary. This will ensure a consistent approach within nursery and at home. We can seek advice and support from outside agencies and or professionals where necessary.

All adults will see the agreed support plans to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school day. The effectiveness of plans will be monitored in partnership with parents/carers, and approaches and interventions adapted where required.

All significant dysregulation incidents will be logged on CPOMS. The incidents are regularly reviewed by the DSL, Lead teacher, SENCO and Two-Year Lead, to identify any patterns and evaluate the effectiveness of support plans and strategies within nursery.

Bullying

Bullying is the repeated and intentional verbal, physical or emotional harming of another. While instances of bullying are very rare at nursery, we take a zero tolerance approach to bullying if or when this does occur.

Instances of bullying can be a misplaced attempt to interact with others. We would endeavour to identify the cause of such behaviour in order to know how best to deal with it. Whatever the motivation we would treat this very seriously, sharing incidents and strategies with families. A child displaying this behaviour would not be named to the parents/carers of the child/children who have been targeted.

Children who repeatedly hurt others are supported by adults and closely monitored to protect other children. The triggers are observed, and situations prevented from occurring as far as possible.

Strategies would be introduced to reduce challenging and develop positive behaviour. If necessary, a support plan would be put in place.

Children who have been the subject of harm or bullying will be supported to develop appropriate strategies when faced with this kind of behaviour.

Links with Safeguarding

Adults strive to build strong relationships with the children and their families. They will get to know each child and their unique strengths and needs. Changes in a child's behaviour can indicate changes at home and adults will notice and discuss such issues with them and their parents/carers to find out if any support is needed.

All adults recognise that a change in behaviours, aggressive or sexualised behaviour and self-harm can be indicators of potential safeguarding issues. All adults are vigilant and aware of the signs of potential abuse or neglect, including child on child abuse, and will report any concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Links with Inclusion and Equality

All children need the adults around them to show respect, positive regard, supportive approaches, positive challenges and fair but clear boundaries.

We respect cultural differences and discuss sensitively with families how we can best support the child, both at home and school to ensure consistency of support and expectations.

Links with social, emotional and mental health SEMH needs

To help reduce the likelihood of behavioural issues related to SEMH needs, the nursery school creates a safe and calm environment in which positive mental health and wellbeing are promoted, and children are taught to be resilient. The nursery promotes resilience as part of a whole-school approach using the following methods:

- **Culture, ethos and environment** – the health and wellbeing of children and adults is promoted through the our nursery school values, informal curriculum, alongside the social and physical environment
- **Teaching** – the curriculum is used to develop children' knowledge about health and wellbeing
- **Community engagement** – the school proactively engages with parents/carers, outside agencies and the wider community to promote consistent support for children' health and wellbeing

All adults are made aware of how potentially traumatic Adverse Childhood Experiences ACE's are. This includes abuse and neglect, and can impact on a child's mental health, behaviour, and education. Where vulnerable children are identified, provision will be made to support and promote their positive mental health.

Conclusion

We believe that all behaviour makes sense, even if it doesn't yet have words. Through warm, safe relationships, we teach children how to:

- Understand and express their feelings
- Build empathy and compassion
- Resolve conflicts peacefully
- Trust that even when they have big feelings, the adults will support and nurture them.

We commit to meeting every child with kindness, connection, and care – so they can learn, thrive, and flourish to meet their true learning potential.

1. Appendices

- i. De-escalation poster for adults
- ii. Restorative discussion support for adults
- iii. Individual support plan master

Legislation, statutory requirements and statutory guidance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory and non-statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

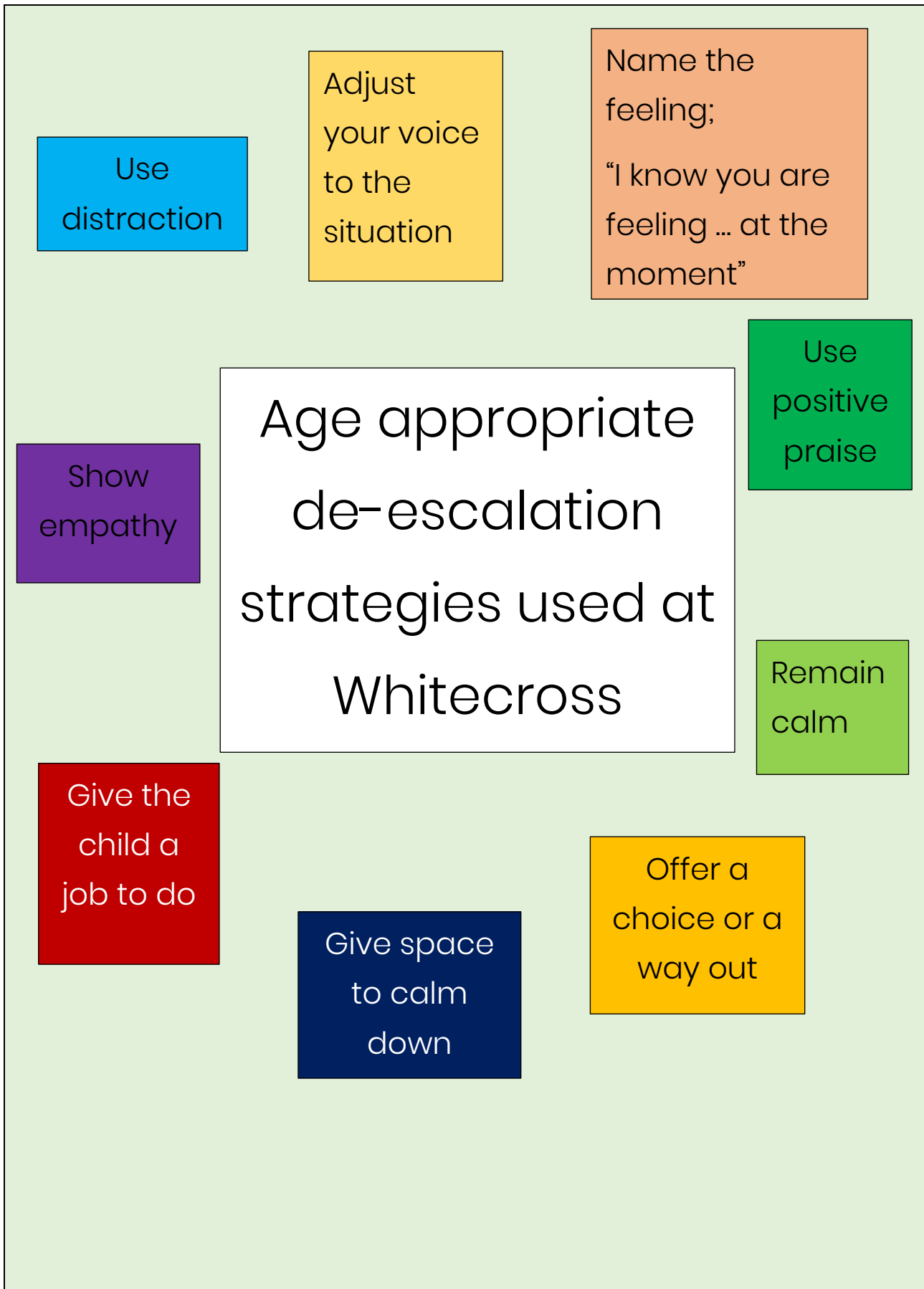
- [Behaviour in schools: advice for Headteachers and school adults 2024](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#)

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils
- [DfE guidance](#) explaining that maintained schools must publish their behaviour policy online

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

1. WX Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
2. WX Prevent Policy
3. WX Positive Handling Policy
4. WX SEND Policy
5. WX Early Years and Curriculum Policy



Restorative Discussion for children at Whitecross Nursery School

1. I wonder what happened.

2. Do you think you made a good choice today?

3. I wonder how _____ is feeling now?

4. I wonder what we could we do together to help you to make things right.

Whitecross Nursery School

Child Behaviour Risk Assessment

KEY INFORMATION		
Full Name		
Date of Birth		
Completed by		Date:
Authorised by		Date:
Background Information		
Brief History of harmful behaviours (When, where, what, who, why, how)		
Risks to be managed How frequent is the behaviour		
Triggers/behaviour to monitor		Indicators of positive change
Review date	Reason for review	Significant amendments