Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy

(2025–2026)

Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy

1. Purpose

At Little Wonders Nurseries, we recognise that behaviour in the early years is not simply something to be managed, but something to be **understood, guided and nurtured**. Young children are in the earliest stages of developing emotional regulation, communication, and social understanding. As such, their behaviour reflects their developmental stage, experiences, relationships and immediate needs.

This policy sets out our commitment to fostering **positive behaviour, emotional wellbeing and respectful relationships** within a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment. It provides a clear framework for how adults support children in developing the skills they need to manage feelings, interact positively with others, and make sense of the world around them.

In line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026)**, this policy adopts a **child-centred and contextual safeguarding approach**, recognising that behaviour must be understood within the wider context of the child's life. Staff are expected to demonstrate **professional curiosity**, particularly where behaviour may indicate underlying needs, distress, or exposure to adversity.

Our aim is not to control behaviour, but to **teach, support and empower children** so they can develop self-regulation, resilience and positive relationships over time.

2. Policy Statement

Little Wonders Nurseries is committed to creating an environment where children feel **emotionally secure, respected and valued**, and where behaviour is supported through strong relationships and consistent practice.

We believe that:

- Positive behaviour develops through **secure attachments and trusting relationships**
- Children learn best when adults respond with **calmness, empathy and consistency**

- Behaviour should be approached with a focus on **understanding rather than judgement**
- All children have the right to be supported in a way that preserves their **dignity and self-worth**

We do not use punitive or fear-based approaches. Instead, our practice is rooted in:

- **Guidance rather than punishment**
- **Connection before correction**
- **Teaching rather than telling**

This ensures that children develop not only appropriate behaviours, but also the **internal skills and understanding** that underpin them.

3. Principles Underpinning Practice

Child-Centred and Developmentally Informed Practice

We recognise that children aged 0–5 are still developing:

- Language and communication
- Emotional regulation
- Impulse control
- Social understanding

As such, behaviours that may be perceived as challenging are often **developmentally appropriate** and should be responded to with understanding and support.

Staff take time to consider:

- What the child is communicating through their behaviour
- What developmental stage the child is at
- What support is needed to help the child succeed

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Relational and Attachment-Based Practice

Strong, secure relationships are at the heart of positive behaviour. Children who feel safe and understood are more likely to:

- Regulate their emotions
- Engage positively with others
- Respond to guidance

Staff prioritise building warm, consistent relationships, ensuring that every child feels known, valued and supported.

Behaviour as Communication

We understand that all behaviour communicates something. For example:

- Aggression may indicate frustration or inability to communicate
- Withdrawal may indicate anxiety or overwhelm
- Repetitive behaviours may indicate unmet sensory or emotional needs

Rather than focusing solely on the behaviour, staff seek to understand the **underlying need** and respond accordingly.

Consistency and Predictability

Children feel safest when expectations are clear and consistent. Staff ensure that:

- Boundaries are applied fairly
- Responses are predictable
- Routines are stable

This supports children in developing a sense of security and understanding what is expected of them.

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Safeguarding and Contextual Understanding

In line with **Working Together 2026**, behaviour is always considered within a safeguarding context.

Staff remain alert to whether behaviour may indicate:

- Emotional distress
- Exposure to domestic abuse
- Neglect or unmet needs
- Trauma or adverse experiences

Where concerns arise, these are explored with **professional curiosity** and escalated appropriately.

4. Promoting Positive Behaviour

Positive behaviour is not simply expected; it is **actively taught, modelled and reinforced** through daily interactions.

Creating an Enabling Environment

The environment is carefully planned to:

- Reduce frustration and conflict
- Promote independence and choice
- Support engagement and curiosity

Resources are accessible, spaces are organised, and routines are predictable, enabling children to feel confident and secure.

Clear and Developmentally Appropriate Expectations

Staff support children to understand expectations through:

- Simple, consistent language

- Visual cues and prompts
- Repetition and modelling

Expectations are realistic and appropriate to the child's age and stage.

Modelling Positive Behaviour

Adults act as role models, demonstrating:

- Respectful communication
- Turn-taking
- Problem-solving
- Emotional regulation

Children learn through observation, and therefore adult behaviour is critical.

Recognition and Reinforcement

Positive behaviour is acknowledged through:

- Specific praise (e.g. "You shared your toy kindly")
- Encouragement
- Celebration of effort

This supports children in understanding which behaviours are valued and why.

5. Supporting Behaviour (When Challenges Arise)

When children display behaviours that challenge, staff respond with **calm, thoughtful and consistent support**.

Immediate Response

Staff will:

- Remain calm and emotionally regulated
- Ensure the safety of all children
- Use clear and simple language
- Acknowledge the child's feelings

This helps to de-escalate situations and maintain a sense of safety.

Supporting Emotional Regulation

Children are supported to:

- Identify and name emotions
- Develop strategies to calm themselves
- Understand cause and effect

This may include:

- Quiet spaces
- Comfort and reassurance
- Sensory support

Teaching Alternative Behaviours

Rather than simply stopping behaviour, staff:

- Teach what to do instead
- Model appropriate responses
- Practice skills with the child

Restorative Practice

Where appropriate, children are supported to:

- Understand the impact of their actions
- Repair relationships
- Rebuild trust

This supports empathy and social development.

6. Behaviour and Safeguarding

Behaviour is always considered within a safeguarding context.

In line with **Working Together (2026)**, staff consider:

- The child's lived experience
- Patterns of behaviour over time
- Any changes in behaviour

Where behaviour raises concern:

- The DSL is informed
- Observations are recorded
- Further support or referrals are considered

This ensures that behaviour is not viewed in isolation, but as part of a **holistic understanding of the child**.

7. Supporting Children with Additional Needs

Some children require additional support to manage behaviour.

The nursery ensures:

- Individualised approaches
- Collaboration with parents
- Engagement with external professionals

Behaviour support plans may be developed where needed, ensuring that strategies are:

- Consistent
- Supportive
- Child-centred

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8. Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that behaviour is influenced by a child's wider context, including home life.

We work in partnership with parents by:

- Sharing information openly
- Developing consistent approaches
- Providing support and guidance

Conversations are approached with sensitivity, respect and a focus on the child's wellbeing.

9. Unacceptable Practices

At Little Wonders Nurseries, the following practices are strictly prohibited:

- Physical punishment
- Shouting or intimidation
- Humiliation or shaming
- Withholding food, comfort or care
- Isolation as punishment

All responses must uphold the child's dignity and reflect safeguarding principles.

10. Training and Professional Development

Staff receive ongoing training in:

- Child development
- Behaviour support strategies
- Safeguarding and trauma-informed practice

Training ensures that staff remain confident, reflective and consistent in their approach.

11. Monitoring and Review

Behaviour is monitored through:

- Observations
- Staff reflection
- Safeguarding oversight

The policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects:

- Current guidance
- Best practice
- The needs of children and families

Appendix: Behaviour Support Flowchart

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Child displays behaviour
        ↓
Adult responds calmly
        ↓
Ensure safety of all children
        ↓
Acknowledge feelings
        ↓
Support regulation
        ↓
Teach alternative behaviour
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Repair relationships

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Monitor patterns

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Concern? → DSL / Support Plan / External agencies