Little Acorns Montessori

Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

Ascot | Bracknell | Crowthorne

Document Control

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Key Contacts

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Statutory Compliance: This policy fulfils the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (DfE, effective 1 September 2025), Section 3 — Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements, paragraphs covering ‘Supporting and understanding children’s behaviour’.

Underpinning legislation: Childcare Act 2006 (ss. 39–40); Early Years Foundation Stage (Welfare Requirements) Regulations 2012; Children Act 1989 and 2004; Equality Act 2010; Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2015 (updated 2020).

Related policies — this policy must be read and implemented alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Biting Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Records Retention Policy
- e-Safety Policy

(All companion policies are held by the Nursery Manager and available on request.)

1. Policy Statement

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment in which every child aged 0–5 years can flourish. We believe that positive behaviour develops naturally when children feel secure, respected, and understood.

We take a relational, developmentally informed approach to behaviour. All responses to behaviour — whether positive or challenging — are grounded in respect for the child, an understanding of child development, and partnership with families. We never use punishment, humiliation, or physical restraint except in the strictly limited circumstances set out in this policy.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, students on placement, and contractors working at any Little Acorns Montessori site.

2. Aims

- Promote a positive, consistent, and nurturing culture across all sites.
- Ensure all staff use agreed, evidence-based strategies when supporting children's behaviour.
- Meet the statutory requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework (DfE, 2025), Section 3.
- Work in genuine partnership with parents and carers.
- Identify and respond promptly to children who may have additional needs, including SEND.
- Protect the safety and wellbeing of all children and staff.
- Meet the requirements of the Ofsted Early Years Inspection Toolkit (in force from 10 November 2025), under which Behaviour, Attitudes and Routines and Inclusion are evaluated as distinct areas using a five-point grading scale. www.gov.uk/ofsted

3. Statutory Framework and Legal Basis

This policy directly addresses the following statutory requirements:

EYFS Statutory Framework (Group and School-Based Providers, DfE, effective 1 September 2025) — Section 3

- Providers must have and implement a behaviour management policy (or, for schools, the behaviour policy must cover early years provision).
- A named practitioner must be responsible for behaviour management and must have relevant training. That practitioner must support colleagues in implementing the policy.

- Providers must not use corporal punishment and must take all reasonable steps to ensure that corporal punishment is not administered by any person who cares for or is in regular contact with a child.
- Physical intervention may only be used to prevent injury to a child or another person, or to prevent serious damage to property. Any such incident must be recorded and parents/carers notified as soon as possible on the same day.
- Providers must take a graduated approach to supporting children with persistent or significant behavioural difficulties, involving parents/carers and, where appropriate, external agencies.

Other relevant legislation

- Childcare Act 2006, sections 39–40: requires all registered providers to comply with the EYFS Welfare Requirements.
- Children Act 1989 and 2004: overarching duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Equality Act 2010: requires providers to make reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities and to avoid unlawful discrimination.
- SEND Code of Practice 2015 (updated 2020): graduated approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) for children with SEND.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (HM Government): behaviour that may indicate abuse or neglect must be referred to the DSL.
- Whistleblowing (EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, Section 3)**:** All providers must have, and communicate to staff, clear procedures for raising concerns about the conduct of colleagues, volunteers, or any adult in the setting. Staff must know how to report concerns both internally and to external agencies (including Ofsted and the local authority). The nursery's Whistleblowing Policy is a companion document to this policy.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Named Behaviour Lead (Nursery Manager)

The Nursery Manager is the Named Behaviour Lead across all Little Acorns Montessori sites and must:

- Hold, or work towards, relevant training in behaviour management in early years.
- Be the first point of escalation when a child’s behaviour is persistent or poses a risk.
- Lead the development and annual review of this policy.
- Coordinate with the SENCO, DSL, and external agencies where additional support is required.
- Ensure all staff receive an induction covering this policy and receive ongoing training.
- Ensure all behaviour incidents and interventions are properly recorded.

4.2 All Staff (including volunteers and students on placement)

- Read, understand, and implement this policy from the start of their placement or employment.
- Model positive behaviour, demonstrating kindness, empathy, self-regulation, and respect at all times.
- Apply consistent strategies and boundaries, as set out in Section 5 below.
- Record and report incidents in line with Section 7 of this policy.

- Never use physical punishment, threats, or humiliation.
- Raise any concerns about a child's behaviour or wellbeing with the Key Person or the Behaviour Lead.
- Be familiar with the nursery's Whistleblowing Policy and feel confident raising concerns about the conduct of any colleague, volunteer, or visitor — including concerns about the use of prohibited behaviour strategies — both internally with the Manager and externally where required.

4.3 Key Person

- Act as the primary point of contact between the nursery and the child's parents/carers.
- Monitor behaviour patterns for their key children and keep the Behaviour Lead informed.
- Lead parent/carer discussions about behaviour concerns, with management support where needed.
- Contribute to Individual Behaviour Support Plans where required.

4.4 SENCO

- Advise staff on appropriate strategies for children with identified or suspected SEND.
- Coordinate referrals to external specialists (e.g. speech and language therapy, educational psychology, Early Help).
- Support the graduated approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) for children with persistent difficulties.

4.5 Parents and Carers

- Share relevant information about their child's needs, background, or experiences that may affect behaviour.
- Engage constructively with staff when behaviour concerns are raised.
- Reinforce agreed strategies at home, where practicable.
- Sign Individual Behaviour Support Plans where these are introduced.

5. Promoting Positive Behaviour

5.1 Enabling Environment

Staff must ensure the physical and emotional environment actively supports positive behaviour. This includes:

- Consistent daily routines that children can predict and understand.
- Age-appropriate and accessible resources that reduce frustration and competition.
- Calm, well-organised spaces that minimise overstimulation.
- Visual timetables and resources to support communication and understanding.

5.2 Positive Relationships

- Staff must build warm, secure relationships with every child in their key group.
- Staff should use children's names, get down to their physical level, and make genuine connections throughout the day.

- Staff must celebrate children's efforts and achievements specifically and promptly: feedback must relate to the action, not general statements (e.g. "You shared the paint with Ellie — that was kind" rather than "good boy/girl").
- Peer-to-peer recognition should be encouraged, supporting children's own understanding of positive behaviour.

5.3 Consistent Expectations

- A small number of simple, positively framed rules must be displayed and communicated to children in an age-appropriate way (e.g. "We are kind", "We share", "We use gentle hands").
- Rules must be explained and revisited regularly through stories, role play, and group discussions.
- All staff must apply expectations consistently. Variation between adults confuses children and undermines behaviour support.
- Where appropriate and developmentally suitable, staff may support children's understanding of behaviour through natural or logical consequences — for example, if a child deliberately damages a resource, they may be supported to help tidy it up. This approach helps children develop a genuine understanding of cause and effect, responsibility, and empathy. Consequences must always be proportionate, calm, and connected to the behaviour; they must never be used punitively or in a way that causes distress or embarrassment to the child.

5.4 Staff Modelling

- Staff must model the behaviour they expect from children at all times: respectful communication, emotional regulation, and kindness.
- Staff must never shout at children or raise their voices in a threatening way.
- Staff should narrate their own emotional regulation to help children understand feelings (e.g. "I felt cross when that happened. I took a deep breath.").

6. Responding to Challenging Behaviour

Children in the early years may display challenging behaviour as a normal part of development, or as a communication of unmet needs, frustration, fear, or anxiety. Staff must respond with calm, compassion, and consistency.

6.1 In-the-Moment Response: Step-by-Step

1. Stay calm. Regulate your own emotions before responding. A calm adult is the most powerful de-escalation tool.
2. Ensure immediate safety. If a child is in danger or is endangering others, intervene calmly to reduce risk (see Section 6.4 on physical intervention).
3. Get down to the child's level. Use a quiet, steady voice. Acknowledge the feeling before addressing the behaviour (e.g. "I can see you're really upset").
4. Name the behaviour, not the child. Say "Hitting hurts people" not "you're naughty". Responses must always address behaviour, never the child's character.
5. Offer a limited choice to restore agency (e.g. "You can sit here quietly or come with me to the book corner").
6. Provide time and space for the child to regulate. A quiet, familiar area should be available — never used as punishment, but as a calm recovery space.

7. Reconnect and repair. Once the child is regulated, return to them for a brief, warm reconnection. This is essential for the child's emotional development and the adult-child relationship.
8. Record the incident (see Section 7). Inform the Behaviour Lead if the incident is significant or recurring.

6.2 Strategies Prohibited at Little Acorns Montessori

The following are strictly prohibited at all times, by all persons on our premises:

- Any form of corporal punishment (smacking, shaking, or any physical act intended to punish).
- Verbal humiliation, shouting in an intimidating way, or threatening language.
- Withholding food, drinks, rest, or toilet access as a response to behaviour.
- Excluding a child from group activities as a punishment.
- Any technique designed to frighten or intimidate a child.
- Singling out a child to embarrass them in front of peers or adults.

Any member of staff, volunteer, or visitor who uses a prohibited strategy must be reported to the Manager immediately. The DSL must be informed. The incident will be managed in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy and HR procedures.

6.3 De-escalation and Graduated Support

Where challenging behaviour is recurring or escalating, staff must follow the graduated approach below:

Stage 1 — Universal Support (all children):

- Consistent in-the-moment responses by key person and room staff.
- Positive reinforcement, visual cues, and adjusted environment as needed.
- Verbal update to parents/carers at collection or via Tapestry/communication book.

Stage 2 — Targeted Support:

- Key Person meets with parents/carers to share observations and agree joint strategies.
- An Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) is drafted, agreed, and signed by parents/carers.
- The SENCO is consulted to explore whether SEND factors may be present.
- Behaviour is monitored over an agreed review period, typically 4–6 weeks for initial concerns, though the review interval should reflect the complexity of the child's needs and be agreed with parents/carers. At each review, the Key Person, Named Behaviour Lead, and SENCO (where involved) will determine whether the IBSP should be closed, continued with revised strategies, or escalated to Stage 3. All review decisions and their rationale must be recorded in the child's file.

Stage 3 — Specialist and External Support:

- Referral to external agencies will ordinarily be made with parental consent (e.g. Early Help, Educational Psychology, SALT, local authority SEND team). Where parents/carers decline consent for a referral and the nursery has ongoing safeguarding or welfare concerns about the child, the Named Behaviour Lead will consult with the DSL. A referral without consent may be made where the threshold for safeguarding concern is met, in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- An approach such as Five to Thrive or an attachment-based intervention may be introduced.
- Progress is reviewed at regular intervals. The IBSP is updated to reflect new strategies and outcomes.

6.4 Physical Intervention

Physical intervention — meaning the use of reasonable force to prevent a child from injuring themselves or others, or from causing serious damage to property — is only lawful in the circumstances set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025 (paragraph 3.74). It must never be used as a form of punishment.

Planned physical intervention (for example, as part of an Individual Behaviour Support Plan for a child with identified needs) must be: agreed in advance with parents/carers and documented in the IBSP or a specific risk assessment; carried out only by staff who have received appropriate training in safe physical intervention techniques; and reviewed regularly as part of the IBSP process.

Unplanned emergency intervention — where a child is at imminent and immediate risk of seriously injuring themselves or another person — may be used by any member of staff without prior parental consent, using the minimum force necessary for the minimum time necessary. Staff must not feel that the absence of a documented plan prevents them from acting to prevent immediate serious injury.

- In all cases, whether planned or unplanned, staff must:
- Inform the Named Behaviour Lead (Nursery Manager) immediately after any physical intervention.
- Complete a written Behaviour Incident Record on the same day (see Section 7).
- Notify the child's parents/carers on the same day, before collection where possible.
- Ensure the incident is reviewed by the Named Behaviour Lead within 48 hours.

7. Recording and Reporting

7.1 What Must Be Recorded

- Any incident where a child’s behaviour results in injury to themselves or another person.
- Any incident where physical intervention is used.
- Any significant or recurring incidents that form part of a pattern.
- All IBSP entries, reviews, and parental communications.

7.2 How to Record

- Complete a Behaviour Incident Record form on the same day as the incident. The form must include: date and time; names of children and adults involved; description of the behaviour and context; actions taken; outcome; and any injuries.
- The completed form must be signed by the recording staff member and countersigned by the Behaviour Lead (Nursery Manager).
- The original record is stored in the child’s confidential file. Records are kept securely and retained in line with our Records Retention Policy.
- A copy of any incident involving another child must also be placed in that child’s file, with appropriate anonymisation where required.
- Any incident that may constitute a safeguarding concern must be referred immediately to the DSL in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

7.3 Parent / Carer Notification

- Parents/carers of any child involved in a behaviour incident that results in injury, requires physical intervention, or is part of a monitored pattern must be informed on the same day.
- Notification should take place before collection where possible.
- The discussion must be recorded and signed by the Key Person or Manager.
- Parents/carers must be informed of any physical intervention as soon as possible on the day it occurs.

8. Communication with Parents and Carers

Effective partnership with parents and carers is central to our approach. We operate an open-door policy and welcome dialogue about behaviour at any time.

- Routine updates on behaviour — both positive and concerning — are shared via the Key Person at collection, through Tapestry, or the child's communication book.
- Where concerns are recurring, a formal meeting will be arranged. This may include the Key Person, the Nursery Manager, and/or the SENCO.
- All meetings related to behaviour concerns will be recorded in writing and a summary shared with the parent/carer.
- Parents/carers are asked to share any significant events at home (e.g. bereavement, new sibling, family changes) that may affect their child's behaviour. This information is treated confidentially.
- Where a child's behaviour is repeatedly putting the health and safety of children and/or staff at risk, the nursery reserves the right to reduce the number of sessions the child attends. In extreme cases, the nursery may cancel the child's place. Such decisions will only be made after all support strategies have been exhausted and after full consultation with the family. The nursery will provide written notice and the opportunity to discuss the decision.

9. Challenging Behaviour by Adults on the Premises

Little Acorns Montessori has a duty of care to children and staff. We will not tolerate threatening, discriminatory, or aggressive behaviour from any adult on our premises.

- Any adult displaying threatening or abusive behaviour will be asked to leave the premises immediately by the Manager.
- Discriminatory remarks or behaviour (including on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion, or sexual orientation) will not be tolerated and will be addressed formally.
- Where a parent or carer's behaviour presents a pattern of concern, the Manager may issue a written warning. Continued behaviour may result in the loss of the child's place.
- All incidents involving adult behaviour will be recorded and, where relevant, referred to the DSL in case there are safeguarding implications for the child.
- Where there is an immediate risk to the safety of staff or children, the police will be called without hesitation.
- The use of mobile phones, cameras, or other electronic devices with imaging or sharing capabilities on Little Acorns Montessori premises is governed by the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and e-Safety Policy. Any adult — including parents, carers, or visitors — who uses such a device in a manner that raises concern (including recording children without consent or sharing images) will be asked to stop immediately. The incident will be

reported to the DSL. Staff must not use personal devices in areas where children are present, in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Please see our Parental Involvement Policy for more details.

10. Inclusion, Equality, and SEND

Little Acorns Montessori is an inclusive setting. We recognise that some children may present with behaviour that is linked to an undiagnosed or diagnosed SEND, attachment difficulty, developmental stage, or adverse childhood experience.

- All responses to behaviour must be developmentally appropriate and take account of the individual child's needs, age, stage, and communication abilities.
- The Equality Act 2010 requires the nursery to make reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities. The IBSP process is one mechanism through which we document and implement such adjustments.
- We actively work to ensure that no child is treated less favourably on the basis of a protected characteristic. Staff must challenge any discriminatory attitudes or language — in children or adults — sensitively and promptly.
- The Fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs are actively embedded across our curriculum and daily life. In the context of behaviour, this means children are supported to: have a voice and be heard (democracy); understand and follow shared rules and boundaries (rule of law); make age-appropriate choices and develop autonomy (individual liberty); treat others with kindness and consideration (mutual respect); and celebrate difference and diversity (tolerance). Staff model these values consistently and challenge any language or behaviour — from children or adults — that is contrary to them.

See our SEND and EDI Policies for more details.

11. Link to Safeguarding

Behaviour can be an indicator of safeguarding concerns. Staff must be alert to:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in a child's behaviour.
- Behaviour that may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, or domestic violence in the home.
- Behaviour that may indicate a child is witnessing or experiencing harm.
- Unexplained or prolonged absence from the setting, particularly where a child's most recent attendance involved a notable behaviour incident or where attempts to reach the parent/carer via multiple emergency contacts have been unsuccessful. Such absences must be referred to the DSL in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the nursery's Absence Monitoring procedures.

Any such concerns must be referred immediately to the DSL without delay, in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff must not investigate concerns themselves.

12. Staff Training and Support

- All new staff receive an induction covering this policy before working unsupervised with children.
- The Named Behaviour Lead must hold or work towards recognised training in behaviour management in early years settings.

- All staff should access relevant continuing professional development (CPD) in behaviour, emotional regulation, and child development.
- Training is not considered complete at the point of attendance. The Nursery Manager is responsible for supporting staff to embed learning from behaviour and safeguarding training into their daily practice. This includes follow-up in supervision, coaching in the room, and reflection in team meetings. Records of CPD, including how training has been applied, are maintained in each staff member's personnel file.
- Staff are supported through supervision sessions to discuss challenging behaviour in a reflective and solution-focused way.
- The nursery recognises that supporting children with challenging behaviour can be emotionally demanding. Staff wellbeing is taken seriously, and any member of staff who has concerns about their own wellbeing should speak to the Manager.

13. Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Nursery Manager, or sooner following any significant incident or change in legislation.

- The annual review will take account of: feedback from staff supervision and team meetings; patterns identified in recorded behaviour incidents; feedback from parents/carers; updates to relevant legislation or statutory guidance; and Ofsted recommendations.
- The reviewed and updated policy will be shared with all staff and made available to parents/carers on request.

14. Key Research and References

The following statutory documents and evidence-based resources underpin this policy:

- DfE (2025). Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (effective 1 September 2025). www.gov.uk
- HM Government (2023). Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- DfE / DoH (2015, updated 2020). SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years.
- Early Education (2021). Birth to 5 Matters: Non-statutory guidance for the EYFS.
- CASEL (ongoing). Social and Emotional Learning in Early Childhood. casel.org
- Five to Thrive — an attachment-based approach to positive parenting. fivetoThrive.co.uk
- Ofsted (2025). *Early Years Inspection Toolkit* (in force 10 November 2025). Includes standalone evaluation of Inclusion, Behaviour, Attitudes and Routines, and Children's Welfare and Wellbeing. www.gov.uk/ofsted

15. Sign Off

Role	Name	Date
Owner/Director	Jonathan Duffy	June 2026