



## SUPPORTING BEHAVIOUR POLICY

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Here at Ohana Centre, 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 for their behaviour.

We value behaviour to understand children's needs and communication. Our role is not to deny or move past emotions and feelings, but to support children in processing these.

We recognise behaviour as learning in action. It should be viewed through the same lens as any other area of learning, such as literacy or self-care. When viewed this way, it opens possibilities for practitioners to plan more meaningfully for support.

There is a range of factors that can affect a child's behaviour at any time and the practitioner's role is to develop a safe emotional environment which will support children in understanding and identifying their own emotions, building a positive self-image, and developing good relationships with others.

As children develop, they learn about boundaries, the difference between right and wrong, and to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places, and objects. The development of these skills is varied and can fluctuate, as they do with adults, and adults must support children through guidance, modelling and understanding of what can impact behaviour. Key staff can help identify and address triggers and reasons behind behaviour and help children reflect, engage in co-regulation with a trusted adult, and develop a capacity for self-regulation.

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### Safeguarding and Behaviour

At Ohana, behaviour support and safeguarding are fully interconnected. Children's behaviour may communicate:

- Distress or fear
- Pain or discomfort

- Communication needs
- Sensory overwhelm
- Emotional difficulty
- Possible safeguarding concerns

Staff must use **professional curiosity** when behaviour changes suddenly or becomes inconsistent with a child's developmental profile.

Any behaviour that raises concern must be reported **immediately** to:

**DSL:** *Alba Arenas Martín*

**Deputy DSL:** *Amerie Appiah-Badu*

This includes:

- Regression or sudden withdrawal
- Increased dysregulation
- Avoidance of certain adults
- Distress during intimate care
- Signs of fear or anxiety
- Unexplained injuries
- Non-verbal or AAC-based disclosures

Behaviour concerns must **never** be managed solely as “behaviour issues” when there may be safeguarding implications.

## **Co-Regulation and Self-Regulation**

Our teaching and support have a co-regulation focus.

Self-regulation is lifelong development in regulating emotions, thoughts, and behaviour outputs. Self-regulation enables adults and children to work positively towards a goal. Self-regulation is not developed independently — it is reliant on co-regulation.

Co-regulation – working towards a common purpose, finding ways to resolve stress and upset and achieving balance. Supported through attentive relationships between caregiver and child.

Over time and with the right support, children can begin to build the capacity for self-regulation. Each experience of co-regulation helps to build the neural pathways that regulate emotion.

Ohana centre understands that Neurodivergent children and those with developmental differences may need more support through co-regulation.

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### **Trauma-Informed & Neuro-Affirming Practice**

In line with our SEND Policy and Safeguarding Policy, we also recognise:

- Behaviour may be a stress response (fight, flight, freeze, fawn, shutdown).
- Co-regulation and relational safety are essential for emotional development.
- Children must never be shamed, isolated or punished for communicating through behaviour.
- Staff must adapt expectations based on sensory profiles, processing differences and developmental needs.

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### **Procedures**

To support children's behaviour in an appropriate way we will:

- Attend relevant training to help understand what is behind behaviour and ways that we can sensitively support this.
- Implement the setting's behaviour procedures, using the stepped approach, where relevant.
- We may use other approved techniques for children with SEND.
- Have the necessary skills to support other staff with behaviour issues and to access expert advice, if necessary.

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### **Link to SENCO, Therapists and Multi-Agency Support**

Where behaviour suggests unmet needs or SEND differences, the SENCO will work alongside:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy

- Educational Psychology
- Early Help
- Paediatric or social care services (where required)

Behaviour plans must align with the child's IEP, sensory plan and communication profile.

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## **Stepped Approach**

### **Step 1: Universal Support**

- We will ensure that EYFS guidance relating to 'behaviour management' is incorporated into relevant policy and procedures.
- We will be knowledgeable about and apply the setting's procedures for Supporting Behaviour.
- We will undertake an annual audit of the provision to ensure the environment and practices support healthy social and emotional development.
- We will regularly review and discuss how the environment and practices respond to children's sensory profiles.
- Ensure that all staff are supported to address issues relating to behaviour including applying initial and focused intervention approaches (see below).
- Adults will consistently apply the following:
  - Be a role model.
  - Get down to the child's level.
  - Listen actively.
  - Use visuals to support behaviour so children understand routines and can visually explore different emotions.
  - Use mirrors for children to explore feelings and facial expressions.
  - Time-in with the child to co-regulate together.
  - Review staff interaction at crucial times of the day.
    - We will use the RULER method with all children.

If behaviour during Step 1 raises concerns about fear, distress, regression, avoidance or injury, staff must escalate to the DSL.

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## **Step 2: Individualised Support**

- We will take the time to consider what individual children's behaviour is telling us about their needs.
- Behaviours that result in concern for the child and/or others will be discussed between the key person and manager.
- **If behaviour suggests distress, trauma or a safeguarding concern, the DSL must be informed immediately.**
- If behaviour continues to be a concern, the SENCO and relevant therapists will contribute to planning.

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## **Step 3**

- It may be agreed that Early Help should begin.
- If the child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, safeguarding procedures must be followed immediately.
- External agencies' guidance must be integrated into the plan.

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## **Initial Intervention & Focused Intervention**

- ABC observations must also record sensory input, emotional state, communication attempts and environmental triggers.
- Where ABC reveals indicators of fear, pain or possible harm, the DSL must review the record.

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## **Use of Rewards & Sanctions**

- Rewards must never be used in ways that shame, isolate or control children.

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## **Physical Intervention**

- Any physical intervention must be the **minimum force necessary**, for the **shortest time**, and only to prevent immediate harm.
- All incidents must be reported to the DSL and recorded with:

- context
- de-escalation attempted
- staff present
- child's emotional response
- how parents were informed

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### **Challenging Behaviour Between Children**

- Patterns must be monitored to identify triggers, sensory needs or possible safeguarding concerns.

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### **Biting Section**

- Repeated biting of the same child requires DSL and SENCO oversight.

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### **Challenging Behaviour From Adults**

- Any adult behaviour that intimidates, threatens or shames a child must be escalated to the DSL.

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### **Record Keeping, Monitoring & Alignment**

To align with Ofsted and EYFS:

- All behaviour incidents must be recorded using behaviour logs.
- Repeated patterns must be reviewed by the key person, SENCO, DSL and leadership.
- Records may form part of:
  - safeguarding chronology
  - SEN evidence
  - therapy planning
  - Early Help referral
  - EHCP application
- This policy works in partnership with:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Online Safety Policy

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- Last review: **8<sup>th</sup> December 2025**
- Reviewed By: Alba Arenas Martín
- Next review due: **November 2026** or earlier if statutory guidance changes.