



## **THE KNOWLE WEST SUPPORTIVE INTERACTIONS STRATEGY**

(How we develop and enable children's relationships, behaviour and social learning)

### Why do we have a Strategy?

- To ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to learn and begin to develop good relationships and a developmentally appropriate understanding of others' feelings.
- To ensure that all parents, carers and professionals are aware of the strategies we use to support children at the Centre.
- To ensure a calm and positive working environment for everyone.
- To ensure that all adults at the Centre are using the same strategies, enabling all children to develop their ability to share, take turns, listen to others and to experience clear, consistent boundaries.
- To enable children to express and acknowledge their feelings and to allow children and adults to respect each other.

### How do we do this?

We believe children's daily experiences and interactions form the basis of children's growing understanding of the world and their response to it. The ongoing support of parents, carers and other adults helps children to take the first steps towards independence and their rightful place in society. Across the children's centre we enable this support by:

- Developing real relationships that are respectful, genuine and supportive.

- Respecting and acknowledging children's ideas
- Ensuring that the learning environment is well equipped, inviting, relevant, challenging and easily accessible.
- Building upon and developing children's own interests.
- Ensuring consistency of experience and routine.
- Talking with children and involving them in discussions and decisions.
- Accepting and planning for behavioural differences.
- Looking for 'early warning signs' or patterns of behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading to foreseeable risks.

In ALL interactions with children, we ALWAYS do the following:

- Express the positive and focus on the behaviour we DO want, with a particular focus on our School Rules: We Walk in the Classroom, We are Kind to Each Other, We Listen to Each Other, We Use Quiet Voices Inside.
- Offer appropriate comfort and contact to children who are distressed or angry and help them to acknowledge, understand, express and talk about their feelings.
- Listen to and respect what children are telling us verbally and through their emotions, actions and body language.
- Encourage children to take responsibility for their own behaviour by giving them time and support to think or talk things through and find their own solutions. (see additional sheet 'Conflict Resolution Strategies').
- Model behaviours and approaches to difficulties to children.
- Acknowledge, celebrate and share children's effort and learning.

Sometimes, adults will intervene in situations to set reasonable limits and expectations and to support children in making choices. This may be, for example, where there is an immediate risk of a child being hurt, where there are threatening or racist behaviours, or where a clear boundary is considered to be needed, perhaps as part of an Individual Education Plan drawn up with parents/carers.

Our agreed approach for this is as follows:

We believe a simple and gradually stepped approach gives children the greatest opportunity to consider their actions and to learn to be assertive and use these strategies themselves.

Clearly, for the youngest children, only the gesture and clear, positive instruction "Please stop!" of the first step will be used when appropriate. This is so that they become used to the action and the clear positive language that will be used as they grow older and increase their understanding.

Adults always ensure that a child understands the actions and words at each step and, where appropriate, use visual cues to support children's understanding. We will

model developmentally appropriate means of making amends when a third party has been injured by a peer (e.g. asking if the other child is okay or offering physical comfort).

The attached strategy is to be shared with ALL staff inside the whole environment, with parents, with supply staff and as part of the induction process for new parents and members of staff.

## Conflict Resolution Strategies

### Steps for resolving conflicts between children

1. **Approach calmly** – Observe as you approach, prepare yourself for a positive outcome. Be aware of body language – it is important to be neutral in order to respect all the points of view. Get down to children’s level. If there is an object involved take hold of it yourself, neutralize the situation.
2. **Acknowledge feelings** – use descriptive words, (you seem angry, sad, upset, or maybe very angry, etc). This helps them “let go” of the emotion and helps them calm down.
3. **Gather information** – tell the children you want to hear from each of them (not “why did you do it?” or “how do you think s/he feels?” – too abstract), but “what’s wrong?”
4. **Restate the problem** – using the information provided by the children restate the problem. Reframe any language which could be hurtful – “I don’t like her, she’s not my friend”. “You are angry and you want to play alone?” Check with the children that you’ve got it right.
5. **Ask for ideas and solutions, choose one together** – help children think through specifics so that you check their understanding of the situation and what they will do, so if they respond “They can share”, this needs expanding.
6. **Be prepared** to give follow-up support. Children may need help to put this plan into action, or more work to sort out the issues.
7. **Remember** – it may not work every time, but if we use this approach consistently children will begin to use it themselves, and if they use it effectively they will have acquired a life skill.