

Chester-le-Street CE Day Care

Behaviour Policy: 9 Months to 2 Years



Key Contacts

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This policy will be reviewed when required. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures

1. Policy Statement

At Chester le Street CE Day-Care we recognise that children aged 9 months to 2 years are at the very beginning of learning how to understand, manage, and express their emotions and behaviours. Our role is to create a **calm, nurturing, safe environment** where each child can develop secure attachments and learn to communicate their needs appropriately.

We do not expect children of this age to follow rules or regulate their emotions independently. Instead, we focus on **responsive caregiving, positive reinforcement, and modelling behaviour**, while working closely with families to support consistency across settings.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- Support the **emotional development** of all children
- Provide a safe and consistent environment that promotes **positive interactions**
- Help children begin to understand simple boundaries through modelling and repetition
- Respond to challenging behaviour in a **calm, age-appropriate and sensitive** way
- Work with parents to ensure a consistent approach between home and nursery
- Promote a **non-punitive**, relational approach to behaviour management

3. Understanding Behaviour in the Under 2s

At this age, children are:

- Developing early communication skills (mostly non-verbal)
- Exploring emotions like frustration, excitement, and anxiety
- Testing boundaries and seeking predictability
- Beginning to assert independence (e.g. saying “no”, throwing objects)
- Not yet able to regulate their emotions or understand consequences

Therefore:

All behaviour is viewed as **communication**, not as intentional defiance.

4. Our Approach to Behaviour

We use a **positive behaviour approach** underpinned by the following strategies:

Positive Reinforcement

- Praise and acknowledge helpful behaviours (“You shared the toy — well done!”)

- Smile, offer hugs, and maintain warm tone
- Model calm, respectful interactions



Co-Regulation

- Support children to manage big feelings (e.g. “I can see you’re upset. I’m here.”)
- Use calming techniques: gentle voice, eye contact, touch
- Name the emotion: “You’re feeling cross because you wanted the truck.”



Consistent Routines

- Provide predictable routines to reduce anxiety
- Use visual or verbal cues to prepare children for transitions (e.g. tidy-up time)



Gentle Redirection

- Offer choices when appropriate: “Would you like the blue ball or the red one?”
- Distract from inappropriate behaviour with engaging alternatives
- Redirect physically (gently) if needed

5. Responding to Challenging Behaviour

We **do not use** time-out, shouting, humiliation, or isolation. These are not developmentally appropriate for this age group.

Examples of how we respond:

Behaviour	Response
Biting	Remove gently, say calmly: “Biting hurts. We use kind hands.”
Throwing toys	Remove object, explain: “We throw balls, not bricks. That could hurt.”
Hitting / pushing	Hold child calmly if needed: “No hitting. We are gentle with our friends.”
Screaming / tantrum	Stay nearby, validate: “It’s okay to feel upset. I’m here to help.”

If behaviour poses a **risk to others or the child**, we may intervene physically (e.g. removing a toy, holding a child gently) in line with our **Positive Handling Policy**

6. Supporting Emotional Literacy

We help children begin to identify and express emotions using:

- Simple words (“happy”, “sad”, “angry”, “gentle”)
- Books, puppets and songs that explore feelings
- Facial expressions and gestures to model empathy
- Age-appropriate tools like feelings boards or visuals

7. Partnership with Parents

We:

- Share information daily about behaviour or emotional changes
- Use shared strategies for consistency (e.g. phrases, gestures)
- Encourage open dialogue about what works at home and in nursery
- Respect cultural approaches to behaviour and discuss any differing expectations

If there are ongoing concerns, we may develop an individual behaviour plan in consultation with the **SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead**, or external professionals if needed.

8. Inclusion and Additional Needs

Some behaviours may be linked to developmental delay, communication needs, sensory processing difficulties or trauma. In these cases, we will:

- Work with the SENCO and other professionals (e.g. SALT, EPs, health visitors)
- Use **reasonable adjustments** and targeted support
- Involve parents at all stages

9. Staff Training and Support

All staff:

- Receive training in behaviour management, attachment and trauma-informed care
- Are expected to model respectful, calm and emotionally responsive behaviour at all times
- Reflect regularly on their practice in team meetings and supervisions
- Use the **key person** system to develop secure emotional attachments with each child

10. Monitoring and Review

- Incidents are recorded if they involve harm to another child, require physical intervention, or cause significant distress.
- Patterns of behaviour are monitored through observation and discussion.