

Relationships Policy

Rationale and Ethos

This Policy reflects current best practice in early years, informed by research into brain development, emotional regulation and the importance of relationships in supporting children's learning and wellbeing.

We understand that **behaviour is a form of communication**. Children's behaviour is influenced by their stage of brain development, their emotional state, their experiences, relationships, environment, and any unmet needs. All feelings are valid and accepted; however, not all behaviours are safe or appropriate. Our role as adults is to respond in ways that help children feel safe, understood and supported to develop emotional regulation over time.

This policy is underpinned by:

- Secure, trusting relationships
- Co-regulation as the foundation for self-regulation
- An inclusive, trauma-informed approach
- Attachment Theory as it relates to the formation of relationships and emotional regulation development
- Best practice in supporting children's emotional and personal, social and emotional development (PSED)

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) will have a One Page Profile to provide individualised support which may include triggers and the appropriate responses required.

Co-regulation plans will be written in collaboration with parents for some children where appropriate - these plans are a proactive approach where adults support a child to manage emotions and behaviour through calm, consistent responses and strong relationships. It helps children feel safe while gradually developing their own self-regulation skills.

Understanding Children's Emotional Development

Children's brains develop from the bottom up. The areas responsible for survival and emotional responses develop before the areas responsible for reasoning, impulse control and problem-solving. Young children therefore cannot be expected to regulate strong emotions independently. When children are overwhelmed or dysregulated, they may move outside their *window of tolerance*. More information about the 'window of tolerance' can be found here [Bing Videos](#)

At these times, learning and reasoning are not accessible. Calm, consistent adults are essential in helping children return to a regulated state.

Through repeated experiences of **co-regulation**, children gradually develop the skills needed for **self-regulation**.

Co-Regulation in Practice

Linskill Nursery

The Linskill Centre, Linskill Terrace, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 2AY

T 0191 257 8000 E nursey@linskill.org W www.linskill-nursery.org

Company limited by guarantee: 04827255 Registered Charity: 1119143

Co-regulation is central to our approach. It involves adults:

- Lending their calm to children
- Modelling emotional regulation
- Naming and validating emotions
- Supporting children to feel safe before expecting behaviour change
-

We recognise that children are not 'giving us a hard time' but are often 'having a hard time'. Connection always comes before correction.

Staff will:

- Remain calm and regulated themselves
- Use reduced, clear and consistent language
- Get down to the child's level and offer emotional containment
- Use scripts that validate feelings, offer choices and hold boundaries
- Follow a One Page Profile for children with SEND.

Examples include:

- "I can see you're feeling really angry-you're face is all red."
- "It's okay to feel angry. It's not okay to hurt others."
- "I'm here to help you. Let's keep everyone safe."

Creating a Regulating Environment

We aim to create an environment that supports children to remain within their window of tolerance. This includes:

- Predictable routines and consistent boundaries
- Predictable, emotionally available adults
- Visual supports and clear expectations
- Opportunities for movement and sensory regulation
- Calm spaces and access to quiet activities
- Positive noticing and affirmation ('filling their cup')

Daily practice supports children to practise regulation skills while they are calm, so they are better able to use them when emotions are heightened.

Supporting Positive Relationships and Social Development

Staff model respectful, kind and inclusive behaviour at all times. Children are supported to:

- Build positive relationships with peers and adults
- Recognise and name emotions in themselves and others
- Develop empathy and understanding

Linskill Nursery

The Linskill Centre, Linskill Terrace, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 2AY

T 0191 257 8000 E nursey@linskill.org W www.linskill-nursery.org

Company limited by guarantee: 04827255 Registered Charity: 1119143



- Practise sharing, turn-taking and cooperation
- Make choices and develop autonomy

Group agreements and expectations are co-produced with children in developmentally appropriate ways.

Consistent, positive language is used across the setting, such as:

- “Kind hands”
- “Walking feet”
- “Good choices”
- “Stop and think”

Responding to Behaviour

When behaviour becomes unsafe or impacts on the child or others, staff will respond in a way that is:

- Calm, respectful and non-judgemental
- Proportionate and appropriate to the child’s age and needs
- Focused on teaching, not punishment
-

Strategies may include:

- Adjusting the environment
- Supporting regulation through movement, sensory input or calm activities
- Offering age-appropriate choices
- Temporary withdrawal with a positive purpose (never as punishment)

There will be no deprivation or exclusion from activities.

Boundaries and Safety

Clear boundaries help children feel safe. Staff will:

- Be fair and consistent
- State boundaries clearly and calmly
- Hold boundaries while supporting emotions
-

Physical punishment is never permitted. This includes smacking, shouting, humiliation, intimidation, or any action that frightens or shames a child.

Physical intervention or reasonable force may only be used to prevent immediate danger to the child or others. Any such incidents will:

- Be carried out with the child’s dignity in mind
- Be recorded and reported via the nurseries Incident Recording system
- Be shared with parents/carers as soon as practicable

Linskill Nursery

The Linskill Centre, Linskill Terrace, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 2AY

T 0191 257 8000 E nursey@linskill.org W www.linskill-nursery.org

Company limited by guarantee: 04827255 Registered Charity: 1119143



You can access further information about this here [Use of reasonable force in schools – GOV.UK](#)

Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are key partners in supporting children's emotional development. They will:

- Be informed of this policy during the introductory visit
- Be kept informed of any incidents or concerns
- Be involved in discussions around strategies and support plans

Where a child requires additional support, co-regulation plans and strategies will be developed collaboratively with parents/carers and, where appropriate, other professionals.

Staff Support and Responsibilities

Staff are expected to:

- Model emotionally regulated behaviour
- Seek support if they feel unable to manage a situation calmly
- Support colleagues when needed
- Reflect on practice and engage in ongoing professional development

Concerns about persistent or escalating behaviour will be discussed with the senior team, which can include the SENDCO. External professional advice may be sought where appropriate.