

Sample Policy Statement

Little Stars on the Lanes recognise all children as individual with unique needs and abilities. We encourage children to develop the skill of regulating their emotions, problem-solving and decision-making.

All staff will support children with their individual needs and adjust the supports as required. Staff will implement clear and consistent expectations depending on the age, abilities and stage of development of the child. Staff will follow clearly the strategies to support children as named in this policy.

The early years' service will work collaboratively with parents/guardians to implement the managing behaviour policy. Through this partnership, it places each child's needs and rights at the centre of our practice.

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Procedure for Supporting Positive Behaviour

Staff

- Staff model positive behaviour through how they play, speak and interact with the children. Role modelling may include: Explaining feelings, using a calm tone of voice, getting down to the child's eye level, giving choice to the children, using language to help children understand positive decisions, waiting and checking for the child's understanding.
- **Little Stars on the Lane** has a Code of conduct for staff relating to behaviour management.
- A key worker is assigned to each child who is responsible for building up a special relationship with the child and their family. This helps with getting to know what the child enjoys and some of the situations they may find difficult.
- Staff always comfort an upset child.
- Staff show empathy to the feelings which the child may be experiencing.
- A child's behaviour is not discussed amongst the staff team, or outside **Little Stars on the Lane**. Only relevant staff will be informed of information including action plans, or care plans.

Children

- Expectations are consistent for all children, and are dependent on the age, stage of development and needs of the child.
- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings are acknowledged by sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Play activities are used to play out challenging situations so children get the opportunity to practice self-regulation strategies.
- Books and storytelling are used to talk about feelings and what we can all do when we are angry, upset or frustrated.

Early Childhood Ireland 2023

- A range of activities are available to the group of children which offer a lot of choice to all in order to support children's play ideas.
- The children are encouraged to develop rules they think are important helping them take ownership of their behaviour (depending on age and verbal ability).

Parents

- A summary of the managing behaviour policy is within the parent's handbook. All parents have access to the full policy during hours of operation.
- Requests of specific strategies from parents are only be implemented where it follows the services managing behaviour policy and is line with best practice.

- Staff implement a balanced approach to communication with parents.
- Staff are aware of respectful communication in supporting a child in managing their behaviour.
- Where staff need to speak with a parent/guardian, the child will not be present.
- The parent/guardian is informed of incidents of behaviour in a mindful manner e.g. away from the door, not calling the parent into the room in front of other parents, away from children.
- Parents can request a meeting to discuss specific elements of the managing behaviour policy. The service, at the earliest convenience will facilitate this.
- **Little Stars on the Lane** maintains clear procedures on monitoring and recording any incidents or issues in relation to supporting children with managing their own behaviour.
- Information is only shared with parent/ guardians regarding strategies or plans in place to support their child. Information about other children is not shared.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss any concern regarding behaviours occurring. All issues, concerns or grievances are managed within **Little Stars on the Lane**.
- Where an accident and/or incident has been recorded under the managing behaviour policy, details are recorded on two separate record forms for each parent to sign. Records only disclose the name of the individual child of the parent who is signing the form. The second child's name is not disclosed.

Curriculum & Environments

- Focuses on child led activities.
- Children do not sit for long periods of time. Children are provided with choice to move from an activity which does not interest them.
- Play environments are laid out into specific play spaces which supports children's natural curiosity encouraging them to become engrossed in their play and develop their own interests.
- Routines are flexible to meet the needs of the children.
- **Little Stars on the Lane** keeps a minimum number of transitions throughout the day.
- The environment provides sufficient space, equipment and materials to meet the needs, abilities and interests of the children.
- Children have daily access to the outdoor environment, ideally at any time they wish.

Early Childhood Ireland 2023

Strategies for Supporting Children

Each child is assigned a "key person". This is important for gathering information and knowledge about the whole child. Through their role, key workers can anticipate a child's reaction and behaviour knowing what is likely to upset a child's mood or behaviour, knowing when to step-in or just observe from a safe distance.

Little Stars on the Lane follows different strategies based on the type, frequency and impact of the behaviour(s).

1. Resolving an Incident / Conflict Management

This type of behaviour may be a once off incident or it may be specific times where a child needs support based on their age, stage of development or needs.

Little Stars on the Lane supports the development of self-regulation through the *Conflict Resolution Approach* or the *Whole Brain Child Strategies*.

These strategies support the child to develop the skill of regulating emotions and problem-solving. There may be different levels of support which are needed for each individual child, the adult should adjust support where necessary in this process for each individual child.

Strategy

Below are the steps to follow in using the *Conflict Resolution Approach*.

- – **Approach calmly** – put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child's eye level.
- – **Acknowledge feelings** – describe how the child/ children are feeling, children often don't have the language to explain how they feel, leading to more frustration. Help the child by describing it for them "you both look very sad and upset"
- – **Gather information** – remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words out so take your time and remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations.
- – **Restate the problem** – after listening to the children simply describe what the problem is so both/ all can understand both sides of the story.
- – **Ask for ideas for solutions & choose one together (or for younger children give a solution)** - give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit of time but it's giving the children lots of practice compromising with one another which are vital skills they will need.
- – **Be prepared to give follow up support** – it is important the staff member follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.

Communication with parents

- These behaviours may or may not immediately be shared with parents as it may be linked to the age of the child or stage of development. It is the role of the adult to support the child in developing these problem-solving skills.

Early Childhood Ireland 2023

2. Managing Moderate Behaviour Issues

This type of behaviour can be recognised when a behaviour is becoming a more regular occurrence.

Incidents of reoccurring behaviour are documented by **Little Stars on the Lane**. The type of information which is recorded may include location, time, date, triggers, witness. This is stored within the child's file in a locked cabinet.

Strategy

The strategies used are consistent and follow the *Conflict Resolution Approach* or the *Whole Brain Child Strategies*.

Communication

Staff

- - The staff team will discuss the reoccurring behaviour and put a plan in place. The plan will have a start and end date for review.
- - Staff may observe the child to identify any triggers of the behaviour. This may be the key worker, and/or another staff member. The plan will identify the duration of observations e.g. for one week, two weeks.
- - When the behaviour happens the steps above will be implemented.
- - Where observations are carried out, the child should not feel isolated. It is important at this
 - stage, staff involved are clear on the purpose of the observations and behaviours being
 - observed.
- - In respecting the dignity and rights of the child, where observations are carried out,
 - information is only shared with relevant persons.
- - The well-being of the staff is paramount, and the early years' service may put varied supports
 - in place where needed.
- - Following the observations, staff are supported to reflect on trends and/or triggers for the
 - behaviour. Additional strategies may be suggested at this stage e.g. staggered transitions, one-to-one support at mealtimes, visual routine, increasing adult: child ratio, physical layout is arranged so that there is a high level of visibility.

Communication with Parents

Reassurance should be provided to parents on supporting their child and open communication should be encouraged throughout this process.

- In setting up a meeting to with parent/guardian, **Little Stars on the Lane** will consider the following:

- Where possible, a suitable time/day is prearranged with the parent and service e.g.

after the session, collection time or during the day.

- Possible supports the parent/guardian might need for the meeting e.g. family member

- Meetings are in a comfortable uninterrupted space.
- All conversations are away from the child.
- Consistent staff attend the meeting e.g. room leader and manager
- All meetings, plans and observations are recorded and stored in the child's record in

a locked cabinet. Early Childhood Ireland 2023

Communication with Parents

- Before observations are carried out, the **Little Stars on the Lane** should consider the following:
 - A meeting may be set up with the parent/guardian. The key worker and/or manager
- may speak with the parent / guardian about the reoccurring behaviour.
 - A plan may be developed between the staff and parent/guardian to support the child. This plan is short-term of 1-2 weeks approx. The strategies and timeframe of the plan

- are clear. The plan is reviewed regularly.
 - Staff encourage questions and discussion with parents.
 - Where possible, the next time/day to discuss the observation is decided at the
- meeting.
 - After carrying out the observation:
 - The keyworker and/or additional staff member may request to speak with the child's
- parent/guardian.
 - During the meeting, the plan, trends and/or noticeable triggers may be discussed with
- the parent/ guardian.
 - Parent/ guardians are encouraged to contribute to the plan.
 - Staff encourage questions and discussion with parents.
 - Where the service has decided to continue observing the child, a further plan may be
- put into place in collaboration with the parent/ guardians.
 - Where possible, the time/day for the next meeting is decided.
 - This process may be cyclical and reoccur many times to identify a trigger or the appropriate strategy.
- Early Childhood Ireland 2023

3. Serious Behaviour Issues

Serious behaviour issues may include the following -

- Repeated pattern of behaviour which impacts with the child's learning or engagement
- Behaviours that are not responsive to the process described above
- Prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive behaviour (e.g. screaming, property destruction, self-injury).

Strategies

Specific strategies may be followed to support the child including *Conflict Resolution Approach* or *the Whole Brain Child Strategies*.

If appropriate, **Little Stars on the Lane** may develop an individual care plan to support the child.

Where other strategies are in place to support the child, there is a clear outline provided in the

care plan. These strategies follow best practice guidelines.

Services may also use the following to support serious behaviour issues:

- **Time to one side with support of an adult**
In rare situations, it may be appropriate to use time to one side with the support of an adult, for short periods of time, to enable a child to calm down. Adult support is needed throughout this time, and a child must never be isolated in any space or room without adult support. Clear guidelines are followed by the early years' service. This should not be used as a form of time out and/or isolating a child.
- **Holding or restraining a child to prevent harm**
The purpose of this intervention can only be to prevent injury to the child, another child or to an adult, or to prevent serious damage to property. Physical holding as prevention must only be used:
 - To prevent injury to the child or other children
 - To prevent an accident

Regardless of age, physical restraint must only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time.

In some cases, an individual care plan is developed from external agencies who are supporting the child. The early years' service, in so far as practical, will implement this care plan in collaboration with parents/ guardians.

Communication

- The staff team may carry out a meeting to discuss the behaviour and develop an action plan to support the child.
- Observations may be carried out at different times of the day to establish triggers of the behaviour. All observations are discussed with the parent/ guardian.
- A plan may be developed in collaboration with the staff team and family of the child.
- If necessary, the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.
- If the behaviour is a child protection concern the Child Protection Policy will be implemented.
- All information gathered and discussed are stored securely and all conversations are highly confidential.
- All meetings, plans and observations are recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.
- The staff always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in situations which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.
- When all reasonable attempts to support the child, whose challenging behaviour is causing the difficulties have failed, it may be necessary to suggest to parents/guardians to seek professional advice. The parent/guardian may then seek the advice or request referral to other professionals.

Prohibited Practices

- - Corporal punishment - Any physical force which is used with intent to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, such as hitting, spanking (refers to striking a child with an open hand on the buttocks or extremities with the intention of modifying behaviour without causing physical injury), shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, pinching, squeezing, or biting is prohibited.
- - Practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful will not be carried out on any child while attending the service.

Supporting Staff

- Staff are given a copy of the behaviour management and emotional support policy as part of their induction in **Little Stars on the Lane** and sign to say that they have read and understood the policy. Staff receive training at induction on the behaviour management techniques that are used in **Little Stars on the Lane**.
- Staff are supported with behaviour management and emotional support of children in their care through ongoing training, support and supervision with management and availability of information on best practice in relation to behaviour management and emotional support in an early years setting.
- A copy of this policy is available in each room for staff to easily access. A copy of specific techniques we use for managing behaviour are available to staff. Staff receive training on these techniques as needed.

- This policy is reviewed on a yearly basis with the input of staff.
- Staff share information as needed, in a confidential manner, to ensure consistency across the service when supporting children's behaviour.
- Staff are aware of the language that they use when speaking to children. Staff focus on positive commands when encouraging children to modify their behaviour. Using 'do' instead of 'don't', for example.

Complaints Policy

The services complaints policy and procedures should be followed where there any issues or concerns regarding the implementation of the managing behaviour policy.

Links with other Policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Interactions Policy
- Transitions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Play Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Parents as Partners
- Staff Development & Training Policy
- Support & Supervision Policy
- Storage of Records Policy and Data Protection Policy.
- Complaints Policy

Person Responsible: Date implemented: Signed by:

Review Date:

_____ **On behalf of Management (Manager, Owner, Chairperson)**
