



Behaviour Management Policy

Purpose

This Behaviour Management Policy outlines the approach and practices at Cocoon in Margate for managing behaviour in line with Montessori principles, as well as national and local legislation and guidance. Our aim is to create an environment where children develop independence, self-discipline, and respect for themselves and others. This policy applies to all children, staff, and visitors within our setting.

Scope

This policy is in accordance with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice, The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework, Kent County Council's Behaviour Support Guidance, and Montessori educational principles. It reflects Cocoon in Margate's commitment to creating an environment that supports self-directed learning, independence, and the positive social and emotional development of all children.

Principles of Behaviour Management

At Cocoon in Margate, we integrate **Montessori principles** into our approach to behaviour management. These principles are:

1. **Respect for the Child** – Every child is seen as capable, and their ability to self-regulate is nurtured through respect and encouragement. We believe in giving children the space and freedom to make choices and learn from their experiences, encouraging autonomy and responsibility.
2. **Promoting Independence** – We encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and the environment. By providing opportunities for decision-making and self-correction, children develop independence and self-discipline. They learn that their actions have consequences and can positively impact their environment.
3. **Freedom with Responsibility** – In a Montessori environment, freedom is essential for growth, but it comes with the responsibility of understanding boundaries. Children are given the freedom to make choices within a framework of clear expectations, which helps them develop self-regulation.
4. **Prepared Environment** – The learning environment is carefully organized to support independent learning, exploration, and collaboration. It encourages children to engage with materials and activities that are developmentally appropriate, which naturally reduces the likelihood of behavioural challenges.

5. **Guided Learning – Adults/guides** act as facilitators rather than directors. They model appropriate behaviours and guide children in making positive choices, helping them develop social skills and emotional regulation in a natural, non-intrusive manner.

6. **Positive Discipline** – We follow a philosophy of discipline that promotes natural consequences. When a child's behaviour does not align with the expectations of the community, the **adult/guide** works with the child to reflect on their actions, fostering intrinsic motivation to do better.

Steps of Managing Behaviour

The steps outlined below are intended to guide adults/guides in addressing behaviour in a way that supports the child's growth, reflection, and learning. This process is rooted in **Montessori principles** and fosters a positive, respectful environment:

1. Observation and Understanding

- The first step in managing behaviour is careful observation. Adults/guides take time to understand the context of the child's behaviour. What is the child trying to communicate? Are there unmet needs, frustrations, or emotional triggers?
- By observing the child's environment, interactions, and routines, adults/guides can gain insights into the cause of the behaviour and can approach the situation with empathy and understanding.

2. Clear and Consistent Expectations

- Adults/guides establish clear behavioural expectations, explained in a way that is appropriate for the child's age and developmental stage. This helps children understand the boundaries and the reasons behind them.
- These expectations are consistently reinforced throughout the day, so children can anticipate and understand the boundaries within their environment.

3. Encouraging Reflection and Self-Understanding

- When a behaviour issue arises, adults/guides encourage children to reflect on their actions. Instead of simply imposing consequences, adults/guides help children understand how their actions affect others and themselves.
- Open-ended questions like, "How do you feel about what just happened?" or "What could you do next time to solve that problem?" support self-reflection and problem-solving skills.

4. **Use of Natural Consequences**

- Adults/guides allow natural consequences to occur when appropriate. If a child mishandles a material, for example, it may be temporarily removed, giving the child the opportunity to learn responsibility for their actions. This helps children see the connection between their behaviour and the outcomes.
- It is important to emphasize that consequences are a learning opportunity and not a punishment. The focus is on helping children understand the impact of their choices.

5. **Support and Redirection**

- If a child continues to struggle with a behaviour, adults/guides provide gentle redirection or support. For example, they may offer an alternative activity, encourage the child to engage in a calming or sensory experience, or help the child find a positive way to express their feelings.
- The aim is to guide the child towards more appropriate behaviour while respecting their emotional needs.

6. **Restorative Practices**

- If a child's behaviour negatively impacts another, adults/guides facilitate restorative conversations where the child can express their feelings and work together to repair any harm. This approach emphasizes empathy and the value of restoring relationships.
- Children are encouraged to recognize how their actions affect others, fostering responsibility, empathy, and a sense of community.

7. **Celebrating Positive Behaviour**

- When children demonstrate positive behaviour, such as kindness, cooperation, or self-regulation, adults/guides celebrate and acknowledge their actions according to our praising principles. This reinforces the desired behaviour and helps build intrinsic motivation.
- Positive reinforcement is always focused on the child's effort and choices rather than external rewards, aligning with the Montessori belief in internal motivation.

8. **Communication with Parents**

- Communication with parents is essential throughout the behaviour management process. Adults/guides will keep parents informed of any ongoing behavioural challenges or incidents, discussing strategies that are being used in the setting and seeking their input.
- Regular updates are shared with parents about the child's progress, and a partnership approach is encouraged to ensure consistency between home and the setting.

- If necessary, meetings may be scheduled to discuss specific concerns and develop collaborative solutions, including individualised plans for the child's needs.

9. **Ongoing Support for Children with SEND**

- For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), adults/guides may implement personalized strategies to support positive behaviour. This may include additional sensory breaks, social stories, or specific tools to aid self-regulation.
- Adults/guides work closely with parents and external professionals to ensure that the behaviour management strategies are appropriate and effective for each child's unique needs.

Unsafe Behaviour

While we work to support and guide children through positive behaviour, there may be instances of unsafe behavior that require immediate attention to ensure the safety and well-being of all children and staff. Unsafe behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical aggression towards others (e.g., hitting, kicking, biting)
- Destructive actions (e.g., breaking materials, damaging property)
- Actions that put the child or others at risk of harm

In such cases, the following steps will be taken:

1. **Immediate Intervention**

- Adults/guides will intervene immediately to de-escalate the situation and ensure that the child is calm and safe.

2. **Assessing the Situation**

- The adult/guide will assess the situation, ensuring the safety of all children and staff. If the child's behaviour presents an ongoing danger or disrupts the learning environment, it may be necessary to send the child home for the day to allow them to regain calm and ensure that appropriate support can be provided.

3. **Contacting Parents**

- If the child is sent home, parents or guardians will be contacted promptly to inform them of the incident and discuss the next steps. We will work closely with parents to address the situation and ensure the child receives the necessary support.

4. **Recording the Incident**

- All unsafe behaviour incidents will be recorded in the Behaviour Incident Record Book. This documentation will include details of the incident, the actions taken by adults/guides, and any communication with parents.
- The record is kept confidential and reviewed regularly to identify patterns or areas where further support or interventions may be required.

The Use of Physical Interventions

We never use physical punishment or the threat of it.

Staff will use physical interventions only as a last resort and only then if they have reasonable grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary to prevent a child from significantly injuring themselves or others or to prevent serious damage to property.

Before reaching this stage, staff will have used all possible non-physical actions, such as dialogue and diversion, to deal with the behaviour. The child or children concerned will be warned verbally that physical intervention will be used if they do not stop.

A dialogue will be maintained with the child or children at all times, so that the member of staff can explain what they are doing and why they are doing it. Staff will make every effort to avoid the use of physical interventions if they are alone with the child or children.

Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied, for example, by diverting a child or children by leading them away by a hand or by an arm around their shoulders.

Staff will use physical intervention as an act of care and control and never punishment. Physical interventions will not be used purely to force a child to do what they have been told and when there is no immediate risk to people or property.

As soon as it is safe, the physical intervention should be gradually relaxed to allow the child or children to regain self-control.

The force of the physical intervention will be always appropriate to the age, size and strength of the child or children involved.

If staff are not confident about their ability to contain a particular situation or type of behaviour, consideration will be given to calling the Manager or, in extreme cases, the police.

Where a member of staff has had to intervene physically to restrain a child, the Nursery Manager will be notified and the incident recorded in the Incident/Behaviour record book.

Training and Support for Staff

Adults/guides at Cocoon in Margate receive ongoing professional development to ensure they understand the principles of Montessori education and how to effectively manage behaviour in a way that aligns with these principles. Training includes:

- Montessori approaches to discipline, independence, and self-regulation.
- Understanding and supporting children with SEND in a Montessori context.
- Reflective practices to ensure adults/guides model behaviour that encourages self-discipline and responsibility.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually in consultation with adults/guides, parents, and external experts to ensure its continued effectiveness. Regular reflection on the principles of Montessori education and the evolving needs of children is key to maintaining a positive and supportive environment.

Conclusion

Cocoon in Margate embraces the Montessori approach to behaviour management, focusing on independence, responsibility, and respect. By fostering an environment where children can learn from natural consequences, make choices, and develop self-discipline, we ensure that all children, including those with SEND, are supported in a respectful, nurturing space where they can grow emotionally and socially.

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This policy is due for review on the following date	01/03/2026

Legal Framework and Relevant Legislation

Our approach to behaviour management is underpinned by the following key pieces of legislation and guidance:

1. **Children and Families Act 2014** – The Act outlines the importance of early intervention and support for children with additional needs, including behaviour-related challenges.
2. **The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2015** – This statutory guidance highlights the importance of early identification, inclusive teaching, and tailored support for children with special educational needs, including behaviour-related difficulties.
3. **The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework 2021** – This framework outlines the expectations for children's learning, development, and care, and emphasizes fostering positive behaviour through the development of emotional regulation and social skills.
4. **The Equality Act 2010** – This Act protects children from discrimination, ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made for children with special educational needs and promoting inclusivity.
5. **Kent County Council's Behaviour Support Guidance** – A local document that provides strategies for inclusive and respectful behaviour management in line with Kent's values of community and respect.
6. **Montessori Principles** – Montessori education emphasizes child-led learning, respect for each child's individuality, and fostering self-discipline through natural consequences and self-correction.