

Communicating with Children Policy

We ensure that all teaching staff, and all visiting the setting, take a consistent approach to communicating with children, in line with our Montessori philosophy. A consistent approach helps children to understand what is expected of them, and to gain emotional security in the setting.

We undergo thorough induction with all team members to ensure that everyone role models the following aspects when working with children:

- Using eye contact with children when speaking to them
- Getting to a child's level when talking or working with them, for example by joining them at a table or mat.
- Remembering that communication is a two-way process with a speaker and a listener.
- Ensuring that teachers leave time for a child to respond.
- Using principles of "Sustained Shared Thinking" when working with a child, encouraging them to take their thoughts further by using open-ended questions such as:
 - What do you think.....
 - If we added more I wonder what will happen....
 - How could we find out.....
 - How did you discover this....
 - What did you do to make that happen...
 - So what did that tell you...
- Being aware of personal body language and the impression that it gives the children, opening your arms where possible.
- Moving towards a child or any other person when communicating with them to support direct two-way communication, and not calling across a room or table if at all possible.
- Using your words to guide the children's actions, rather than automatically offering your hand for them to be guided physically. The children in your care are independent beings and it is our responsibility to promote this: "we are going to the bathroom together", "we are going to the garden together". Use the word "together" to emphasise a joint action; this helps the child when moving from one thing to another.
- Encouraging children to use their words, rather than physicality to communicate with others.
- Explaining to children what is going to happen during a transition in clear language, for example "We are going to join circle time now. When you have finished your work, please put it back on the shelf, and then you can join us."
- Using consistent repeated sentences, for example: "Thank you for playing with your cylinders on your mat". "Thank you for walking in the classroom". "Thank you for tidying up your activity".
- Expressing things in positive terms, as ideas expressed in the negative often have the opposite effect to the one intended. When a teacher says "don't shout in the classroom" "no shouting in the classroom", the child may hear "shout in the classroom". They may also experience feelings of doubt and insecurity or be afraid to take risks. It is better to use our words to direct the child positively: "We use gentle voices in the classroom"; "When we draw we keep our pencil on the paper". We play gently with our friends when we are at school" or "This is how I play gently; you show me how you play gently with your friend".
- Explaining clearly to children: "If you would like to climb, can I ask you to go slowly, and then you will be safe."; "To be safe walking along the wall you need to go slowly". Sentences like these guide the child as to your expectation and empower them, suggesting to them that they can indeed perform this action. Then you praise them: "Thank you for keeping your feet on the pavement. That's exactly how we walk down the road and stay safe".
- Repeating simple sentence structures in myriad circumstances. When carrying scissors: "When we carry scissors we hold them like this and then we are safe"; "Can you show me how you hold the scissors like me?"; "That's exactly how we hold our scissors"; "Thank you for holding your scissors so beautifully."

This policy is supported by our Staff Handbook on Communication and Behaviour, which explains in detail how we expect staff to communicate and to manage behaviour issues with children in the classroom.

Date: November 2020

Our Communicating with Children Policy will be reviewed annually.