



## Apple Tree Farm Services CIC

### Positive Behaviour Policy

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- Behaviour in farms
  - Searching, screening and confiscation at farm Guidance
  - The Equality Act 2010
  - Use of reasonable force in farms
  - Supporting children with medical conditions at farm
  - Farm suspensions and permanent exclusions
  - SEND code of practice 2014.
- In addition, this policy is based on:
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which outlines a farm's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its children
  - Sections 88-94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which require farms to regulate children's behaviour and publish a behaviour policy and written statement of behaviour principles, gives farms the authority to confiscate children's property, permits staff to use reasonable force when required
  - Schedule 1 of the Education (Independent Farm Standards) Regulations 2014



It is also based on up-to-date Affective Neuroscience research, Dr B Perry, Attachment in education research, L Bomber, H Geddes, Child Development and Trauma research, Dr M Sunderland, Dr K Treisman, L Cherry, ACEs and Protective factors research, Dr Fellitti, Dr Burke-Harris.

Please also read the following Apple Tree Farm Policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Photography and Filming Policy
- Data Protection Policy

### Relational Approach Objectives

The aim of this policy is to ensure a consistent approach across our setting to support children in recognising and regulating their own behaviour and enabling them to modify it where needed. A further aim is to ensure that we create and maintain a safe environment for all whilst fostering a nurturing and restorative approach. The farm is committed to providing consistent and structured opportunities for children to build positive relationships with each other, their practitioners, and their parents. We acknowledge that a positive child-practitioner relationship is one of the most effective ways to build a sense of belonging.



- To promote, encourage and reinforce the highest possible standard of child behaviour through use of clear expectations and boundaries, appropriately given according to understood developmental needs
- To promote expectations of behaviour and capacity for relationship for children and staff
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviours across our setting, including active use of PACE and therapeutic approaches
- To ensure staff use consistent approaches which encourage children to develop their ability to self-regulate and support others that may be struggling
- Provide clarity to staff about the underlying ethos of the farm and its aims to always support modelling of respectful and positive relationships with all farm users

### **Trauma Informed Schools Approach**

- Increased 'safety cues' in all aspects of the farm day, e.g. 'meet and greet' and 'check in' at the farm entrance, eyes on were assessed as needed, take up time etc.
- Staff trained in 'PACE' modes of interaction (Hughes, 2015): being warm, empathic, playful and curious (proven to shift children out of flight/fight/freeze positions).
- Staff ensure that interactions with children are socially engaging and not socially defensive, to decrease likelihood of children relating defensively (fight/flight/freeze). Dr S Porges
- A whole-farm commitment to cease all use of harsh voices, shouting, put-downs, criticisms, and shaming (proven to be damaging psychologically and neurologically).
- Staff 'interactively repair' occasions when they themselves move into defensiveness. Rupture and repair cycle.
- Pedagogic interventions and/or 'time in' that help staff to get to know children better on an individual basis e.g. "I wish my teacher knew" (what matters to them, who matters to them, their dreams, hopes). This is key to enabling children to feel safe enough to talk, if they wish, about painful life experiences, which are interfering with their ability to learn and their quality of life.
- Vulnerable children have easy and daily access to at least one named, emotionally available adult, and know when and where to find that adult. If the child does not wish to connect with the allocated adult, an alternative person is found.
- Farm staff adjust expectations around vulnerable children to correspond with their developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress. This includes removing vulnerable and traumatised children in a kind and non-judgmental way from situations they are not managing well.
- Provision of a clear, confidential and non-shaming system of self-referral for children to access support.
- The nurturing of staff in such a way that they feel truly valued and emotionally regulated and in so doing to support them to interact throughout the farm day with positive social engagement rather than defensiveness. Relate – validate feelings and help children to label them
- A whole-farm commitment to enabling children to see themselves, their relationships and the world positively, rather than through a lens of threat, danger or self-blame.
- Vulnerable children provided with repeated relational opportunities (with emotionally available adults) to make the shift from 'blocked trust' (not feeling psychologically safe with anyone) to trust, and from self-help to 'help seeking'.
- A whole-farm approach to understanding behaviour as a communication of need.
- An understanding of the role of calm containment and boundaries to keep children safe in non-shaming ways Regulate – calm and soothe at the right time and pace for the child
- Relational interventions specifically designed to bring down stress hormone levels (e.g. from toxic to tolerable) in vulnerable children, enabling them to feel calm, soothed and safe. This is to support learning, quality of life and protect against stress induced physical and mental illness, now and in later life.
- Evidence-based interventions that aim to repair psychological damage and brain damage caused by traumatic life experiences, through emotionally regulating, playful, enriched adult-child interactions.



- The emotional well-being and regulating of staff are treated as a priority to prevent burnout, stress related absence, or leaving the profession through stress-related illness, secondary trauma and/or feeling undervalued, blamed or shamed. Reflect – this may be straight away, or at a later time/date – have patience to find the right time – sometimes it helps to be ‘alongside’, doing something (like a puzzle or practical task) or travelling somewhere
- Staff development and training in the art of good listening, dialogue, empathy and understanding (instead of asking a series of questions/giving lectures).
- Provision of skills and resources to support parents and staff in meaningful empathic conversations with vulnerable children who want to talk about their lives. This is to empower children to better manage their home situations and life in general.
- Within the context of an established and trusted relationship with a member of staff (‘working alliance’), children are given the means and opportunity to symbolise painful life experiences through images as well as words, as a key part of ‘working through’ these experiences and memory re-consolidation. Means include the provision of different modes of expression, e.g. art/ play/drama/music/sand-play/emotion worksheets/emotion cards.
- PSHE Curricular content enables children to explore making informed choices about how they relate to others, how they live their lives, and how they treat their brains, bodies and minds.
- Staff development and training to help children move from ‘behaving/communicating’ their trauma/painful life experiences, to reflecting on those experiences. Staff learn to do this through empathic conversation, addressing child’s negative self- referencing and helping them develop positive, coherent narratives about their lives.

### **Managing Challenging Behaviour**

Apple Tree Farm aims to respond to challenging behaviour in both a consistent and personalised way, ensuring that past trauma and current circumstances are considered. Important to the success of this is a clear understanding of TIS approaches, Restorative Practice approaches and an awareness of adverse childhood experiences, ACEs and Protective Factors. Consistency does not mean always responding in the same way to each child or behaviour, it means responding in a way which is consistent to our values and beliefs. Whilst each individual child benefits from a consistent approach, being consistent and fair is not about everyone getting the same, but everyone getting what they need.

- All staff will be PIPs trained.
- Expectations are clear and there are identified non-negotiables across all aspects of provision.
- Child voice is used to establish individual boundaries, and this develops both accountability and ownership.
- Staff are expected to have an awareness of child triggers, and all children are regularly reviewed against their own Risk Assessments.
- Where children are struggling with managing their behaviour then staff should still respond with unconditional positive regard sending a clear and genuine message of empathy and concern for them at the same time as addressing the negative behaviour. Restorative approaches should be used to foster and develop ownership of the issue.
- Use of verbal and non-verbal cues should be used to support, such as Traffic Light Systems, emotion cards, agreed words/cues.

### **Behaviour Strategies and Staff Well-Being**

These strategies are not an exhaustive list and are designed to be used appropriately, and according to the needs of individual children. A consideration must always be whether this is a behaviour linked to a SEND, SEMH and/or SLCN.



Where appropriate children will have restorative conversations as soon after the event as feasible, this should, if possible, involve all relevant parties. Restorative approaches may also be used to help put right what has happened.

- Individual alternatives and limited choices may be used, alongside therapeutic type interventions such as going for a walk, taking the dog for a walk, time in with a trusted adult or dog, movement, sensory and brain breaks, use of specialist areas to support self-regulation (time in).
- The recognition of emotions and behaviour is part of a therapeutic approach as well as the PSHE curriculum.
- All staff should be seen as Emotionally Available Adults and support children in understanding and managing their emotions and actively encourage children to be able to name them as appropriate.
- Staff have access to high quality training including PRICE, Restorative Practice, TEACCH, ELKLAN, Trauma informed practices, Safeguarding, Draw and Talk, Emotional Logic/Emotion Coaching and Mental Health Champions (Mental Health First Aiders).
- Staff also have access to Briefings and De-Briefs which are classed as case supervision, providing a safe forum to explore concerns regarding children/explore appropriate actions following incidents of challenging or negative behaviour.
- Staff have access to online or telephone supervision/counselling from our in-house counsellor.
- Staff can use phone calls and or e-mails to keep parents/carers informed about how each child is getting on/any issues they are facing.
- Senior management regularly liaise with home and, where helpful, share individual strategies for managing challenging behaviour.
- Case supervision offers an opportunity to off-load, discuss difficult cases and be both supported and challenged regarding decision making.

## **Rewards**

At Apple Tree Farm we recognise that rewarding positive behaviour can have a profound impact on child engagement, relationships and behaviour. Whilst we recognise that children may display behaviours that challenge, looking for the positives is key in supporting children to manage in a better way. Individual children will have a range of reward systems in place that are designed to work for that child at that time. Our rewards systems are never punitive and focus on achieving not losing. Systems can include certificates, postcards home, working towards special trips/activities, extra time with a favourite animal etc. Rewards should be offered for both short term achievements and long term. Rewards will be varied and include positive affirmation of aspects of effort and well as achievement, recognition of relational successes as well as academic, and focus on the developmental capacities and needs of the individual children as well as groups. An understanding of age-appropriate rewards, i.e. instant or delayed gratification, words, tangible certificates, or banked points and can be gained for self or community. Recognition and positive, descriptive, specific praise is known to be beneficial in developing socially engaged learners. We are committed to using rewards as a positive and not a shaming behavioural approach.

## **Actions/Consequences**

Apple Tree Farm staff actively seek to avoid having set actions in response to some specific incidents. This enables staff to employ actions which are appropriate to the individual child on the day, considering any mitigating circumstances, numbers of children involved etc. and placing safeguarding and safety at the centre of any decisions to amend child provision.



## Non- Negotiables

Some behaviours however are never acceptable, and these may include:

**Use of Mobile Phones** - The use of mobile phones at the farm can disrupt learning and compromise the safety onsite of children and staff. Children will be expected and reminded to leave their phones securely stored in their bags in the barn kitchen or placed in their allocated storage within the barn room. It may be possible in exceptional circumstances, by individual negotiation with SLT for a child to check their phone in an agreed place for an agreed time. This must be limited to a maximum of 15mins, in the presence of a farm practitioner and in the barn kitchen/barn room.

**Smoking and Vaping** - Smoking or vaping on the farm is not permitted for children.

**Weapons** - Bringing weapons onto site

**Drugs** - Either being under the influence of drugs or bringing drugs onto the farm site

**Bullying** - Emotional or physical bullying or harassment of any staff member or child; Including racist, sexual or homophobic language or gestures

Other non-negotiables which may also potentially result in a temporary or permanent halt to provision include:

- A targeted attack on any staff member or child Targeted abuse, including on social media for any staff member or child Hate based language
- Verbal and threatening language
- Taking and/or damaging other people's property
- Criminal damage to property or equipment
- Malicious allegations against staff or children

Persistent non-negotiable behaviour or a one-off serious incident may result in a referral to the management's internal complex case panel, SLT will reflect on the number and nature of any incidents, number of children involved, any mitigating circumstances/SEN, any safeguarding concerns etc. prior to deciding about actions required. Serious incidents may be reported to the police as alleged crimes in certain circumstances. Apple Tree Farm will take a solution-focused approach to managing children who repeatedly display these behaviours.

Temporarily pausing farm provision may be needed in the first instance to maintain a safe environment. Following a serious incident or series of incidents, Apple Tree Farm may decide to terminate a child's placement with immediate effect. However, prior to this decision being made, all other avenues will normally be explored with other agencies and the Local Authority where possible. All incidents are recorded by staff on our electronic system, Tapestry. Parent/carers will be informed by farm staff about any serious incidents/non-negotiables as soon as is practically possible or as soon as it is safe to do so. Any requests from parents/ carers to see records on Tapestry will follow GDPR procedures.

All children will have a current risk assessment which reflects the risks identified because of historic or current behaviours. Parents/carers have a right to see their child's risk assessment. This document may also be shared with other professionals. In some circumstances, staff may use reasonable and proportionate force to physically intervene (PI) and prevent a child from harming themselves or others, causing significant damage, causing significant/unsafe disorder. This may include Passive Intervention and Prevention (PIPs), using the minimum amount of force for the minimum amount of time possible. All incidents of PI or PIPs are recorded on Tapestry, parents/carers will be informed as soon as is practically possible and written records can be seen by parents/carers following GDPR procedures.



Apple Tree Farm staff are duty-bound to confiscate any prohibited items which are found in a child's possession. Any such items will not be returned to the child. Any items found which are potentially harmful or detrimental to the safe running of the farm may be confiscated until a parent/carer can collect them.

**Allegations** (Please see safeguarding policy)

Allegations made by children will be taken seriously and investigated accordingly. We encourage children to tell an adult if they see/know that someone is doing the wrong thing. Staff will listen to the complaint/allegation and will support a child to make a written statement. Other witnesses may also be asked to provide statements. Once an allegation has been investigated, the outcome will be shared with the child and parent/carer. If a parent/carer is unhappy with the outcome of an investigation, they may follow the Complaints Procedure and make a formal written complaint.

This policy must be reviewed every three years, or sooner if deemed necessary, to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bleemard".

Signed:  
Farm Manager

Date: 26/02/2026