



Self-Regulation Policy

Policy Statement

At Little discoverers we recognise that self-regulation is a fundamental skill that underpins children's emotional wellbeing, learning, behaviour and future success. Self-regulation involves a child's ability to understand and manage their emotions, thoughts, attention and behaviour in different situations.

We understand that self-regulation develops gradually throughout early childhood and is supported through warm, responsive relationships with caring adults. Children learn to regulate their emotions and behaviour through co-regulation, where adults provide guidance, reassurance and support while children develop the skills needed to manage independently over time.

Our approach is rooted in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), recognising that strong emotional development and secure relationships provide the foundation for all future learning.

Aims

At our setting, we aim to:

- Promote children's emotional wellbeing and resilience.
- Support children in recognising, understanding and expressing their feelings appropriately.
- Develop children's ability to manage their emotions and behaviour.
- Foster independence, confidence and self-esteem.
- Support the development of executive functioning skills, including attention, working memory and flexible thinking.
- Build positive relationships that help children feel safe, secure and valued.
- Work in partnership with families to support children's emotional development.

Understanding Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is an important aspect of children's development and is closely linked to the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning within the EYFS.

Children who are developing self-regulation skills are increasingly able to:

- Manage strong emotions.
- Focus their attention.
- Wait for short periods of time.
- Follow instructions.
- Adapt their behaviour to different situations.
- Solve problems and resolve conflicts.
- Persevere when tasks become challenging.
- Develop positive relationships with others.



We recognise that children develop these skills at different rates and that some children may require additional support to achieve positive outcomes.

The Role of Adults

Adults play a crucial role in supporting children's self-regulation. We understand that children cannot always manage their emotions independently and often need sensitive adult support to help them understand and regulate their feelings.

Practitioners will provide consistent, nurturing responses to children's emotional needs and will support children through moments of distress, frustration, disappointment and excitement. Staff will remain calm, patient and emotionally available, helping children to feel safe while learning strategies to manage their emotions.

Adults will model positive behaviour, emotional regulation and problem-solving skills. By demonstrating empathy, respect and self-control, practitioners provide children with positive examples that support their own development.

Creating an Enabling Environment

The environment plays an important role in supporting self-regulation. We strive to create calm, predictable and emotionally secure learning spaces where children feel confident and able to engage in learning.

Children benefit from clear routines and consistent expectations, which help them understand what is happening and reduce feelings of uncertainty or anxiety. Daily routines are carefully planned to provide structure while remaining flexible enough to respond to children's individual needs.

The learning environment includes opportunities for children to access quiet spaces, sensory resources and areas where they can retreat when they need time to regulate their emotions or reduce sensory overload.

Supporting Emotional Development

Developing emotional literacy is an important part of self-regulation. Staff help children recognise and name their feelings through everyday interactions, stories, discussions and play experiences.

Children are encouraged to talk about their emotions and are supported to understand that all feelings are valid. Practitioners help children explore appropriate ways of expressing and managing emotions while developing empathy and understanding of others.

Through positive relationships and meaningful conversations, children begin to develop greater awareness of their own feelings and the feelings of those around them.

Developing Self-Regulation Skills

Self-regulation is supported throughout the daily routine and curriculum. Staff provide opportunities for children to practise skills such as waiting, turn-taking, sharing, listening, concentrating and problem-solving.

Children are encouraged to make choices, take responsibility for their actions and develop increasing independence. Practitioners support children to persevere when challenges arise and celebrate effort as well as achievement.



Mindfulness activities, breathing techniques, movement experiences, sensory activities and relaxation opportunities may be used to help children develop awareness of their emotions and bodies.

Positive Behaviour Support

Our approach to behaviour is centred on teaching rather than punishment. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and that children may display challenging behaviour when they are struggling to regulate their emotions, communicate their needs or cope with their environment.

When children experience difficulties, staff will seek to understand the reasons behind the behaviour and provide support that meets the child's developmental and emotional needs.

Practitioners will use positive guidance, clear boundaries and consistent expectations to support children in learning appropriate behaviours. Children will be helped to reflect on their actions and develop strategies for managing similar situations in the future.

Supporting Individual Needs

We recognise that some children may require additional support to develop self-regulation skills. This may include children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), communication difficulties, developmental delays, adverse childhood experiences or other factors affecting emotional development.

Where additional support is required, staff will work closely with parents, carers and relevant professionals to develop appropriate strategies and interventions. Individual support plans may be implemented where necessary to ensure children receive consistent support both within the setting and at home.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Strong partnerships with parents and carers are essential in supporting children's emotional wellbeing and self-regulation.

We will share information about children's progress, celebrate achievements and work collaboratively to develop consistent approaches between home and the setting. Parents and carers will be supported with information, advice and strategies to help promote self-regulation and emotional resilience.

Open communication ensures that children's individual needs are understood and supported effectively.

Staff Training and Professional Development

The setting is committed to ensuring all practitioners have a secure understanding of children's emotional development and self-regulation.

Staff will access regular professional development opportunities relating to:

- Child development.
- Emotional wellbeing.
- Attachment and relationships.



- Positive behaviour support.
- Trauma-informed practice.
- SEND and inclusion.
- Mental health and wellbeing.

This enables practitioners to provide consistent, evidence-informed support for children.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through observation of practice, supervision, staff discussions and feedback from children and families.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, guidance or best practice changes.

Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Staff Supervision Policy

Reviewed: September 2026