

Callington Kindergarten

Interactions with Children and Behaviour Guidance Code

Guiding statement: *At Callington Kindergarten, we guide behaviour through connection, safety, teaching and repair, so every child can belong, participate and grow as a confident learner.*

Purpose

This code provides a shared approach to interactions, behaviour guidance and relationships at Callington Kindergarten. It supports children, families and staff to experience a safe, respectful and predictable learning environment.

This code is supported by the Callington Kindergarten Consistent Language Guide, which provides practical examples of the words, rituals and restorative conversations educators use with children.

Our beliefs

- Children have the right to feel safe, respected, connected and included.
- All behaviour is communication and tells us something about a child's feelings, needs, understanding or developing skills.
- Learning, wellbeing and behaviour are strengthened through secure, respectful and predictable relationships.
- Children are capable learners who can develop regulation, empathy, problem solving, agency and independence with intentional adult support.
- Families know their children well and are important partners in supporting each child's wellbeing, learning and behaviour.
- No child should be made to feel rejected, insecure, embarrassed, isolated or ashamed.

Our shared expectations

Our agreed expectations are intentionally taught, modelled and revisited through play, routines, visuals, stories, social stories, restorative conversations and everyday interactions.

We are safe	We are kind	We are brave learners
We use safe hands, bodies, feet, words and choices.	We use caring words and actions, include others and repair relationships.	We have a go, ask for help, solve problems, try again and learn from mistakes.

We promote positive interactions by:

- knowing each child and family well and responding within their family, cultural and community context
- using a strengths-based approach that recognises children as capable, competent and learning
- using the shared language of safe, kind and brave learners throughout the day
- creating predictable routines, flexible environments, quiet spaces and active learning spaces that support regulation and participation
- intentionally teaching emotional literacy, protective behaviours, fair play, turn taking, help-seeking, problem solving and repair
- noticing, naming and celebrating expected behaviours so children understand what safe, kind and brave learning looks like
- offering choices that support children's agency while maintaining clear safety boundaries
- starting and ending each session with connection so children feel seen, welcomed and secure.

Consistent language

Educators use simple, calm and consistent language focused on safety, kindness, repair and learning. Language is adjusted to each child's age, development, communication and regulation needs.

- "You are safe. I am here to help."
- "You can be angry. You cannot hurt."

- “I won’t let you hurt yourself or others.”
- “Let’s find a safer way.”
- “What can we do to help fix this?”
- “At Callington Kindergarten, we are safe, kind and brave learners.”

Detailed examples for morning connection, separation, repair conversations, adult body language and educator reflection are included in the Consistent Language Guide.

We respond to behaviours of concern by:

- responding quickly, calmly and respectfully to support immediate safety
- using co-regulation and time-in with a trusted educator rather than shame, isolation or punishment
- naming the behaviour and safety concern in simple language
- re-modelling safer, kinder and more appropriate ways to communicate, enter play, seek help or solve problems
- using calming, sensory, movement-based, rhythmic or quiet experiences according to the individual child’s needs
- supporting children to problem solve, listen to others and understand the impact of their actions when they are ready
- communicating with families early so we can work together to understand and support the child
- documenting repeated behaviours or concerns to understand patterns, triggers, needs and successful strategies
- seeking support from DfE support services or external professionals when required
- developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing behaviour support plans in partnership with children, families, educators and support services when needed.

Restorative repair

Restorative repair helps children understand the impact of their actions, rebuild relationships and learn safer and kinder ways to interact. It occurs only when children are calm enough to participate and when it is emotionally and physically safe for everyone involved.

- checking if someone is okay
- using words, visuals, gestures or actions to repair harm
- practising a safer way to enter play, ask for a turn or express frustration
- helping to restore play, relationships or the learning environment.

Children are not forced to apologise. Educators support authentic repair by helping children understand what happened, who was affected and what can be done to make things better.

As a staff team, we commit to:

- being calm, emotionally available and responsive in our interactions with children
- taking charge when needed to keep children and staff safe while remaining kind and respectful
- communicating with each other throughout the day about children’s needs, regulation and safety
- supporting each other and seeking help when a response to behaviour is becoming difficult
- communicating respectfully with families and working together to support each child
- reflecting on our environment, routines, relationships and teaching practices so children can participate safely and successfully
- protecting every child’s dignity, privacy and right to feel safe, connected and respected.

Review and supporting document

Version	2
Document date	June 2026
Review date:	June 2027
Supporting document	Callington Kindergarten Consistent Language Guide
Review	In line with site policy review processes, or earlier after an incident, change in process, or change to department policy, legislation, regulation or best-practice guidance.

A guide to Callington Kindergarten's consistent language - June 2026

Guiding idea: At Callington Kindergarten, we use consistent language to support connection, safety, teaching, regulation and repair.

Purpose

This guide supports educators and families to listen to children's emotions, reflect on relationships and be respectful, kind and wise adults for children. It provides shared language so children experience predictable, calm and consistent responses from adults across the kindergarten day.

The language in this guide aligns with Callington Kindergarten's philosophy by emphasising belonging, strong relationships, children's agency, emotional safety, explicit teaching, high expectations and partnership with families.

Our shared expectations

Shared expectation	What adults consistently teach and name
We are safe.	Safe hands, safe bodies, safe feet, safe words and safe choices.
We are kind.	Caring words and actions, including others, listening, helping and repairing relationships.
We are brave	Having a go, asking for help, solving problems, trying again and learning from mistakes.

Everyday language

Educators will differentiate the complexity of their language according to each child's age, development, communication, regulation and individual context.

When / purpose	Callington language	Educator intention
Noticing children's emotions	"I can see you are feeling sad / angry / mad / tired." "I can see this feels tricky for you."	Name what we notice without judgement. Help children build emotional language.
Acknowledging emotions	"It is okay to feel sad." "You can be angry. You cannot hurt."	Validate the feeling while keeping clear boundaries around safety.
Supporting big feelings	"I can see you need me to help with these big feelings." "It's my job to help you with these tricky feelings."	Communicate that the adult will stay connected and support regulation.
Taking charge when needed	"It's my job to look after you and keep you safe." "I am in charge so you know you are safe."	Provide calm adult leadership so children feel secure.
Anticipating behaviour	"We are doing this soon and I know this can be a tricky time for you, so I will help you."	Prepare the child for transitions or predictable challenges before escalation occurs.
Staying with the child	"I can see that you are upset, so I am going to stay here with you until you feel better."	Use time-in and co-regulation rather than isolation or shame.

Morning connection ritual

Educators will be positioned in learning spaces ready to connect with children and support the transition into kindergarten. The aim is high affection, high connection and high structure at the start of the day.

When / purpose	Callington language	Educator intention
Greeting	“Good morning, I’m happy to see you.” “Would you like to start with me at the playdough table or outside near the sandpit?”	Create a warm entry and offer a supported choice.
Forced choice for connection	“Would you like to learn with me here or with Mary at the blocks?”	Give children agency while keeping the adult structure clear.
If a child is unsure	“I can help you get started. Let’s choose one place together.”	Reduce anxiety and support entry into play and learning.

Separation from family

When / purpose	Callington language	Educator intention
Child is sad, confused or upset when saying goodbye	“I can see you are feeling sad. It is okay to feel sad.” “Your family is going now and I will be here to keep you safe and learn with you until they come back.”	Acknowledge emotion, confirm the adult role and reassure the child that family will return.
Adult takes charge kindly	“The good news is it is my job to be here with you today and keep you safe. Your job is to say goodbye.”	Support families and children with a clear, kind separation routine.
Using visuals	“Let’s look at our day. After outside play, story and lunch, your family will come back.”	Use the visual timetable to reassure the child about what happens next.

End of day connection ritual

When / purpose	Callington language	Educator intention
Before pick-up	“What is one thing you enjoyed today that we can share with your family?”	Help children reflect on belonging, learning and positive moments.
At pick-up	“Your family is here. Thank you for learning with us today. We can’t wait to see you next time.”	End the session with warmth, predictability and connection.
Educator self-check	“Have I had a learning moment with this child today?” “Have I helped this child have a well-worn path back to me?”	Check that each child experienced meaningful connection with an educator.

When a child has been hurt physically or emotionally

The first educator response is to ensure immediate safety. If one child is dysregulated and another child has been hurt, one educator stays with the dysregulated child to prevent further harm, while another educator supports the child who has been hurt and provides comfort or first aid as needed.

Once children are regulated and ready to reconnect, educators support a restorative conversation. If it is not emotionally or physically safe to bring children together, repair will be delayed and supported in another way.

When / purpose	Callington language	Educator intention
Checking on the child who has been hurt	"You look sad. Can you tell me what happened?" "I am here to help you."	Comfort, listen and name feelings for children.
Checking on the child who caused harm	"You don't look happy either. Can you tell me how you are feeling?"	Stay connected while helping the child regulate and reflect.
Naming the impact	"Jo is feeling hurt because you pushed them." "When you pushed, Jo's body got hurt."	Make the behaviour and impact visible without shaming the child.
Wondering about need or intention	"I wonder if you were trying to get a turn." "What were you hoping for when that happened?"	Help the child understand their own feelings, needs and actions.
Problem solving	"I can hear how you are both feeling. I wonder what we could do to sort out this problem?"	Invite children into problem solving when they are regulated enough.
Repair	"What could we do to help fix this?" "Would you like to check if they are okay, get an ice pack, help rebuild, or try the words again?"	Support authentic repair. Do not force apologies.

If an educator has been hurt

If an educator has been hurt, another educator will support the dysregulated child and use time-in, calm language, sensory support or forced choice to co-regulate. When everyone is safe and ready, the educator and child can reconnect and repair the relationship.

When / purpose	Callington language	Educator intention
Immediate safety	"I won't let you hurt me." "I am moving my body to stay safe and I am still here to help."	Set a clear boundary while staying emotionally available.
Repair with educator	"My body was hurt. I am okay now. Let's work out what you can do next time."	Repair the relationship without blame or shame.

Adult body language, voice and connection

- get down to the child's level where safe and appropriate
- use a calm, steady and kind voice
- use gentle and respectful physical gestures, consistent with Protective Practices
- keep facial expression and body posture open and non-threatening
- avoid lecturing, shaming, threatening, blaming or using sarcasm
- stay close enough to support but give physical space where a child needs it
- ask for help from another educator when you are reaching your own limit
- be the bigger, stronger, wiser and kind adult: take charge of safety while staying connected.

Educator reflection points

- Was I at the child's level?
- How might the child have been feeling before, during and after the behaviour?
- Have I regularly checked in with this child today through a smile, positive acknowledgement, wave or shared play?
- Does this child need me to play with them, repair a relationship rupture, or help them enter play and learning with others?
- Have I used respectful body language, gentle safe hands and a calm voice?
- Does this child need me to be more clearly in charge so they can feel safe?
- Have I offered enough structure, choice and connection?
- What pattern might this behaviour be showing us about the child's needs, skills or environment?
- Did I use gender inclusive language?

Final reminder: Consistent language is not a script to control children. It is shared adult practice that helps children feel safe, understood, connected and able to learn.