

Positive Touch Policy

Acceptable forms of touch/physical intervention in Newdigate Pre-School

There are many occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with children for a variety of reasons, for example:

- Communication
- First Aid
- to comfort a child in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age)
- to direct a child or young person (holding hands, hand on shoulder etc)
- for educational skills (Sports activities, Roleplay, demonstrating pencil grip etc)
- for life skills (changing for Muddy Mondays, toileting, using cutlery etc)
- in an emergency to increase safety to the child and staff

In an emergency incident staff may take into account the use of reasonable force and their responsibilities under duty of care.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and children takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the child or young person's age and level of understanding
- the child or young person's individual characteristics and history
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)

If a child or young person requires physical support on a regular basis this information will be documented on an individual plan such as a handling plan, toileting plan or behaviour support plan.

Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the child's neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular child or young person.

The use of force by staff to restrain or control a child

Newdigate Pre-School endeavours to ensure that all children are safe and that all aspects of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda are addressed. The main objective of this policy is to ensure all staff, parents are aware of the procedures and practice that will be carried out to ensure that this is the case at the pre-school. This policy links with the pre-school's behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy and special educational needs policy. It is intended to ensure that it will prevent serious breaches of pre-school discipline and prevent injury to individuals or serious damage to property.

In order to minimise the need to use force or restrain child or young persons at staff will strive to:

- create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require using force and apply pre-school rules consistently and fairly.
- develop an effective relationship between staff and a child that is central to good order.
- ensure all supervision of children is carried out in a consistent manner so children and staff are comfortable within the setting.
- use relevant materials for approaches to teach children how to manage conflict and strong feelings.

- ensure all staff have appropriate instructions and training to enable them to be effective in their various roles in and out of the setting.
- ensure that handling plans will be put in place and training given to ensure staff are equipped to deal with individual children who have been identified.
- Whenever possible, warn a child that force may have to be used before using it.

Responsibilities

It is the Manager's duty to ensure all staff are aware of their statutory powers to use force and or restrain a child. As part of the induction process into the pre-school the Manager will inform staff if they have the powers to restrain, and who they can turn to if they are in a situation with a child that may be causing concern.

All staff at pre-school may have the statutory powers to use force to restrain a child or remove them from an area. A record of 'authorised' staff will be indicated on the DBS checklist retained in the safeguarding folder.

When and where to use restraint

The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use should always depend on the circumstances that staff find themselves in. Time in these circumstances is often short with little time for reflection. Nevertheless, staff needs to make the clearest possible judgements. Staff will need to decide the seriousness of the incident and the injury, disorder or damage that could occur if force is not used. The chances of achieving a desired outcome by other means and the risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies. Staff will have been made aware of any significant children i.e. those on SEND/Child Protection Registers and in any extreme cases where there is a need to engage the police to avoid danger to themselves and others.

If a member of staff decides that the use of force is appropriate and an action of last resort then they should always:

- advise giving a warning to the child that a physical intervention may have to be used.
- suggest how the child is to be handled ensuring that no form of restraint is used that could constrict breathing. Appropriate means are passive physical contact such as standing between children or young persons or blocking a child's path, leading a child or young person by the hand or arm, ushering a child or young person away by placing a hand in the centre of the back or in more extreme circumstances using appropriate restrictive methods that a member of staff has been trained to perform.
- try to ensure that they do not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe or call for assistance.

Examples of situations that particularly call for judgements of this kind include:

- a child attacks a member of staff or another child
- children are fighting, causing risk or injury to themselves or others
- a child is causing or on the verge of committing deliberate damage to property.
- a child is causing or is at risk of causing injury or damage by rough play or use of an object.
- a child absconds from an area or leaves pre-school at an unauthorised time.
- a child persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave an area.
- a child is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a session, a pre-school event or pre-school outing.

In these examples use of force would be reasonable (and therefore lawful) if it is clear the behaviour is dangerous and the situation could not be resolved in any other way. Account must be taken of the individual needs of the child their understanding of the situation.

Recording of incidents

A record sheet (will be completed by all staff engaged in any incident where handling has taken place even if they did not handle the child. The record sheets will be kept centrally in the pre-school safeguarding folder.

Once completed they must be passed to the Manager. They must be completed once the situation has been dealt with to ensure accuracy and that it is a true and honest report. The Manager will inform the parents of the child by phone followed by a letter and, if necessary, arrange to meet them. The report will then be filed in the child's records in the pre-school file cupboard.

All accident, incident or near miss reports must be recorded. Surrey schools can access the SCC on line health and safety event reporting portal surreycc.oshens.com

Following any incidents where force has been appropriate the Manager will make arrangements to support the staff and children as these can be upsetting times.

First aid will be administered by a trained first aider and emotional support will be provided as required.

Staff will discuss the situation within 2 days with the Manager to see if all procedures were followed and how we could try to avoid further repercussions, learning from the experience.

Complaints procedures

The pre-school has a clear complaints procedure and any complaints would be received in the first instance by the Manager. If matters were not resolved, then the complainant would take the matter to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. Parents wishing to make a complaint will be issued with the guidance booklet detailing the procedures.

Caring touch

There may be circumstances when physical contact is appropriate and recovery other than that covered by Section 93 of the Education Inspection Act of 2006 i.e.:

- contact in sports activities demonstrating technique or exercises.
- administering first aid.
- congratulating a child or young person or where a child is in distress and needs comforting
- young children and those with SEN may need staff to provide physical prompts or help.

In all these cases Practitioners must use their own professional judgement when they feel a child needs this kind of support, which should always respect the wishes of the individual.

This policy will be monitored by the pre-school and governors and will be reviewed on a regular basis. The Manager and staff will review the pre-schools use of force strategy following any incidents and make any relevant changes to the policy.