



TOUCH AND PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN CHILDREN AND STAFF EARLY YEARS

Physical contact

1. It is recognised that hugs and warm physical contact may be an appropriate and comfortable part of school life, particularly with younger children. Usually it is best for adults not to initiate such contact.
2. Reassurance may also be given appropriately e.g. through a pat on the shoulder or arm.
3. Physical contact is often necessary in the Early Years Department: helping children use the toilet, dressing, comfort and general care and is likely to occur in general play and activities.
4. Physical contact is necessary when administering first aid.
5. Physical contact may be appropriate during craft activities to help and direct a child.
6. Young children with special educational needs may need staff to provide physical prompts or help.
7. Touching may also be appropriate if a child is in distress and needs comforting.
8. Some children may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background, or because of abuse.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort, when all other discipline strategies have been applied, in cases where there is an immediate danger to the child or others or as indicated overleaf.

Procedure

1. The teacher or assistant should first give verbal signal that are repetitive and familiar and that are generally used to hold the group, e.g. 'hands are for work and play', 'kind hands in the kindergarten', 'running feet are for outside', 'only donkeys kick', etc.
2. If the child does not modify their behaviour as a response to these usual signals, staff will adopt a calm and measured approach and attempt to hold the child around the waist and sit with the child.
3. If this measure does not calm the child, an attempt will be made to take the child to another space to allow them to have a tantrum, scream, cry or speak out.
4. If the child is striking out [e.g. hitting, scratching, biting, kicking or pulling hair] at a teacher/assistant or another child, they may need their hands or feet holding [restraint] until they can be removed from the situation.

A child may be held [restrained] under the following circumstances:

- If a child is causing injury to themselves or another child
- If a child tries to physically attack a teacher/assistant
- If a child is causing damage to property
- If a child is engaged in behaviour that compromises good order and discipline
- If a child is running out of the school building or grounds

No action will be taken that may cause injury.

Staff should avoid holding or touching children in an inappropriate way.

Where ever possible the assistance of another adult should be obtained.

Parents should be informed of 'one-off' incidents.

On-going difficult behaviour would be discussed with parents and SENCO, and ways in which it could be managed, will be considered. A Support Plan may be put in place, which would be reviewed regularly. (See Special Educational Needs Policy).

Approval & Review

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees on

3rd March 2016

Policy review date:

February 2017