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EARLY YEARS TOUCH AND PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN CHILDREN AND TEACHERS

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 appropriately given, e.g. through a pat on the shoulder or arm.
3. Physical contact is often necessary in the Early Years Department: helping children to use the toilet, dressing, comfort and general care and is likely to occur in general play 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. We also recognise that 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 or in cases where there is an immediate danger to the child or others.

Procedure

1. The teacher or assistant should first give verbal signals 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/nursery', 'running feet are for outside', 'only donkeys kick'. If the child doesn't respond then the teacher will divert them from the play into a new focus e.g working at the table with an adult or taking a message to another Kindergarten etc

2. If the child does not modify their behaviour as a response to these usual signals or a teacher's attempt to distract the child, 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 physically tries to 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

Under no circumstances will a member of staff:

- Hold or touch a child in an inappropriate way
- Cause injury to a child
- Use shouting or verbal threats to discipline a child (ren)

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

When a member of staff has needed to employ the above procedure this will be recorded and the parents will be informed.

Ongoing difficult behaviour would be discussed with parents and the 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.

Please also refer to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Reviewed December 2018