



01904 409763
headoffice@yorkchildcare.co.uk
www.yorkchildcare.co.uk

Appropriate Touch and Physical Intervention Policy

Statement of Intent

York Childcare recognises that positive touch is an important part of caring relationships and children's emotional wellbeing. Appropriate touch can provide reassurance, support learning and development, and help children feel safe and secure. All touch must be respectful, proportionate, responsive to the child's needs and undertaken in a manner that maintains the dignity of the child.

This will be done through a combination of approaches including:

- Positive and consistent role modelling
- Providing a stimulating, interesting and challenging learn through play environment
- Setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations
- Providing positive feedback

Where a child has identified SEND and physical intervention may reasonably be anticipated, staff will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to develop appropriate support strategies and risk assessments.

There are two main types of handling:

Positive Handling - The positive use of touch is a normal part of human interaction. At our nursery we will exercise appropriate care when handling children. We will use positive handling in appropriate situations for example:

- Giving guidance to children (such as how to hold a paintbrush, or when balancing/climbing)
- Providing emotional support (such as placing an arm around a distressed child). There may be occasions (for example if a child is hurt/very upset) when a member of staff may feel it appropriate to hug a child to console them
- Physical care (such as first aid or toileting)
- Hand holding providing the child is compliant and it is not as a restraint

Restrictive Physical Intervention - This is when a member of staff uses physical force intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will. In most cases this will be using the adult's body rather than mechanical or environmental methods.

The use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

At nursery we will only use physical restrictive handling as a last resort where all other possible de-escalation skills have been used and where there is a significant risk of harm occurring, for example when:

- A child is injuring themselves or others
- A child is damaging property

Staff may use reasonable and proportionate physical intervention to prevent a child from leaving the setting, or an off-site activity, where doing so would place the child or others at immediate risk of significant harm. This policy extends beyond the setting boundaries when staff have charge of children off site.

Physical Restrictive Handling will never be used out of anger or as a punishment, and will always be necessary, reasonable and proportionate.

Any incident involving restrictive physical intervention must be recorded as soon as possible after the event and shared with the manager. Records will include:

- What happened immediately before the incident
- The risks identified
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- The intervention used
- Duration
- Any injury sustained
- Views of the child where appropriate
- Parents/carers informed

The manager will review all incidents to identify any patterns and ensure practice remains lawful, necessary and proportionate.

Please refer to our Behaviour Management Policy.

Views on Touch

Touch is essential to provide sensitive and good quality care for the children and young people we support. Used in context, and with empathy, touch supports the development of our natural interactions with the children and young people we care for. In play or for emotional reasons children of any age who are at early levels of development are likely to be quite tactile and physical.



01904 409763
headoffice@yorkchildcare.co.uk
www.yorkchildcare.co.uk

We may choose to hold children for a variety of reasons, but in general terms we would normally do so for either comfort or reward. We may also need to physically touch, guide or prompt children if they require personal care, assistance with writing, eating, dressing, walking alongside busy roads etc.

How do we use touch?

1. **HUGGING** – Practitioners may offer or respond to a hug when it is clearly in the child's best interests, welcomed by the child and appropriate to the circumstances. This protects children who:
 - Are upset
 - Have communication difficulties
 - May not be able to verbally initiate comfort
2. **HAND HOLDING** – Hand holding may be used for reassurance, guidance or safety. Where a child actively resists hand holding, staff will consider whether the action constitutes a restrictive intervention and will act in accordance with this policy.
3. **LAP SITTING** – As children grow in independence, staff will normally encourage them to sit alongside adults rather than on laps. Exceptions may occur where a child requires significant emotional reassurance or comfort and this is considered appropriate and proportionate.
4. **KISSING** – At nursery, we do not allow staff members to physically kiss any of the children. If there is an occasion a child kisses a member of staff, they would gently and sensitively explain that we do not kiss like that here, and offer an alternative gesture of warmth, affection or comfort towards the child e.g. a hug or blow a kiss.

At times, children in such crisis or distress decide to hold in such a way which is not described as above (e.g. 'front on' hug/lap sitting). If this should happen, we would give the child guidance as to the more appropriate methods of touch listed above.

The use of touch is discussed openly and regularly between staff. Staff understand that they are responsible for ensuring that appropriate boundaries are observed.

All staff are responsible for the implementation of this policy. They must intervene if they observe any behaviour by a member of staff towards a child that contravenes the policy and places a child at risk of harm. The member of staff will be asked to

consider their behaviour, and to repeat safeguarding training. Any such incident will be followed up in supervision to ensure the member of staff understands this policy and their safeguarding responsibilities to children in their care.

Gender and cultural factors have relevance in issues of touch. The emotional and communication needs of the individual will be discussed with all concerned and due equal consideration.

Prohibited Practices

Staff must never:

- Use physical intervention as a punishment.
- Restrict breathing.
- Hold a child around the neck.
- Use pain compliance techniques.
- Deliberately inflict pain.
- Use humiliating or degrading treatment.
- Continue intervention longer than necessary.

Please note that although we have a touch policy and believe that contingent touch can be a positive experience for the children that we care for, this does not mean that we have to touch children, and we realise that some children will not want to be touched and we respect this.