

Physical Contact and Physical Restraint

Statement of Intent

The staff at Grass Roots Private Day Nursery recognise the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We also recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have an active part to play in protecting our children from harm. All staff should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment promoting the social, physical and moral development of individual children. The nursery understands the importance of working within the Every Child Matters Framework and the five outcomes outlined within it:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-Being

Physical Contact

During a child's time at Grass Roots, particularly with the younger children, there will be occasions when the staff will need to have some form of physical contact with the children in their care. The nursery recognises that close, physical contact is vital in order to help them develop into well balanced, secure and happy individuals. The nursery is, however, aware of the need for clear boundaries for physical contact in order to protect everyone involved. Physical contact may be misconstrued by a child, parent or observer. Touching children, including well-intentioned gestures can, if repeated regularly, lead to serious questions being raised.

General Guidelines

As a general principle staff must not make unnecessary physical contact with the children. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to children. There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some children may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background or special needs or because they have been abused.

Where appropriate, staff should receive information on these children, whilst ensuring that all matters of confidentiality and sensitivity remain of paramount importance.

Where Physical Contact may be Acceptable:

At Grass Roots we care for very young children. There will be times when staff are required to have close physical contact with a child, for example during settling in periods, when providing first aid, intimate care or during the dressing and undressing of older children when they have had a toileting accident. It is also important for the children to feel safe, secure and loved in their environment. We understand that children can react differently to physical contact and we respect this. Staff have received training in safeguarding & child protection.

It should always be the child who instigates any sort of physical contact such as cuddles. If a child is very upset then the adult must ask the child if they want a cuddle. Children should not be kissed by the nursery staff under any circumstances.

Young children and children with special educational needs may need staff to provide physical prompts to help.

There may be occasions where a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance, possibly owing to an accident or disagreement, or a child struggling to separate from a parent or carer, which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give.

Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time. Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel a child needs this kind of emotional support and should reflect the child's needs, age and level of maturity. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek the advice and guidance of the Designated Safeguarding Lead – Lucy Pottinger

Detailed instances that would involve physical contact include the following:

Reason for Contact	Acceptable Contact	Unacceptable Contact
Lifting child into highchair or onto changing table, moving non-mobile child to a new area or activity.	Lifting or carrying child in a safe and secure way	Holding for prolonged periods of time. Lifting in a dangerous or uncomfortable way
Consoling and reassuring a child who was upset, possibly due to an accident or disagreement, or maybe a child struggling to separate from a parent or carer	Cuddling a child, sitting a child on your knee. Occasionally, when separating a child from a parent or carer, it is necessary to physically remove/transfer the child to a member of staff, with adult's consent.	"Kissing Better"
Toileting children who still require adult support.	Lifting, supporting children on the toilet. Wiping bottoms following a bowel movement. Older children will be encouraged to do this for themselves. For children in nursery, the toilet door will always be left open but modesty will be preserved. Adults will always talk to children about what is happening and why.	Never touching a child's private areas. The adult may direct a child's hand to assist them.
Changing the clothing of a child who may have soiled themselves	Quickly undressing and redressing the child. May involve removing underwear and replacing with clean clothes. Cleaning soiled body parts with wipes. Colleagues will always be made aware that a child and staff member have left the room to deal with soiling.	Intimate or sustained contact with child's body
Restraining a child for their own protection or the protection of others.	At Grass Roots we believe a child should never get to the point that they need restraining but in some cases we may need to intervene. They should always try to use verbal persuasion before physical intervention if possible. Holding a child across their bodies from behind, using gentle to firm pressure as necessary until the child has calmed down sufficiently. Guiding children by the shoulders away from the situation using the "Mitten Grip".	Unacceptable force e.g. causing reddening of the skin or bruising. "Gripping" children with fingers apart.
Helping with dressing up clothes, adjusting clothing (eg	General contact with the body	Intimate or sustained contact with the body.

tucking in shirts, vests etc into skirts/trousers).		
Holding hands such as for reassurance, in circle games and role play or for safety reasons eg crossing the road.	Gently holding hands. "Over Grip"	Unacceptable Force
Sitting children on an adult's knee eg for sharing a story, reinforcing good behaviour or at a child's request.	Putting arm or arms around the child	Intimate contact. Sitting child face to face and astride an adult.
Rough and Tumble Play, Physical play.	Piggy Backs, tickling, catching child as part of an agreed game, holding child around upper body eg assisting them on bikes, climbing frames, swings, climbing outdoor equipment. Although games may be child led, there are incidences where these may be adult led. It is vital any contact must be on the child's terms and with their willing participation. The adult must always be sensitive to the child's feelings and body language as they may not always communicate verbally.	Unreasonable force, intimate contact.

Physical Restraint

Where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force'. Before intervening physically, staff should wherever practicable, tell the child who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if he or she does not. The staff member should continue to attempt to communicate with the child throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. In such cases only the minimum force necessary will be used whilst maintaining a calm and measured approach. Grass Roots staff should not put themselves at risk of injury. In these circumstances, the staff member should remove the other children who may be at risk and seek assistance from a colleague. Staff should inform the child/children that they have sent for help. Until assistance arrives, staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally and try to prevent the situation from escalating.

Types of Incidents

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a child.

They will fall into three broad categories:

1. Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
2. Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
3. Where a child is behaving in a way that is compromising the safety of staff members and/ or other children.

Examples of situations that fall within one of the first two categories are:

- A child attacks a member of staff or another child
- Children are fighting

- A child is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- A child is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- A child is running in the playground in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others

Recording Incidents

Any member of staff involved in an incident requiring physical intervention must inform the manager and write a detailed report of the incident to help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the situation.

Planning for Incidents

If the nursery is aware that a child is likely to behave in a way that may require physical control or restraint, it will plan how best to respond in the situation.

The nursery will endeavour to:

- Manage the child and situation by diffusing the situation
- Involve the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the nursery may need to take
- Brief staff to ensure that they know exactly what action should be taken and where appropriate provide training or guidance
- Ensure that additional support can be summoned if appropriate

This policy will be reviewed by management annually, who are responsible for ensuring the dissemination of this policy to all staff, volunteers and parents.