

## Physical Handling Policy

It is the policy of All Saints Pre-school that physical handling should be avoided wherever possible.

There are three main types of physical handling:

We promote **positive handling** – the positive use of touch is a normal part of human interaction. Touch might be appropriate in a range of situations:

- Giving guidance to children (such as how to hold a paintbrush or when climbing)
- Providing emotional support (such as placing an arm around a distressed child)
- Physical care (such as first aid or toileting)

Staff must exercise appropriate care when using touch (see Child Protection policy). There are some children for whom touch would be inappropriate such as those with a history of physical or sexual abuse, or those from certain cultural groups. Staff will be advised about any children to whom this may apply. The setting's policy is not intended to imply that staff should no longer touch children.

Physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during sport sessions.

Staff need to use their own professional judgement when they feel a child needs this kind of support and should not be inhibited from providing such contact when it is professionally appropriate to do so.

In certain circumstances we have to use **physical intervention**. Physical intervention can include mechanical and environmental means such as chairs, fences, cones or locked doors. These may be appropriate ways of ensuring a child's safety.

Acceptable physical intervention can take a number of forms, namely:

- Physically interposing between children
- Blocking a child's path
- Holding
- Pulling
- Leading a child by the hand or arm
- In extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds

On occasions we may have to use **restrictive physical intervention**.

Hampshire guidelines on physical restraint state:

*“Restraint occurs when a member of staff uses physical force intentionally to restrict a child’s movement, against his or her will. It should rarely be used”.*

In most cases this will be through the use of the adult’s body rather than mechanical or environmental methods.

The use of force can only be regarded as reasonable if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it.

Any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Where it is judged that restrictive physical intervention is necessary, staff should:

- Aim for side-to-side contact with the child. Avoid positioning themselves in front (to reduce the risk of being kicked) or behind (to reduce the risk of allegations of sexual misconduct).
- Aim for no gap between the adult and child’s body, where they are side to side. This minimises the risk of impact and damage.
- Aim to keep the adult’s back as straight as possible.
- Beware in particular of head positioning, to avoid head butts from the child.
- Hold children by “long” bones i.e. avoid grasping at joints where pain and damage are most likely.

Staff are not allowed to use seclusion (which is where children are forced to spend time alone in a supervised room) except in an emergency situation.

Staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, namely:

- Holding a child around the neck, by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the child’s ability to breathe.
- Slapping, punching or kicking a child.
- Tripping a child.
- Holding or pulling a child by the hair or ear.
- Holding a child face down on the ground.
- Any hold that may restrict breathing.

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a child in a way that may be considered indecent.

## **Types of Incident**

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

Examples of situation 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 hall or on the stage in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure himself or herself, or others.
- A child absconds from, or tries to leave the All Saints Pre-school premises.

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- A child persistently refuses to obey an instruction from an adult.
- A child is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting the Pre-school.

## **Practical Strategies**

Before intervening physically, staff should, wherever practicable, tell the child who is misbehaving to stop and also make it clear what would happen if he or she does not.

Communication must continue with the child throughout the incident and it should be made clear to the child that contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

A calm and measured approach to the situation is needed at all times. Members of staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger, or frustration. Members of staff will not punish the child by physical injury or cause humiliation.

## **Practical Responses**

### **DO:**

- Remain controlled
- Talk clearly and give clear instruction
- Keep talking (calm requests for desired behaviour)
- Request help and tell the child you are requesting help
- In order to help keep calm remove any other children or adults where possible
- Remove other people if they are in danger
- Remove potential weapons
- Assume that the child is going to calm down

### **DON'T**

- Use confrontational body language
- Engage in prolonged or exaggerated eye contact
- Use confrontational language e.g. "*stop being childish*"
- Use physical intervention unless other non-physical methods of calming have been tried.

## **Who can use restraint?**

Everyone has a right to use reasonable force to prevent an attack against themselves or others.

Supervisor, Deputy Supervisor and Assistants can use physical restraint under other circumstances.

These arrangements apply at all times when the Pre-school has responsibility for the children.

The policy does not apply to situations before the children arrive or after the children have left the Pre-school. This policy does, however, apply when on Pre-school outings.

A member of staff should not intervene if she believes that she may be at risk of injury. In these circumstances the member of staff should remove other children who might be at risk and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues. Until assistance arrives the member of staff should continue to attempt to diffuse the situation orally (if at all possible) and try to prevent the incident escalating.

## **After an Incident of Restraint**

The Supervisor and Management Committee must be notified as soon as possible after any incident in which physical force is used to control or restrain a child.

All incidents (unless trivial) should be recorded on the Restraint Incident Report Form.

In an emergency, staff will do their best, within their duty of care and use only reasonable minimal force. After an emergency the situation is reviewed and plans for an appropriate future response are made. This will be based on a risk assessment.

A risk assessment is used to help write the individual behaviour plan that is developed to support a child. If this behaviour plan includes restrictive physical intervention it will be just one part of a whole approach to supporting a child's behaviour.

The setting will draw from as many different viewpoints as possible when it is known that an individual child's behaviour is likely to require some form of restrictive physical intervention. In particular, the child's parents/carers will be involved with staff from the setting who work with the child and any visiting support staff (such as Area SENCOs, Educational Psychologists, Portage Plus workers, the Behaviour Support Team, Speech and Language Therapists and Social Workers). The outcome from these planning meetings will be recorded and a signature will be sought from the parent/carer to confirm their knowledge of the planned approach. These plans will be reviewed at least once every four to six months, or more frequently if there are major changes to the child's circumstances.

It is All Saints Pre-school policy to inform parents of any incidents on the same day. Parents will be encouraged to discuss ongoing concerns with the Supervisor.

If the child had to be removed from the setting the child should be reinstated in the setting as soon as possible.

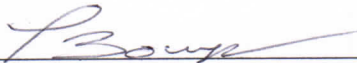
Consistent with the principles of the Children's Act 1989, children who have been restrained are entitled to record their view, after they have calmed down. Appropriate staff will be on hand to support the child and also help debrief children who have been involved through witnessing an incident of restraint.

Any injuries sustained by staff should be recorded separately in accordance with Health and Safety procedures.

References

- Education Act 1966
- The Criminal Law Act 1967
- The Children's Act 1989
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**This policy was adopted on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2010.**

Signed on behalf of the pre-school \_\_\_\_\_ 

Reviewed 11.5.11 H. Griffith  
H. GRIFFITH

Reviewed 27.9.12 H. Griffith