

## Safeguarding Children

### **General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare**

Children's behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs.

## **1.15 Physical Handling Policy**

### Introduction

All staff aim to help children take responsibility for their own behaviour. A variety of strategies are used within the setting depending of the needs of the child (see Achieving positive behaviour policy)

Approaches include:

- Positive role modelling
- Planning a wide range of interesting and challenging activities that engage children in learning
- Setting and reinforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations
- Providing children with positive feedback and encouragement
- Use of behaviour management support plans where necessary

When a child is accompanied by a parent/carer (e.g. at a drop-in or group session), Nursery staff will expect that adult to take full responsibility for their child's behaviour and safety. This may include physical handling by that adult in certain circumstances. Staff may need to offer advice and support to a parent/carer when appropriate. In circumstances where staff are concerned about a child's safety, they will need to act in accordance with the Nursery's Safeguarding Children Policy. When children are in the care of Nursery staff (e.g. in the nursery school), then the following guidance must be followed.

### Definitions

There are three main types of physical handling:

- Positive handling: The use of touch is a normal part of human interaction. Touch might be appropriate in a range of situations. For example, giving guidance to children (how to hold a paint brush, or when climbing); providing emotional support (placing an arm around a distressed child); physical care (first aid or toileting).

In these circumstances, staff must exercise appropriate care when using touch. There are some children for whom touch would be inappropriate such as those with a history of physical or sexual abuse, or from certain cultural groups. This policy does not intend to imply that staff should no longer touch children.

- Physical intervention: Physical intervention can include mechanical and environmental means such as high chairs, stair gates, or locked doors. These may be appropriate ways of ensuring a child's safety.
- 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 through the use of the adult's body rather than mechanical or environmental methods.

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Principles for the use of restrictive physical intervention Restrictive physical intervention (RPI) must be used within the context of the positive behaviour management approaches used within the Nursery (see Achieving positive behaviour Policy).

RPI must only be used in extreme circumstances and must not be the preferred way of managing children's behaviour.

Staff will aim to do all they can to avoid using RPI through a variety of well- established and well-planned strategies. However, there are rare situations of such extreme danger that create an immediate need for the use of restrictive physical intervention. In these circumstances, RPI can be used with other strategies such as saying 'Stop'. Staff must only use RPI when they believe that its use is in the best interest of the child: their needs are paramount.

All staff have a duty of care towards children in the setting. When children are in danger of hurting themselves, others or of causing significant danger to property, staff have a responsibility to intervene. In most cases, this would involve an attempt to divert the child's attention or another activity or the instruction 'stop!'. However, if it is judged as necessary, staff may use PRI.

When PRI is used, it must be within the principle of reasonable minimal force, i.e. an amount of force in proportion to the circumstances. Staff should use as little restrictive force, for as short a period as necessary, in order to maintain safety.

When can restrictive physical intervention be used?

RPI can be justified when:

- someone is injuring themselves or others
- someone is damaging property
- there is a suspicion that, although injury, damage has not yet happened, it is about to happen.

Staff might need to use RPI if a child is trying to leave the site and it is judged that the child is at risk. However, the Nursery has planned other protective measures such as secure doors and adequate staffing. Duty of care would also extend to when staff have charge of children off site (e.g. on outings).

It is important to recognise that in certain circumstances, RPI, although justified, may make a situation worse. Staff need to make a judgement and then use an alternative strategy (e.g. seek help, make the area safe, remove other children, etc.).

The main aim in using RPI is to restore safety for both the child and those around him or her. RPI must never be used out of anger, as a punishment or as an alternative to measure that are less intrusive and which staff judge would be effective.

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Who can use restrictive physical intervention? It is recommended that a member of staff who knows the child well is involved in a restrictive physical intervention. This person is most likely to have used other strategies prior to the need for RPI. However, in an emergency, anyone can use RPI as long as it is consistent with this policy.

Where an individual child's behaviour is such that they are likely to require RPI, staff should be identified as the most appropriate to be involved (as part of a behaviour plan). It is important that such staff have received appropriate training and support in positive behaviour management as well as physical intervention. It is also important to consider the physical and emotional health of both staff and children involved.

What type of RPI can and cannot be used? Any use of RPI should be consistent with the principle of reasonable minimal force. Where it is deemed necessary to use, staff should:

- Aim for side by side contact. 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's and the child's body, where they are side by side. This minimises the risk of impact and damage.
- Aim to keep the adult's back straight as possible
- Be aware 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.
- Ensure that there is no restriction to the child's ability to breathe. In particular, this means avoiding holding a child around the chest cavity or stomach.
- Avoid lifting children

Staff are not permitted to use seclusion (where children are forced to spend time alone in a room) except in an emergency situation. RPI should not be used to bring children to, or hold them in 'time out' type strategies.

### Planning

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

- What the risks are
- Who is at risk
- What can be done to manage the risk

Staff will also need to develop an individual Behaviour Plan, where RPI is seen as one part of a whole approach to supporting a child's behaviour.

The Behaviour Plan should outline:

- An understanding of what the child is trying to achieve or communicate through their behaviour
- How the environment can be adapted to better meet the child's needs
- How the child can be taught and encouraged to use new, more appropriate behaviours

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- How the child can be rewarded when he or she makes progress
- How staff respond when the child's behaviour is challenging (responsive strategies – see below)

There are a range of responsive strategies that can be used as a direct alternative to RPI (e.g. humour, distraction, relocation, offering choices, etc.). These must be considered first, with RPI as the last option.

When it is likely that a child's Behaviour Plan necessarily includes the use of RPI, then staff will consult widely with involved parties (parents, staff working with child, therapists, educational psychologist, etc.). The outcome of such planning meeting will be recorded and written parental consent will be sought. Behaviour Plans will be reviewed every four to six months or more frequently if required.

### Recording and reporting

Incidents of the use of RPI must be reported to the Head / Manager or supervisor and must be recorded as soon as possible (and within 24 hours) in the R. I. P/Report book. According to the nature of the incident, the incident should also be noted in other records such as the accident book or individual child's tracking sheets.

After using RPI, Nursery Manager will inform the parents by phone, on collection from nursery or by letter to go home with child (whichever is possible at the time). Parents should receive a copy of the record form.

### Supporting and reviewing

Situations that result in the use of RPI are distressing for those involved, whether as the person doing the holding, the child being held, or someone observing or hearing about what has happened. Support must be given to the child so that they can understand, where ever possible, why they were held. Where appropriate, staff may have similar conversations with children who observed the incident. In all cases, staff must wait for the child to have calmed down enough to be able to talk productively and understand this conversation.

Support must also be offered to staff involved by having the opportunity to talk through the incident with the most appropriate member of the staff team.

It is important that after RPI, staff and child have the opportunity to repair any potential strain to their relationship. The Behaviour Plan should also be reviewed to see if there are ways of reducing the risk further in the light of what happened.

### Monitoring

The Nursery Manager is responsible for monitoring the use of RPI within the Nursery. This information will be used to identify training needs and the effectiveness of the Nursery's ability to meet children's needs without the use of RPI.

Complaints: Parents and staff should be referred to the Nursery's complaint procedure available through the Office.

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This policy was adopted at a meeting of	<u>Downham Nursery School</u>	name of setting
Held on	<u>July 2024</u>	(date)
Date to be reviewed	<u>July 2025</u>	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee PP		
Name of signatory	<u>E.J. Laffeaty-Sharpe</u>	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	<u>Principal/ Proprietor</u>	