

Positive Touch Policy

Within our general day-to-day activities, there are often times when children need appropriate physical contact either when they hurt themselves or get upset about something.

We consider that appropriate touching can be very reassuring for children and therefore it is an intrinsic part of our practice.

Children's needs do vary, some will benefit from being physically comforted to enable them to feel secure within the setting. Equally important, if not more so, is the fact that some children can find any appropriate physical contact extremely uncomfortable.

During staff induction we share our document Personnel Golden Rules which provides very detailed information regarding how we expect a member of our team to present themselves and also how to keep themselves safe and to work within safe practices. This explores the safe limits for staff practice limiting the possibility that a member of the team could be in a position where physical touch can be misconstrued. This policy should also be read alongside our Safeguarding Policy

How we may use appropriate touch to enhance a child's wellbeing and learning:

- Giving a light touch on the head, arm or shoulder. Studies have shown that if an adult lightly touches a child's head or shoulder while talking to them, what the adult is saying is much more meaningful to the child.
- A firm and gentle holding of a child's two hands in yours whilst facing them at their level to enable direct connection – particularly useful before making a request.
- Rubbing a child's back as a method of letting them know that you are there, when they are engaged in Tummy Time Play. This may also be used with a child who is upset and deregulating to provide soothing.
- The use of containment by an adult – a cuddle alongside on the sofa to read a book, scooping up a small child for a cuddle when they are upset
- The use of our hands applying gentle but firm pressure on a child's head to provide grounding, when it is a part of a specific plan.
- During Tumble Time we support children to become involved in wholehearted and full body play understanding the significance that this has for a child's emotional and physical development. At a child's request a member of staff may join in with this play supporting a child's engagement however not leading the play. Touch will be a significant part of this play and requires team members to carefully monitor the positive impact of their involvement.
- Holding Time As a staff team, we are aware of the connection between young children's attachment with their parent/carer during their early years to their personal, social and emotional needs. If children have experienced interruptions in this attachment, they may present a variety of behaviours, which need to be sensitively handled by staff. If the children's challenging behaviour happens regularly, we will complete a My Plan for that child with strategies to support the child. When a child regularly presents challenging behaviour, appropriate intervention may be necessary to prevent them hurting themselves or others or damaging resources. With the parent's written agreement, 'Holding time' can be used. Through this we are helping the child to drop their defences, so we can re-dress the balance of the child feeling omnipotent (in charge) and the adult takes back the control. Please read our practice documents which relate to Holding

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Signed: Judy Westacott/