Positive Handling Policy

Policy statement

At Binfield Preschool we believe that children need to feel happy, safe, and secure and develop good relationships with the adults in our setting. We promote the personal, emotional, social, and physical development of each individual child. We believe that children need to have many opportunities for freedom of movement indoors and outside in our garden. We understand that for their emotional development, the children need physical comfort/contact when appropriate. We have a behaviour policy in place, which actively teaches children our codes of behaviour with a strong focus on positive praise (see behaviour policy). This policy works well for the vast majority of our children. However, for a very few children on rare occasions we may have to use physical intervention.

All staff need to feel able to manage risk and inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what and how challenging behaviours might be communicated. They need to know what the options open to them are, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

Procedures

Definition of ‘restrictive physical intervention’

The Law allows for staff and professionals authorised by the manager to use Restrictive Physical Intervention to prevent a child from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property
- engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the Preschool

“Restrictive Physical Intervention” is the term used by the DfE (Department for Education) to include interventions where bodily contact using force is used. It refers to any instance in which a staff member or other adult authorised by the manager must, in specific circumstances, use “reasonable force” to control or restrain a child. There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. However, there are two relevant considerations:
• the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it
• the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the
  behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent

*When the use of restrictive physical interventions may be appropriate*

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. However, there are other situations when physical management may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain children may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with various strategies, which are suited to that child’s needs and situation. The safety and well-being of all staff and pupils are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

The staff are authorised by the manager to have control of the children and must be aware of this Policy and its implications. Students on work placement and volunteers will not be permitted to use any restrictive physical interventions.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger, and that removing children and themselves from a difficult situation is the right thing to do. We value all efforts by staff to exercise their duty of care for the children when rectifying difficult situations.

Each member of staff is required to complete a moving and handling risk assessment form in order that individual employee capabilities are considered. It is the manager’s responsibility to ensure all staff undertake this risk assessment as part of their induction. It is Preschool’s view that each member of staff can take responsibility for their own safety in any situation and will need to take action to ensure their own health and safety e.g. they may need to remind the manager or colleagues of an injury or physical condition that prevents them from handling or supporting a child.

*Planning for the use of restrictive physical interventions*

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour and only using Restrictive Physical Intervention when:

- As an act of care and control, not punishment
- There are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary
- In the child’s and/or other children’s best interests

Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion and at the level of understanding of the child. If those efforts fail and Restrictive Physical Intervention is necessary, it is done so under the following conditions:

• only the minimum force necessary is used to prevent severe distress, injury, or damage
Acceptable forms of intervention

Binfield Preschool provides care to children aged two-years-old and children with special needs, who require positive touch and a more hands-on approach to support their personal, social and emotional development, as well as supporting them in all other areas of learning.

In our setting, physical contact is never used as a punishment. According to the needs of individual children, we may use physical touch/ intervention:

- to give reassurance to a child
- to comfort a child in distress
- to ensure children have every opportunity to benefit from the Preschool curriculum (EYFS)
- to gently direct a child
- to support children in learning life skills, such as toileting
- when providing intimate care, such as changing nappies
- to provide support within a physical activity, such as climbing/movement
- in an emergency, to avert a child from danger
- in rare circumstances when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted

Developing a positive handling plan

If a child is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan will be agreed and completed with the parents and/or other professional. This Plan will include strategies to help the child avoid getting into these situations and identify the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing.

The plan will include:

- involving parents/carers and/or other professional to outline the specific actions the Preschool may take, when and why
- a risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected e.g. the key person or Senco
- identifying training needs
Reporting the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

Every use of restrictive physical intervention is to be reported to the parent at the end of the day. Dependent on the circumstances, the manager, or the assistant manager if the manager is off-site, and chair of committee should also be informed, and it may be necessary to write up a report.

A written report of an incidence of Restrictive Physical Intervention

If a written report has been made of an incidence of Restrictive Physical Intervention, this should be added to the child’s personal file in the Contact Folder. The incident should also be recorded in the Incident Book.

Guidance and training for staff

As part of their induction, all staff are expected to familiarise themselves on the Preschool’s policies, in particular those relating to Behaviour and Safeguarding. This includes tips on manual handling techniques.

Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and committee informed of all incidences where Restrictive Physical Intervention was necessary, we could avoid the need for complaints. All disputes that arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with by the manager and committee in line with our policies.