

Physical Contact in Pre-School Policy

This policy has undergone an Equalities Impact Assessment in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty

Committee:	Achievement
Policy Ratified:	October 2025
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This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

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1. Guidance and other policies

- 1.1. The **EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers**¹ paragraph 3.5 states that schools are not required to have separate policies to cover EYFS requirements provided the requirements are already met through an existing policy. Paragraph 3.58 et seq **Supporting and understanding children's behaviour**, requires providers to support, understand, and manage children's behaviour in an appropriate way.
- 1.2. This policy should be read together with the CLP **Behaviour and Relationships Policy**, the CLP **Intimate Care Policy** and the school's **Behaviour Policy**.

2. Aims:

- 2.1. Coastal Learning Partnership recognises that staff working in pre-school and nursery settings can form close bonds with children due to the nature of their work with our youngest children. Children need contact with familiar, consistent carers to ensure they can grow confidently and feel self-assured whilst away from their main care givers. At times, children need to be cuddled, encouraged, held and offered physical reassurance. Intimate care routines throughout the day are essential to children's basic needs.
- 2.2. Coastal Learning Partnership believes friendly physical contact is central to warm, personal relationships and to the good quality care of young children. Good quality practice in early years encompasses a full understanding of child protection. However, early years practitioners are also responsible for promoting the development of young children, based on secure attachment and emotional security. The behaviour of all practitioners needs to support children as they grow as individuals and learn to value themselves.

3. Acceptable Comforting:

- 3.1. Coastal Learning Partnership staff should follow these guidelines and principles when offering comfort to a pre-school or nursery pupil:
- 3.2. If a child requires comforting (following an accident or on parents' departure or when noticeably tired/upset), and if in the short-term cuddles will help, these will be given. This will always be in a room with an open door.
- 3.3. Occasionally, when separating a child from a parent /carer, it is necessary to physically remove/transfer the child to a member of staff, with the adult's consent. The staff member must ask the parent/carer first before removing the child from their parent/carer.
- 3.4. Sitting a child on an adult's lap/knee is often a way of giving comfort or calming a child. This will be done when initiated by the child.
- 3.5. Occasionally there is no alternative to picking a child up, but for health and safety reasons this is a 'last resort' and should only happen when there is a risk to a child's safety or other children's safety.
- 3.6. If a child falls asleep on a practitioner's lap/ knee, a practitioner will safely transport the sleeping child to a safe sleep area.
- 3.7. Sun cream can be topped up throughout the day by a practitioner on exposed skin. It is expected that sun cream should be put on by parents prior to attending the setting.
- 3.8. Other activities such as kissing on the cheek, forehead or lips, even instigated by the children themselves are not appropriate and must never occur.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

4. Physical Contact in Play

- 4.1. Coastal Learning Partnership recognises that some children's needs will require additional physical support including touch as directed by professionals. This means, on occasion, a child may need to be touched as part of an agreed game, or holding a child around upper body, e.g., assisting them on bikes, stilts, helping them to jump, bounce, hop etc. These are forms of acceptable physical contact that staff may, from time to time, engage in during play. Although such games and activities may be initiated by the child, there will be occasions when it may be adult-led. It is vital any contact must be on the child's terms and with their willing participation. The adult will always be sensitive to the child's feelings and body language as they may not always communicate verbally how they are feeling. All staff are trained and give due consideration to the EYFS, safeguarding, first aid and physical handling when assisting children in their play.

5. Physical Handling in Relation to Behaviour Management

- 5.1. In line with the school's **Behaviour and Relationships Policy** Coastal Learning Partnership staff will aim to help children take responsibility for their own behaviour. This can be done through a combination of approaches which include:
- Positive role modelling
 - Planning a range of interesting and challenging activities
 - Setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations
 - Providing positive feedback
 - Predictable and familiar routines.
- 5.2. In short, physical handling is not expected as part of behaviour management

6. Physical Contact and Physical Handling

- 6.1. There are very occasional times when a child's behaviour presents particular challenges that may require physical handling. This guidance sets out expectations and definitions for the use of physical handling.
- 6.2. Positive handling:
- 6.3. 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).
- 6.4. Staff must exercise appropriate care when using.
- 6.5. Restrictive Physical Intervention
- 6.6. This is when a member of staff uses physical force intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will. This will be through the use of the adult's body rather than mechanical or environmental methods. This guidance refers to the use of restrictive bodily physical intervention and is based on national guidance. We only use restrictive physical intervention where the risks involved in physical intervention are outweighed by the risks involved in not using physical intervention. It is not our preferred way of managing children's behaviour. Restrictive physical intervention will be used only in the context of a well-established and well- implemented positive behaviour management framework with the exception of emergency situations. In line with statutory guidance, any physical intervention

must be recorded by the practitioner and parents/carers must be informed as soon as reasonably practical.

- 6.7. Some children's needs will require additional physical support. In these cases, there will be a risk assessment written by the SENDCO which will be shared and agreed upon with parents/carers. All staff will have read the risk assessment and implement it accordingly.