

## Physical Handling

We aim to help children take responsibility for their own behaviour 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

## Definitions

Positive handling

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

Physical intervention

- Includes mechanical and environmental means (e.g. locked doors or gates)

Restrictive physical intervention

- Physical force is used intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will. This is usually through the use of the adult's body rather than mechanical or environmental methods

## Principles

1. Positive behaviour management approaches. Restrictive physical handling is used in the context of positive behaviour management techniques. Restrictive physical handling is only used in extreme circumstances. We aim to do all we can to avoid using restrictive physical intervention.
2. Paramountcy. Restrictive physical handling is only used when we believe its use is in the child's best interests i.e. their needs are paramount.
3. Duty of care. Everyone working at Longparish Playgroup has a duty of care towards the children in our setting. When children are in danger of hurting themselves or others or of causing significant damage to property we have a responsibility to intervene which may involve the use of restrictive physical handling.
4. Reasonable minimal force. We will use as little restrictive force as necessary in order to maintain safety and for as short a time as possible.

## Use of restrictive physical intervention (RPI)

Restrictive physical intervention can be justified when

- Someone is injuring themselves or others
- Someone is damaging property
- There is suspicion that although injury, damage or other crime have not yet happened it might do

Duty of care means that we may use restrictive physical intervention if a child is trying to leave the site and we judge the child to be at risk. We will also use other measures such as securing the site and ensuring adequate staffing levels. This duty of

care also extends away from Longparish Playgroup when we are in charge of children off site (e.g. when out for walks or on outings).

There may be occasions when RPI is justified but we judge it may make the situation worse. In that instance we would not use it but would use some other method consistent with our duty of care (e.g. issue an instruction to stop, seek help, or make the area safe).

The aim in using RPI is to restore safety to the child and to those around him/her.

### **Who can use RPI?**

All members of staff who are in regular contact with the children may use RPI. In an emergency anyone can use RPI providing it is consistent with our policy.

### **What type of RPI can be used?**

Any physical intervention we use is consistent with the principle of reasonable minimal force. Where it is judged that RPI is necessary we will:

- Aim for side-by-side contact with the child.
- Aim for no gap between the adult's and the child's body where they are side by side
- Aim to keep the adult's back as straight as possible
- Beware of head positioning (to avoid head butts from the child)
- Hold children by the long bones (to avoid pain and damage to joints)
- Ensure there is no restriction to the child's ability to breathe (in particular avoiding holding a child around the chest cavity or stomach)
- Try to avoid lifting children

We never use seclusion, i.e. send children out of the room on their own. We do not use RPI to bring children to or hold them in time out.

Staff will receive training in the use of RPI through Hampshire County Council.

### **Planning**

In an emergency we will do our best within our duty of care and with the use of reasonable minimal force. After such an emergency we will review the situation and plan future responses based on risk assessment. This will consider

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

This risk assessment can be used to draw up an individual behaviour plan outlining

- 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
- How staff will respond when the child's behaviour is challenging (responsive strategies)

We will pay particular attention to responsive strategies such as humour, distraction, relocation and offering choices. These will be chosen in the light of the risk assessment.

When we know that an individual child's behaviour is likely to need RPI we will seek the views of all those working with the child from within the setting and visiting

support staff. Above all we will work closely with the child's parents/carers and keep them fully informed.

### **Recording and reporting**

Any use of RPI will be recorded on the RPI Record Form (Early Years) as soon as possible. If necessary it will also be recorded in the accident/incident record book. We will inform the child's parents/carers on the day of the incident and give them a copy of the record form. Our chairman will also be informed.

### **Supporting and reviewing**

The use of RPI is distressing to all those involved – the person doing it, the child and his/her parents/carers or someone observing.

After an incident we give support to the child so that he/she can understand why they were held when the child is calm enough to understand. The supervisor will spend time with the parents/carers explaining the situation and agreeing a way forward.

Support is given by the most appropriate member of the staff team to the adults who were involved either actively or as observers.

The key aim of after-incident support is to repair any potential strain to the relationship between the child and the adult who restrained him/her. We will consider reviewing any individual behaviour plan so that the risk of needing to use RPI again is reduced.

### **Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years by the supervisors and the chairman and they will seek support from the Area SENCO as necessary.

Monitoring the use of RPI will help to identify trends and therefore help develop Longparish Playgroup's ability to meet the needs of children without using RPI.

### **Complaints**

The use of RPI can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive use. If anyone (child, parent/carer, member of staff or visitor) has a concern we will deal with it through our complaints procedure. Details of this are in our operational plan or on our website at [www.longparish.org.uk/playgroup](http://www.longparish.org.uk/playgroup) . Information is also displayed on the notice board in our lobby.

This policy will be reviewed in January 2008.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Longparish Playgroup Committee

Held on .....

Signed on behalf of the committee by .....