 Jack and Jill Pre-school… *where children can explore, create and discover the colour of dreams*

Physical Intervention Statement (Positive Handling Plan)

The well-being and safety of all children at Jack and Jill/JACK is of paramount importance. It is acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to act in situations where use of reasonable force may be required. It is further acknowledged that physical techniques are part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

This document informs parents and carers and provides support and guidance for staff in the management of challenging situations in the setting.

This statement sets out a framework of principles within which staff judgements should be made. It promotes a coherent, consistent, and coordinated approach across Jack and Jill settings.

Staff should be aware of their duty of care to the children in the setting to maintain an acceptable level of safety. Any physical intervention should be used with the aim to avert immediate danger of injury to any person, including themselves, or to prevent the committing of a criminal offence, or where a child’s conduct leads to behaviour that prejudices good order and discipline – no more force than is reasonably necessary in the circumstances should be used. However, staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency – indeed they have a legal obligation to safeguard the welfare of the children in their care.

***Working Principles:***

* Where physical intervention is likely, a positive handling plan should be devised.
* Physical intervention should be a last resort and only undertaken when all other means of gaining control have failed.
* Staff should not place themselves at risk of subject of a false allegation. To minimise this risk, they should avoid being alone with any child if possible.
* Individual risk assessments should be carried out on children that are likely to require physical restraint.
* All staff should seek to promote an atmosphere of calm, consistency and order so that children feel secure.
* All staff are expected to have an awareness of the needs of different cultures represented in the setting.
* If the safe environment is challenged by the dangerous or violent behaviour of a child, staff need to achieve a prompt and safe resolution of the situation.
* The professional practice of staff needs to be clearly understood by all. Practice should be consistent and considered, with all actions taken clearly recorded.

***Appropriate Physical Contact (Policy) with Children:***

At Jack and Jill, we recognise the need of young children to feel safe and secure in the setting and with their carers.

We are aware of child protection issues relating to the ‘touching’ of children and acknowledge these as real concerns.

We acknowledge touch as a natural need and response.

We recognise a child’s right to decide for themselves who has physical contact with them and when, as they interact appropriately with those around them.

We recognise that the staff and carers in the setting will respond to the needs of the child and that these needs may include appropriate physical contact.

Jack and Jill will be vigilant in providing flexible, care-orientated responses to children’s needs.

***Guiding principles for physical contact between staff and children:***

Children may be successfully re-engaged in their activities by a hand on the shoulder or by leading or guiding them back to their seat or activity. Similarly, a child may be distracted from destructive behaviour. Again, some children when engaged in an argument or fight which is not likely itself to cause serious harm but is nonetheless disruptive and detrimental to the well-being of other children, may be successfully diverted by using positive behaviour management techniques.

If physical intervention is unavoidable, it is important that the degree of force used is appropriate to the situation - It is appropriate to use physical prompts and guidance when positive verbal prompting has been unsuccessful.

Staff should be mindful that close proximity to children who are in a highly agitated state can make matters worse and increase the level of risk.

Physical restraint should only be used to prevent likely injury to the child or others, or likely serious damage to property. Restraint is not used as a punishment, as a means to enforce compliance with instructions, or in response to challenging behaviour which does not give rise to reasonable expectation of injury to someone or serious damage to property.

If using physical restraint, the level and duration of the restraint will be the minimum necessary to restore safety – knowing the child is a key factor in making these judgements.

***Children with additional needs:***

DfE (2019) – “… In response to risk presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, schools and colleges should in considering the risks carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups by planning positive and proactive behaviour support…”

***Response options:***

*What is Control?* – passive, physical contact such as standing between children or blocking a child’s path, or active physical contract such as leading a child by the arm.

*What is Restraint?* – to hold back physically or to bring a child under control.

What options do staff have when responding to harmful (to self, others or property) behaviour?

*Self-protection* – in cases of assault.

*Momentary control* – time limited response that should only take a few moments. Help should be called for during this time.

*Restraint and holding immobilisation* – at least two members of staff must be present to initiate this action.

*Containment* – this is used to isolate the threat of violence from the people that it might hurt.

***To minimise the need for force:***

* Create a calm environment, minimising the risk of incidents arising that might require using force.
* Use social and emotional aspects of learning to teach children how to manage conflict and strong feelings.
* De-escalate incidents if they arise.
* Only use force when risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risk involved in not using force.

**In Summary**

*What is reasonable force?*

The term reasonable force covers a range of actions that involve a degree of physical contact with children. It is usually used to either control or restrain children and can range from guiding a child by the arm to restrain in order to prevent violence or injury. It involves no more force than is needed.

*Who can use reasonable force?*

All members of the staff team can use reasonable force.

When can reasonable force be used?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent children from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. The decision on when physical intervention should be used is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned and depends on the individual circumstances.

* Force must not be used as a punishment.