

Mehria Wonderland Nursery



Physical contact policy

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Signed: Zia Qazi
Senior Manager

Signed: Zile Humma
Assistant Manager

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Deputy Manager



Physical contact Policy

Purpose of having a 'Physical contact Policy'

Positive touch is a basic human need. At Mehria Primary Setting, we interact daily with young children who are naturally tactile and affectionate. We want to make sure that their needs are met and that they develop caring, positive relationships with others. If a child initiates contact or needs reassurance, we want our staff to feel confident that they can respond naturally without fear of unfounded accusations.

We want parents and Carers to feel confident that we will respond appropriately to their children's needs, and to understand that positive touch may be a part of that response. We believe that avoiding using positive touch when appropriate would have a negative effect on the children in our setting and our setting community.

The following guidance gives examples of situations where positive touch is appropriate. This list is not exhaustive and there will be many more instances where it may be used appropriately.

Examples of Acceptable Touch

- First Aid – e.g. cleaning wounds, applying plasters
- Personal hygiene – e.g. changing soiled clothing, cleaning themselves (2 members of staff should be involved in these situations);
- Getting changed for PE – e.g. dressing, tying hair back, putting swimming hats on
- During lessons – e.g. supporting in PE, showing how to hold a pencil/ scissors, using a mouse, holding musical instruments; children on laps in EYFS when appropriate
- Responding to their initiated contact – e.g. returning hugs, holding hands;
- Reassuring and comforting children – e.g. when they are upset, worried or in need of guidance. Children can be held and/ or patted in exceptional circumstances e.g. children sitting on laps in EYFS when appropriate.
- Praise – e.g. reaffirming "Well done" with a gentle pat on the shoulder. This should only occur in public area and not in private;
- Safety – e.g. crossing the road, preventing children from hurting themselves e.g. placing your hand firmly around the child's wrist, arm or hand.

Physical Touch

The use of any physical contact should always be undertaken with due consideration, in particular Mehria Primary Setting does not condone the uncontrolled or unconsidered use of force, nor does it condone the use of physical intervention.

Physical prompts, guides and reassurances are necessary in a range of settings. Staff should, when appropriate, feel able to use touch to comfort and communicate with the child. Such use of touch must be done in a professional manner, avoiding any possible perception of inappropriate behaviour or even abuse.

To use touch/physical support successfully staff must;

- be non-abusive, with no intention to cause pain or injury

- be in the best interests of the child and others
- have a clear education purpose or to improve social relationships
- Always ensure there are other adults or responsible children around.
- Never show favour to individual children.
- Never touch a child in the area between the waist and mid-thigh or near the chest.
- Never touch a child in a way that could be mis-interpreted as being anything other than friendly appropriate adult-child support.
- Where a child tries to get closer than appropriate, the message should always be along the lines of, "I like you and I enjoy being with you, but I would rather you held my arm/hand like this".
- Some very active children sometimes calm down and focus on a lesson when having a gentle stroke e.g. on the back of the neck. In this case such a support mechanism must be written into the child's Care Plan.
- Cuddles should be short and side by side.
- Never kiss a child, and do not encourage children to kiss adults other than their parents.
- A child should only sit on an adult's knee for a short time and for a specific reason such as following an injury, and not too close to the body. If a child may need to sit on a member of staff's knee for longer term support, this must be written into the child's Care Plan.
- Tickling is not deemed appropriate.

Staff members are aware of any child who finds physical touch as unwelcoming. Such sensitivity may arise from the child's background, personal history etc. This information should be recorded in the child's file.

If there are any concerns about inappropriate touch by a member of staff or by a child, these should be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Ms. Zile Humma, (or one of the Deputy Safeguarding Leads in her absence) and these concerns will be dealt with following the setting's safeguarding procedures.