



Redcastle Family School: Physical Contact and Physical Handling Policy

(Pre-school and Nursery)

Formally adopted by the Governing Body of:	Redcastle Family School
On:	January 2026
Signed by Chair of Governors:	Heather Pringle
Last updated:	
Review date:	Annually

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Children and Behaviour Management Policies.

Physical Contact Policy

Staff at Sandcastles Nursery can form close bonds through the nature of their work with children. Children need contact with familiar, consistent carers to ensure they can grow confidently, feeling self-assured. 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.

At Sandcastles Nursery, we believe 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.

Acceptable Comforting

- If a child requires comforting (following an accident or on parents' departure or when noticeably tired), and if in the short term cuddles will help, these will be given.
- Occasionally, when separating a child from a parent /carer it is necessary to physically remove/transfer the child to a member of staff, with adult's consent.
- Sitting a child on an adult's knee is often a way of giving comfort or calming a child, this will be done on the child's request or with their consent.
- Occasionally there is no alternative to picking a child up, but for health and safety reasons this is a 'last resort'.
- If a child falls to sleep on a practitioner's lap, a practitioner will follow the moving and handling policy to safely transport the sleeping children to a safe sleep area.
- Other activities, often instigated by the children themselves, we will explain is not appropriate. This includes any form of kissing on cheek, forehead or lips.

Physical Contact in Play

Catching a child 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. are acceptable physical contacts 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. All staff are trained and give due consideration to the EYFS, safeguarding, first aid and physical handling when assisting children in their play.

Physical Handling in Relation to Behaviour Management

In line with our Behaviour Policy at Sandcastles Nursery, staff 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.

Other Behaviour Management techniques and protocols can be found in the Behaviour Management Policy and Safeguarding Policy including verbal scripts and Norfolk Steps when supporting behaviour that does not meet expected standards.

Definitions

Positive handling

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). Staff must exercise appropriate care when using touch (please also refer to our safeguarding policy).

There are some children for whom touch would be inappropriate such as those with a history of physical or sexual abuse, or those from certain cultural groups. The setting's policy is not intended to imply that staff should no longer touch children.