



## Poppy Rd Kids Club

### Positive Handling and Touch Policy

#### Statement of Intent

At Poppy Rd OOSC we aim to help children take responsibility for their own behaviour.

This will be done through a combination of approaches including:

- Positive and consistent role modelling
- Providing a stimulating, interesting and challenging learn through play environment
- Setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations
- Providing positive feedback

However, there are very occasional times when a child's behaviour presents challenges that may require physical handling.

There are two main types of handling:

**Positive Handling** - The positive use of touch is a normal part of human interaction. At Poppy Rd OOSC we will exercise appropriate care when handling children. We will use positive handling in appropriate situations for example:

- Giving guidance to children (such as how to hold a paintbrush, or when balancing/climbing)
- Providing emotional support (such as placing an arm around a distressed child). There may be occasions (for example if a child is hurt/very upset) when a member of staff may feel it appropriate to hug a child to console them
- Physical care (such as first aid or toileting)
- Hand holding providing the child is compliant and it is not as a restraint

**Restrictive Physical Intervention** - This is when a member of staff uses physical force intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will. In most cases this will be through the use of the adult's body rather than mechanical or environmental methods.



## The use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

At Poppy Rd OOSC we will only use physical restrictive handling as a last resort where all other possible de-escalation skills have been used and where there is a significant risk of harm occurring, for example when:

- A child is injuring themselves or others
- A child is damaging property

Staff will aim to prevent the use of physical restrictive handling by using positive behaviour management (see behaviour management policy) unless the situation calls for immediate action and will only be used to restore safety for all children.

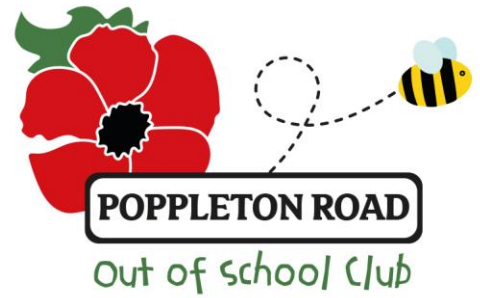
Within our duty of care, staff may use physical restrictive handling if a child is trying to leave the setting and would be at risk of harm. This policy extends beyond the setting boundaries when staff have charge of children off site.

Physical Restrictive Handling will never be used out of anger or as a punishment, and will always be necessary, reasonable and proportionate. Please refer to the club's Behaviour Management Policy – Sub-Section (The Use of Physical Interventions.)

## **Views on Touch**

Touch is essential to provide sensitive and good quality care for the children and young people we support. Used in context, and with empathy, touch supports the development of our natural interactions with the children and young people we care for. In play or for emotional reasons children of any age who are at early levels of development are likely to be quite tactile and physical.

We may choose to hold children for a variety of reasons, but in general terms we would normally do so for either comfort or reward. We may also need to



physically touch, guide or prompt children if they require personal care, assistance with writing, eating, dressing, walking alongside busy roads etc.

### How do we use touch?

**1. HUGGING** – At Poppy Rd OOSC we discourage staff from giving hugs to children unless it is absolutely necessary – in order to reduce the emotions of the child if they are upset. The method that the staff will use will be a ‘side-on’ hug which removes the need for a ‘front on’ hug.

**2. HAND HOLDING** – We recognise that children sometimes enjoy being able to hold hands with adults around them. This is perfectly acceptable when the hand holding is compliant. At Poppy Rd OOSC we would encourage all children to be independent however, we would take the hand of a child to give reassurance and to communicate security and comfort if this was deemed appropriate for the emotional wellbeing or safety of the child concerned.

**3. LAP SITTING** – At Poppy Rd OOSC we discourage lap-sitting. Children are encouraged to seek comfort/attention through other means, hand holding etc. If a child attempts to sit on a staff members lap, we would explain to them that this is not what we do here and ask them to sit next to a member of staff or peer. However, lap sitting may be deemed appropriate in extreme circumstances and where it is necessary and justifiable e.g. where a child is almost inconsolable.

At times, children in such crisis or distress decide to hold in such a way which is not described as above (e.g. ‘front on’ hug/lap sitting). If this should happen we would give the child guidance as to the more appropriate methods of touch listed above.

The use of touch is discussed openly and regularly between staff. Staff understand that they are responsible for ensuring that appropriate boundaries are observed.



Senior staff are responsible for the implementation of this policy. They must intervene if they observe any behaviour by a member of staff towards a child that contravenes the policy and places a child at risk of harm. The member of staff will be asked to consider their behaviour, and to repeat safeguarding training. Any such incident will be followed up in supervision to ensure the member of staff understands this policy and their safeguarding responsibilities to children in their care.

Gender and cultural factors have relevance in issues of touch. The emotional and communication needs of the individual will be discussed with all concerned and due equal consideration.

Please note that although we have a touch policy and believe that contingent touch can be a positive experience for the children that we care for, this does not mean that we have to touch children and we realise that some children will not want to be touched and we respect this.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Poppy Rd Kids Club	
Held in:	Nov 2023	
To be reviewed in:	Nov 2024	
Signed on behalf of the setting:		
Name of Signatory:		
Role of Signatory:	Manager	Deputy Manager