

Physical Contact Policy (Updated for EYFS 2025)

Policy Statement: At Butterflies Nursery, we recognise the importance of positive and appropriate physical contact in nurturing children's emotional well-being and supporting secure attachments. Physical contact can provide comfort, reassurance, and encouragement when used in a respectful and supportive manner. This policy outlines our approach to ensuring all physical interactions are appropriate, child-led, and aligned with EYFS 2025 guidance.

Purpose of Physical Contact:

- Physical contact is used to **offer comfort, reassurance, and security** to children in our care.
- It aims to foster **emotional connections, self-confidence, and trust** while **respecting individual boundaries**.
- We promote **a safe and supportive environment** where children feel valued and respected.

Types of Physical Contact:

- **Appropriate and positive** physical contact includes:
 - **Hugs (when initiated or welcomed by the child)**
 - **Hand-holding (for reassurance or safety reasons)**
 - **High-fives, pats on the back, or encouraging gestures**
 - **Cuddles or lap sitting (only if initiated by the child and deemed appropriate)**
- Physical contact is **always child-led**, ensuring that children feel **safe and in control** of their personal space.

Consent and Comfort Level:

- **Children's preferences regarding physical contact will be respected** at all times.
- **Children have the right to decline** any form of physical contact without judgment or pressure.

- Staff will recognise and respect **verbal and non-verbal cues** indicating a child's comfort level.

Cultural Sensitivity:

- Staff will be **culturally aware and sensitive** to variations in **physical contact practices** across different **families, communities, and religious backgrounds**.
- We will discuss **cultural expectations** with parents to **ensure alignment with family values**.

Personal Boundaries and Safeguarding:

- Children will be taught about **personal boundaries and respecting others' personal space**.
- Staff will **model respectful behaviour** by seeking consent before **initiating physical contact**.
- Any **inappropriate physical contact** will be **addressed, recorded, and reported** to the appropriate safeguarding authority.

Staff Training and Awareness:

- Manager and staff will receive **training on appropriate physical contact** and recognising **signs of discomfort** in children.
- Training will include:
 - **Appropriate and inappropriate touch**
 - **Recognising and responding to children's boundaries**
 - **Dealing with disclosures or concerns sensitively**

Gentle Discipline Approach:

- Physical contact **must never be used** as a form of **punishment, restraint, or control**.
- We use **positive behaviour management strategies** that encourage self-regulation and respect.

Communication with Parents:

- Parents will be informed about our **approach to physical contact** and given opportunities to **share their preferences or concerns**.
- We will document **any specific preferences, restrictions, or cultural considerations** expressed by parents.

Reporting and Documentation:

- Any **concerns, disclosures, or uncomfortable physical interactions** will be recorded and **reported to parents or safeguarding officers** where necessary.
- Staff will **document any instances where physical contact is refused or appears to cause distress**, ensuring we adapt our approach accordingly.

Alignment with EYFS 2025 Changes:

- The **EYFS 2025 framework emphasises** the importance of **secure attachments and emotional well-being**, particularly in **building confidence and resilience**.
- This policy aligns with EYFS 2025 by:
 - **Prioritising child-led interactions**, ensuring **physical contact is respectful, supportive, and appropriate**.
 - **Encouraging emotional security and self-regulation**, in line with the **Personal, Social, and Emotional Development (PSED) framework**.
 - **Teaching children about boundaries and consent**, reinforcing the principles of **respect and autonomy**.
- The **updated EYFS guidance highlights** the importance of **positive relationships between caregivers and children**, supporting **secure emotional development** through appropriate contact.

Review and Monitoring:

- This policy will be **reviewed annually** or more frequently if required, ensuring it remains **compliant with EYFS 2025** and other **safeguarding regulations**.
- Feedback from **parents, staff, and external agencies** will be welcomed to **continuously improve our physical contact policy**.

Signed: Chrissie Day

Date: 2nd July, 2025