



Children of the World Montessori School

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Physical Contact and Intimate Care Policy

Policy Statement

Children of the World Montessori School recognises that young children need appropriate physical care, comfort, reassurance and practical help. Staff maintain warm and caring relationships with children while observing clear professional boundaries and safeguarding both children and adults.

Physical contact will always be appropriate to the child's age, individual needs and circumstances. Staff will be sensitive to children's verbal and non-verbal communication, feelings and body language.

Appropriate Physical Contact

Appropriate contact may include:

- comforting or reassuring a child who is upset, hurt or finding separation difficult;
- holding a child's hand for reassurance, participation in an activity or safety;
- helping a child with dressing, clothing or physical activities;
- lifting or supporting a child where this is necessary for their care, safety or participation;
- providing appropriate physical assistance with toileting, changing or personal care.

Comfort such as a cuddle or sitting on an adult's knee may be appropriate when it is responsive to the child's needs. Staff will remain attentive to whether the child welcomes the contact and will stop or adapt it if the child shows discomfort or wishes to move away.

Professional Boundaries

Physical contact must never be for an adult's own needs or gratification and must never be secretive, coercive, sexualised, unnecessarily intimate or otherwise inappropriate. Staff must not kiss children.

Adults should avoid unnecessary prolonged physical contact and should use only the level of contact reasonably required for the child's care, comfort, learning or safety.

Toileting, Changing and Intimate Care

Children who need help with toileting, wiping, changing or other personal care will be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect. Children will be encouraged to do as much as they can independently, according to their age and ability.

Where direct physical assistance is necessary for hygiene or care, staff may provide it. Contact with intimate areas will be limited to what is reasonably necessary to clean, change or care for the child safely and hygienically.

Staff will explain what they are doing in language appropriate to the child and respond to the child's communication and body language. Privacy and dignity will be maintained while also following safe working practices. Other staff will be aware when a colleague is providing intimate care where appropriate.

Soiling and Changing Clothes

If a child soils or wets their clothing, staff will provide appropriate assistance with cleaning and changing. Clean clothing will be used where available and soiled items will be managed hygienically. Parents/carers will be informed as appropriate.

Physical Play and Activities

Physical support may be needed during play or activities, for example when helping a child onto equipment or supporting balance and movement. Contact will be proportionate, safe and sensitive to the child's willingness to participate. Staff will pay particular attention to non-verbal cues from children who may not be able to express discomfort verbally.

Physical Intervention

Physical intervention will only be used where permitted under the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, for example to avert immediate danger of personal injury or where absolutely necessary to manage a child's behaviour. Any such intervention will be proportionate to the circumstances.

Physical intervention will be recorded and parents/carers informed in accordance with the setting's Supporting and Understanding Children's Behaviour Policy.

Safeguarding

Any concern about inappropriate physical contact, intimate care or the conduct of an adult will be treated as a safeguarding matter and dealt with in accordance with the setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Reviewed and updated: September 2026

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