**Physical Contact Policy (EYFS 2025)**

**Policy Statement:** At Little Acorns preschool, 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.
* All 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 DSL or appropriate safeguarding authority.

**Staff Training and Awareness:**

* 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 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 DSL** 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.

**Signed:** Chairperson  
**Date:** September 2025