A5 Physical Contact & Physical Intervention Policy

Grass Roots Nursery Group – Updated October 2026

1. Policy Statement

Grass Roots Nursery Group is committed to creating safe, nurturing environments where children feel secure, supported, and able to regulate their emotions. Physical contact is a natural and important part of early childhood care, and when used appropriately, it supports children's wellbeing, attachment, and development.

Physical intervention or restraint is **never used as a behaviour management strategy**. It is permitted only in exceptional circumstances where a child's behaviour presents an immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, and all other de-escalation strategies have been exhausted. Any physical intervention must be proportionate, necessary, and carried out with the utmost care.

This policy outlines how physical contact is used safely and respectfully, and how physical intervention is managed as an absolute last resort.

2. Purpose & Scope

This policy provides clear guidance for staff on:

- appropriate physical contact
- safe, lawful physical intervention
- de-escalation strategies
- documentation and reporting
- safeguarding responsibilities

It applies to all employees, apprentices, students, volunteers, and agency staff working within Grass Roots Nursery Group.

3. Principles of Safe Physical Contact

Physical contact is a normal and essential part of working with young children. Staff may use gentle, appropriate contact to:

- comfort a distressed child
- support toileting, intimate care, or personal hygiene
- assist with dressing, feeding, or care routines
- guide children safely during transitions or movement
- support learning and play
- prevent accidents or falls

All physical contact must be:

- respectful
- child-centred
- age-appropriate
- culturally sensitive
- consistent with the child's needs and preferences

Staff must remain alert to children's cues and respect any indication that a child does not want physical contact.

4. Preventing the Need for Physical Intervention

Our approach prioritises prevention, emotional regulation, and relational practice. Staff work proactively to reduce the likelihood of crisis situations through:

Emotion Coaching (EEF Framework)
Children are supported to understand and regulate their emotions through attuned interactions, co-regulation, and calm modelling.

Predictable, Supportive Environments
We create structured, safe spaces that reduce anxiety, minimise triggers, and promote positive behaviour.

Individualised Support Plans
Children with additional needs or emerging behavioural challenges may have bespoke plans developed in partnership with families, SENCo, and external professionals.

Calderdale SEN Outreach Collaboration
We work closely with Calderdale SEN Outreach to access specialist guidance, training, and strategies tailored to individual children.

These preventative measures significantly reduce the likelihood of situations escalating to physical intervention.

5. De-Escalation Strategies
Before any physical intervention is considered, staff must use a range of de-escalation techniques, including:

- calm, reassuring language
- offering clear, simple choices
- distraction and redirection
- reducing sensory input
- providing space and time
- using familiar regulation strategies
- removing triggers where possible

Staff maintain a calm tone, gentle body language, and supportive presence throughout.

6. Physical Intervention as a Last Resort
Physical intervention may only be used when:

- a child is at immediate risk of harming themselves
- a child is at immediate risk of harming others
- a child's behaviour poses a serious safety risk (e.g., running into a road, throwing dangerous objects)

Any intervention must be:

- **proportionate** to the level of risk
- **minimal** in force and duration
- **focused solely on safety**
- **designed to reduce harm**, not control behaviour

Staff must never use techniques that:

- restrict breathing
- cause pain
- involve holding a child on the floor
- involve any form of restraint that could cause injury or distress

Throughout the intervention, staff continue to communicate calmly with the child and attempt to de-escalate the situation.

7. After an Incident

Following any physical intervention:

- the child is comforted and supported
- staff help the child regulate and return to calm
- the incident is discussed sensitively with the child at an appropriate time
- staff involved receive support and debriefing
- the environment or triggers may be reviewed to prevent recurrence

8. Documentation, Reporting & Safeguarding

All incidents involving physical intervention must be recorded immediately on CPOMS. Records must include:

- date, time, and location
- the behaviour leading to the intervention
- de-escalation strategies attempted
- the type and duration of physical intervention used
- any injuries or distress
- names of staff and witnesses
- follow-up actions and support provided

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be notified on the same day. Parents must be informed promptly and sensitively.

Management regularly reviews incident logs to identify patterns, training needs, or environmental adjustments.

9. Training & Professional Development

Staff receive regular training in:

- de-escalation
- Emotion Coaching
- safe physical intervention
- trauma-informed practice
- SEND-related behaviour support

Specialist coaching may be provided through Calderdale SEN Outreach or external behaviour support professionals.

10. Monitoring & Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, local procedures, or organisational needs change. The DSL team and Nursery Manager oversee implementation across all settings.

11. Linked Policies

Safeguarding & Welfare (Category A)

A1 Safeguarding & Child Protection
A2 Allegations Against Staff
A3 Whistleblowing
A4 Behaviour & Positive Relationships
A6 Prevent Duty & British Values
A7 Children's Wellbeing & Emotional Development
A8 Complaints
A9 Equality, Inclusion & SEND

A10 Parents as Partners & Family Support

Care & Intimate Care (Category G)

G1 Intimate Care & Toileting

Staff Policies (Category H)

H1 Staff Code of Conduct

H2 Safer Recruitment & Induction

H7 Parent Conflict, Aggression & Home Visit Procedures

Safeguarding Handbook

Detailed procedures for specific safeguarding issues.