

## Weapon and Superhero Play Policy

### Policy Statement

We recognise that each child is unique and will support them to be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of secure and loving relationships, as well as having the opportunity to learn in a positive and stimulating environment.

At Cornerstone Preschool we aim to provide support for all areas of learning. From time to time, children may show an interest in superhero and weapon play.

### Rationale

Historically, this type of play has often been banned from early year's settings, in the belief that it encourages aggression or violence. This ban, as well as being difficult to enforce, may well have a negative impact on young children's development, particularly boys.

Recent research and current writing suggests that children learn important lessons by exploring these themes in a safe arena of play, for example, concepts such as good and evil, life and death, strength and power, gender and identity.

We have developed this policy in order to support practitioners and parents to respond appropriately to superhero and weapon play. If there are concerns about aggressive or threatening behaviour, we will refer to the Behaviour Management Policy.

### Aims and Objectives

- Although we are allowing superhero and weapon play we will discourage children bringing in toy weapons to the preschool, as this is a general rule about ANY toy, as they may get broken or lost.
- If children wish to make a weapon then this will be supported by a practitioner, as it may be an ideal learning opportunity to follow their interests. Children will also be allowed to be creative with the props that they use during this play, providing it will not break, hurt others and is observed by a practitioner.
- When superhero or weapon play is taking place a practitioner will be nearby to observe and extend this play. The practitioner may introduce other storylines or characters to develop this in a creative or imaginative way.

- Superhero costumes are allowed from home into the preschool just as princess dresses or fairies are allowed. This will help practitioners to plan for individual children's interests.
- The children in the setting who show an interest in superhero or weapon play will be asked what rules they think need to be set in order for this play to be acceptable. A 'weapon license' will be made for each child involved in the play, with the rules on it, their picture and their signature (to show they agree to the rules.) If a practitioner sees any of the rules being broken by someone then they lose their license and they cannot continue in this play.
- When making the rules the practitioner may need to suggest a few, such as, ensuring the children ask if others want to play with them, as certain children may feel uncomfortable with weapon or superhero play and this must not be thrust upon them.
- Superhero or weapon play will be allowed outside.
- Conflicts and disagreements will happen, as it would in any play, and this will be dealt with a practitioner listening, discussing, compromising and resolving the problem. Please see our Behaviour Management Policy for more details.
- Alongside weapon and superhero play there are other areas in the preschool for the children to access, which support positive, gentle, caring play, e.g., the cosy corner, the book corner, the home corner, etc.
- If parents are concerned by weapon or superhero play, then they are asked to speak to a member of staff and may then be referred onto the Preschool Deputy or Preschool Business Manager. Their concerns will be taken seriously and the issue will be addressed.

## **Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

The children and parents are actively involved in the education process at Cornerstone and their perceptions about Weapon and Super Hero Play are explored and valued.

The staff will regularly evaluate the impact that actively fostering this element of role play has on the environment, the cohort as a whole and identified groups of children and individuals.

If required a range of support strategies will be put in place to ensure that this style of play does not have any negative impact.

## **Principles that underpin the policy**

The principles that underpin our policy are

- Approaches to teaching and learning in role play should reflect the interests of the children and not exclusively those of the adults
- Planning for role play in the environment should be based upon assessment information from the observed play of the current cohort.
- Our setting will acknowledge the positive aspects of the character of the Superhero and highlight the negative aspects of weapon use and physical violence at a level that is appropriate to the age and needs of the children. This will be mainly done through story, drama and appropriate discussion.
- Styles of teaching and learning should meet the needs of children and not preconceived notions of what is or is not appropriate role play.
- All children's emotional welfare, wellbeing and involvement should be assessed in relation to this style of play.
- Children should enjoy the play opportunity.
- The Superhero play should motivate and challenge children.
- The creation of an effective culture of Weapon/Superhero play in any setting takes time, and is a process rather than an event.
- Parents and carers need to feel well informed about and comfortable with the settings approach to Weapon/Superhero play and the principals that underpin it.
- Effective and engaging play is about our setting fitting the interests of the child, not the child fitting the setting.
- On-going opportunities for quality imaginative play are not overlooked or left to chance, but thought about and planned in advance.
- If children within the setting do not show an interest in superhero and weapon play then this will not be encouraged. We will only support this if their play revolves around these themes.
- This policy will be reviewed regularly and we will assess how we can best support, assist and facilitate weapon and superhero play.

### **Prevent Strategy**

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we also have a duty "to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

**This policy was agreed at an Under 5s AGM meeting held on...14th May 2018.... (Date)**

**Signed on behalf of the preschool.....(Chair)**