14.1 Superhero and Weapon Play Policy

Policy Statement

This policy has been inspired by an interest in the role of popular culture and its effect on many of the children in our early years setting – most particularly superhero play. Over the years, many early years' practitioners have expressed interest in and also concern about the pre-occupation of some of the children with this type of play which often involves weapons and fighting. Adults are often unsure of the value of this play, how to manage it effectively or how to join in as play partners. This has led to a greater awareness of the implications on learning of different learning styles and rates of development of children. As a result, many practitioners have decided that banning or even discouraging superhero and weapon play disadvantages those who are so engrossed by it. Perhaps most importantly superhero play reminds us that bridging the gap between the culture of home and the early years setting is a key strategy in supporting the emotional well-being of all children.

Aims

- For staff to understand why superhero and weapon play is so important to certain children.
- For adults to engage with and develop the play
- To channel the play positively and use it as a tool to extend thinking, learning skills and imaginative development
- To plan for superhero and weapon play which has arisen from children's interests and observations of their play
- For children to express their feelings in a safe environment
- For staff to monitor that the environment is kept safe and ensure children's expression of feelings during superhero play does not intimidate nearby children who are not part of the game
- To develop children's negotiation and rights respecting skills and help them make the connections to transfer these skills into everyday situations
- To monitor gender issues – both girls and boys enjoy superhero and fantasy play and so there should be female as well as male hero figures represented in the equipment and displays

Objectives

- For staff to use a range of strategies to extend the play and drive the children's ideas forward so that it is not repetitive
- Develop children's turn taking, sharing and cooperative skills – they cannot have a capture and rescue game on their own
- Rescue games lead to problem solving scenarios
- Look at the wider 'lives' of the superheroes e.g. what do they eat, where do they live – and use this information to extend learning across the nursery areas
- Use a range of materials to make dens and develop role play indoors and outdoors
- Encourage use of different types of text e.g. write superhero stories, shopping lists, notices, tickets etc

Weapon / Gun Play Guidelines

- We will not provide bought toy guns and weapons, however children may make weapons from creative materials or use representations e.g. from Lego
- Children may only 'shoot' others who are already part of the game
- No touching when 'shooting'
- If children cannot follow the rules then we will remove the weapon and use our usual conflict resolution and behaviour strategies as detailed in our behaviour policy
- We will have discussions about alternatives to hurting others / using weapons
- We will have discussions, based on reality or imagination, about how to help those who are hurt e.g. medical people who help us, magic potions to make them better

Staff are sensitive to the cultural / family background of the child, including whether the child's family has experienced violence, moved to Britain to escape war etc. The key person should be proactive in gently explaining the play to families who may be sensitive to it and discuss any issues

that may arise from it, while recognising that children who have been in aggressive situations may welcome the play as an outlet for pent up feelings. If staff are unsure they should refer to the safeguarding policy and / or speak to a senior member of staff.

This policy was adopted by	Springfield Bees Pre-School
On	15/12/25
Date to be reviewed	15/12/26
Signed on behalf of the provider	
Name of signatory	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair)	