Superhero and Weapon Play

**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 secure and loving relationships, as well as having the opportunity to learn in a positive and stimulating environment.

At Westfield Playgroup 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 the safe arena of play, e.g. concepts such as good and evil, life and death, strength and power, gender and identity. Children have the means through this sort of play to express themselves, their lives, and their individual experiences.

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 our Behaviour Management Policy.

**Aims and Objectives**

* No toy weapons will be allowed in the setting. Children will be asked to store these toys on their pegs.
* We will encourage children to be creative with their ideas. If they wish to make weapon, a selection of open-ended materials, i.e. construction/junk modelling, are available for this purpose.
* Children may wear ‘superhero’ costumes. We will provide a rich variety of dress-up materials and accessories, in order that children can develop their play further.
* Children will be supported to play co-operatively, and develop an awareness of the needs of others.
* Children, who do not wish to play, will be supported to say No, and find appropriate language, i.e. “if I’m not in your game, please don’t shoot me”.
* Clear limits will be set to keep play safe. If someone gets hurt, (emotionally or physically) we will help the children to resolve their differences, and find ways to make amends.
* In order to support children’s developing skills- communication, language, personal, social and emotional, we will involve them in creating ‘safe rules’for play. This will include brainstorming, discussion and practitioners joining the play occasionally.
* We welcome parents’ views, comments and observations. Please do not hesitate to discuss and queries or concerns with us.