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## Weapon and Superhero 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 a base of secure and loving relationships, as well as having the opportunity to learn in a positive and stimulating environment.

At Mini MoHo Nursery 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 nursery, 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 nursery 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

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- 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 but as the setting is not free-flow it is also allowed inside a certain area of the nursery, eg, the corridor. This is away from the quieter activities in the 'Busy Bee' room and allows other children to distance themselves if they do not want to join in.
  - 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 nursery for the children to access, which support positive, gentle, caring play, eg, 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 Nursery Deputy or Nursery Manager. Their concerns will be taken seriously and the issue will be addressed.
  - This policy will be reviewed regularly and we will assess how we can best support, assist and facilitate weapon and superhero play.

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.