



Superhero and gun play policy

Background

We encourage children to make sense of their world through play and exploration.

Role play develops children's;

- Imagination
- social skills
- friendships
- language skills
- critical thinking.

This can apply to all play, which is, initiated by the children. Research has shown in relation to settings where superhero and gun play is *not* allowed that constant negativity towards children's interests only serves to erode their self-esteem, it can stunt their imaginative development and turn them into creative liars, as the weapons they construct become mobile phones, drills or hosepipes as soon as they see an adult approach.

Research also shows that children are able to tell the difference between real aggression which frightens them and pretend fighting or aggressive play which they see as fun. We recognise that parents are the main influence on the development of a child's attitude to violence and the school may need to give further advice to parents, probably to individual families, about the suitability of toys, computer games etc.

Downs Infant staff will use the 12 point indicator list for play to identify the quality of play, If we apply this test to superhero and gun play we find that quality play and learning is likely and we should therefore be encouraging it.

These indicators are:

1. using first hand experiences
2. making up rules
3. making props
4. choosing to play
5. rehearsing the future

6. pretending
7. playing alone
8. playing together
9. having a personal agenda
10. being deeply involved
11. trying out recent learning
12. coordinating ideas, feelings and relationships for free flow play.

Downs Infant School's Aims

- All children to feel safe, secure and valued
- All children's play and interests to be accepted and encouraged
- All children to be able to express their feelings and choices

We will allow superhero and gun play because we value all children as individuals and all children have different likes, dislikes and interests.

The play will be governed by the following:

1. We will follow the children's interests
2. We may introduce aspects of superhero play in order to develop learning for example to interest some children in 'writing'
3. We will not introduce war and weapon play
4. We will not introduce replica weapons
5. We will talk about how weapons are dangerous and hurt people.
6. We will teach children that hurting others is wrong as part of our ongoing PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) curriculum
7. We will not allow real violence and aggression which distresses or hurts others
8. We will support children who do not wish to join in this play through verbal language, Makaton signing etc.
9. Staff will manage the superhero and gun play, in the same way as any other play, and may have to intervene to stop it if the safety or welfare of any children is at risk.
10. Children may only 'shoot' others who are already part of the game
11. No touching when 'shooting'
12. If children cannot follow the rules then we will remove the weapon and use our behaviour policy
13. We will have discussions about alternatives to hurting others / using weapons
14. 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.