All Silver Stars Day Nursery policies will be subject to any future change according to Government legislation and guidelines to maintain the safety of all children, families, staff and visitors.

3.17

Weapon and Gun Play

Policy statement

Rationale

At Silver Stars, we recognise the important role that popular culture, including superhero play, has in the lives of young children. Many children are drawn to this type of play, which often involves imaginative use of weapons and physical battles. While some adults may feel uncertain about its value or how to engage safely, research and experience show that superhero and weapon play can provide significant benefits for children's learning, development, and emotional wellbeing.

Banning or discouraging this play can disadvantage children who are highly engaged in it. Superhero play also helps bridge the gap between children's home experiences and the nursery environment, supporting their emotional security and sense of belonging.

Children may develop an interest in superhero and weapon play from various sources, including:

- Watching movies or TV shows featuring superheroes and battles.
- Observing older siblings or parents playing online games with weapons.
- Parents whose professions involve the responsible use of weapons.
- First-hand experiences of witnessing or being involved in traumatic events.

Aims

Silver Stars aims to support all children's interests and learning through superhero and weapon play, in line with the EYFS framework, the Early Learning Opportunities statement, and the Promoting Positive Behaviour policy. We aim to:

- Provide safe, supervised opportunities for children to explore and develop superhero and weapon play.
- Encourage children to express feelings, develop imagination, and make sense of experiences in a safe environment.
- Use play as a tool to extend language, problem-solving, social skills, and physical development.
- Promote cooperative play, turn-taking, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

Guidelines for Practice

1. **Adult Involvement and Supervision**
    - Practitioners will observe, facilitate, and extend superhero and weapon play while remaining nearby.
    - Staff may introduce new storylines, characters, or challenges to develop creativity and learning.
    - The play environment will be monitored to ensure safety and prevent any intimidation of children not participating.
    - Conflicts or disagreements will be resolved by practitioners using discussion, compromise, and positive behaviour strategies in line with the Behaviour Management policy.

2. **Supporting Creativity and Interests**
    - Children may make weapons from creative materials or use representations such as Lego.
    - Children are only permitted to "shoot" other participants in the game, with no physical contact.
    - If rules are not followed, the item will be removed and conflict resolution strategies applied.
    - Staff will encourage discussions about non-harmful alternatives to weapons and imaginative solutions to help others, such as medical interventions or magic potions.
    - Opportunities will be provided to extend learning through writing, storytelling, and role play connected to superheroes' wider "lives," including their homes, food, and daily routines.

3. **Safety and Cultural Sensitivity**
    - Staff will consider the cultural and family background of each child, including experiences of violence, trauma, or migration.
    - Practitioners will explain the nature and purpose of superhero play to parents who may have concerns, addressing issues sensitively and proactively.
    - Children who have experienced aggression may use superhero play as an outlet for feelings; staff will monitor this carefully.
    - Any concerns about safeguarding or child wellbeing observed during play must be reported immediately according to the nursery's Safeguarding Policy.

4. **Parental Communication**
    - Parents will be informed during induction or key-person meetings about the educational purpose of superhero and weapon play.
    - Concerns raised by parents will be addressed by the child's key person, deputy manager, or nursery manager.
    - Staff will work collaboratively with families to ensure the child's play is understood and supported appropriately at home and in the setting.

5. **Learning and Development**
    - Practitioners will use superhero and weapon play to promote language development, imagination, problem-solving, turn-taking, cooperation, and self-esteem.
    - Observations will be recorded to assess learning opportunities and inform planning for individual and group development.

Staff must supervise, extend, and guide play while respecting children's needs, backgrounds, and wellbeing.

Superhero and weapon play is recognised at Silver Stars as a valuable form of imaginative play that supports children's holistic development. By supervising, extending, and guiding this play, staff ensure it remains safe, inclusive, and educational while respecting children's backgrounds and experiences.

Name of signatory	Jenifer Capper
Role of signatory	Proprietor
Signed: Date: Review Date:	 February 2026 February 2027