



Growing deep roots. Producing good fruit

Offenham CE First School

'Safe Touch'

At Offenham CE First School we understand that appropriate relationships between staff and pupils are paramount to promoting the safeguarding of children at our school.

The DfE's guidance document, 'Use of reasonable force in schools', which was published in 2013, makes clear that there are occasions when physical contact with a pupil, other than reasonable force, is appropriate and necessary.

This Safe Touch Policy has been created with the aim of ensuring that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities in terms of appropriate and inappropriate touch when involving pupils.

All children are entitled to receive an education in an environment where they feel safe, secure and respected. The school will dedicate itself to ensuring that no pupils feel threatened or disrespected, in terms of physical contact between themselves or a member of staff.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to the following legislation, including, but not limited to:

- The Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010

This policy will also have due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE 'Use of reasonable force in schools' 2013
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015

The school will implement this policy in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy and Equality Policy.

Roles and responsibilities

All members of staff at our school have a duty of care towards pupils, and must be aware of the boundaries involving physical contact.

The headteacher is responsible for conducting annual safeguarding training and monthly safeguarding activities for all members of staff and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities, in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all staff engage in safe touch with pupils, and only where absolutely necessary.

All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that no pupil feels threatened or unsafe at our school as a result of inappropriate touch.

All members of staff have a responsibility to report any instances of inappropriate touch to the headteacher.

The headteacher is responsible for communicating with parents/carers and ensuring that they are aware of this policy.

The school has a responsibility for ensuring that they create and promote a culture in which pupils' wishes and feelings are respected.

What is safe touch?

For the purpose of this policy, "safe touch" is defined as physical contact that, if otherwise avoided, would be inhumane, unkind and potentially emotionally or physically damaging for the pupil.

Safe touch should never be invasive, humiliating or flirtatious.

The school understands that the following examples are instances of safe touch which may occur between staff and pupils:

- Comforting an upset or distressed pupil
- Congratulating or praising a pupil
- Holding the hand of a pupil to guide them, such as when crossing a road or walking to assembly
- Giving first aid to a pupil
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons, administering medicine or when using musical instruments

Types of safe touch

The school understands that certain types of physical contact between staff and pupils are inappropriate, such as hugging, lap-sitting and some instances of holding hands.

The school recognises that the only appropriate places to touch pupils are on the shoulders, arms and back.

The school places the following restrictions on hugging:

- At our school staff may use safe touch for reward or comfort
- Staff are permitted to use the school-hu. This is a sideways hug whereby the member of staff places their hands on the pupil's shoulders.
- At our school we understand that there are times when a member of staff will need to hold a pupil's hand, either to guide them or to prevent them from being physically harmed. Hand holding for any other purpose is not permitted
- This school recognises that all instances of lap-sitting are inappropriate and therefore discourages this interaction between members of staff and pupils and would encourage the member of staff to pull up a chair next to a child.

Reasonable force

The school understands that there are times when members of staff must provide physical intervention whereby a child presents danger to themselves or others.

Many members of our staff team have undertaken Positive Physical Intervention training and this takes place on a three yearly cycle.

Any occurrences of the use of reasonable force will be reported to the headteacher, who will keep a written record of this and communicate it to the pupil's parents/carers.

Reporting inappropriate touch

If a pupil attempts to engage in any inappropriate touch, the member of staff involved will report this immediately to the headteacher, in order to prevent any allegations of inappropriate physical contact.

If another member of staff suspects or witnesses inappropriate physical contact, whereby the member of staff is willingly involved, they will report this to the headteacher immediately.

The headteacher will keep a written record of all instances of reported inappropriate touch.

Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school's Allegations Against Staff Policy.

Training of staff

The headteacher will conduct annual safeguarding training for all members of staff in relation to safe touch.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher, who will make any necessary changes and communicate this to all members of staff.

This policy was reviewed Autumn 2023 and will be reviewed Autumn 2024.