



Positive Touch Policy

Agreed: December 2020

Review: December 2021

Stoughton Infant School and Nursery Positive Touch Policy

Our school believes that there can be positive physical contact between staff and children. This is not physical contact that in any way seeks to establish authority over a child, but that which provides comfort, eases distress and signals care as would be expected between good parents and their children.

Touching younger children is an important part of care, and can give welcome reassurance or comfort to the child. Staff must however bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued and must conduct themselves accordingly. Staff should therefore respond to young people in a way that gives expression to an appropriate level of care, and to provide comfort to ease a young person's distress whilst at the same time protecting against the physical contact being misinterpreted by the young person.

If any member of staff at any time thinks that an action may have been misinterpreted, or may lead to a complaint, they need to feel confident to self-report so that the matter can be recorded fully, and the Headteacher can assist any debrief with the child and their parents which may be necessary.

When touching a child the following points must be considered:

- Any form of physical contact that a reasonable person would judge to be a conscious, self-aware, reasonable and a justifiable act is acceptable. Staff must ensure their actions are acceptable to the child or young person
- A high proportion of children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties may have experienced sexual and/or physical abuse. Staff need to ensure that any physical contact is not misinterpreted
- If at any time a child demonstrates verbally or otherwise that he, or she, is not comfortable with physical contact, where appropriate staff should respect this
- Physical contact should never be secretive, take place in a private location or used for the gratification of the adult and in any way that may be considered indecent, or represent a misuse of authority
- Staff need to be aware that different cultural factors may apply
- Age and maturity are factors that should be considered in deciding appropriate physical contact
- Where a member of staff feels that it would be inappropriate to respond to a child or young person seeking physical comfort, the reasons for denying this should be explained to the child, and the child should be comforted verbally as necessary
- The issue of personal contact in general should be raised in interviews and induction training for staff and discussed in staff development and supervision. All staff will be given and must read our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy and "Keeping Children Safe in Education" document.

Staff should work positively and confidently with children and find the least intrusive way possible to support, empower and keep children safe. The foundation of good practice in working with children should be:

- Building relationships of trust and understanding
- Understanding triggers and finding solutions
- If incidents do occur, defusing the situation and/or distracting the child wherever possible.

Acceptable forms of touch and Physical Intervention in Stoughton Infant School and Nursery

There will be many occasions when it is appropriate and caring for staff to have physical contact with children ie:

- Communication
- First Aid
- To comfort a child in distress
- To direct a child by holding hands or placing a hand on their shoulder
- For the development of skills ie handwriting, PE, drama
- For self help skills ie changing for PE, toileting, cutlery
- In an emergency to maintain safety

If a child requires physical support on a regular basis ie for toileting, wheelchair, mobility or behaviour, this will be documented on an Individual Healthcare Plan, Risk Assessment or Proactive Plan. Training will be given to staff who are responsible for the child.

Physical Contact is never made as a punishment or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact must not be made with the child's neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area or other sensitive body parts. Pressure must not be put on joints.

Where there is a medical exception to this it will be recorded in the Individual Healthcare Plan and two members of staff will always be present for the procedure.

It may be necessary to use reasonable force in order to fulfil a duty of care ie to keep a child, other children, adults or property safe. In these cases we have trained staff who will know what to do and they must be called. Currently they are: Sarah Carrington, Emily Danova, Natalie Pilgrim, Sue Goodall and Anna Cichowska. Please refer to the Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy for guidance.