



# **Attleborough Primary School**

## **Touch Policy**

**Date: September 2020**

**Review: September 2021**

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## Statement of intent

At Attleborough Primary School, we understand that appropriate relationships between staff and pupils are paramount to promoting the safeguarding of pupils 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 pupil feels threatened or disrespected, in terms of physical contact between themselves or a member of staff.

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## **1. Legal framework**

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Equality Act 2010
  - The Children Act 1989
- 1.2. This policy also has due regard to government guidance including:
  - DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'
  - DfE (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children'
  - DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force'
- 1.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
  - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Behaviour Policy
  - Equality Policy

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

- 2.1. All members of staff at our school have a duty of care towards pupils and will be aware of the boundaries involving physical contact.
- 2.2. The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for conducting annual safeguarding training for members of staff and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities, in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 2.3. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all staff engage in safe touch with pupils, and only where absolutely necessary.
- 2.4. All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that no pupil feels threatened or unsafe at our school as a result of inappropriate touch.
- 2.5. All members of staff have a responsibility to report any instances of inappropriate touch to the DSLs.
- 2.6. The headteacher is responsible for communicating with parents and ensuring that they are aware of this policy.
- 2.7. The school has a responsibility for ensuring that it creates and promotes a culture in which pupils' wishes and feelings are respected.

## **3. What is safe touch?**

- 3.1. 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.

- 3.2. Safe touch should never be invasive, humiliating or flirtatious.
- 3.3. 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
  - Using musical instruments

#### **4. Types of safe touch**

- 4.1. The school understands that certain types of physical contact in KS1 and KS2 between staff and pupils are inappropriate, such as hugging, lap-sitting and some instances of holding hands.
- 4.2. The school recognises that the only appropriate places to touch pupils are on the shoulders, arms and back.
- 4.3. The school places the following restrictions on hugging:
  - At our school we encourage staff using touch for reward or comfort to use the 'school-hug', rather than an embrace.
  - The school-hug is a sideways hug whereby the member of staff places their hands on the pupil's shoulders.
  - This type of hug prevents the pupil from turning themselves towards the member of staff and thus engaging in a 'front' embrace, which the school deems as inappropriate.
- 4.4. The school places the following restrictions on holding hands:
  - 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.
  - Within our Reception classes we will hold a pupil's hand when giving guidance, reassurance or to comfort them.

- We encourage the use of a 'school hand-hold'. This is done by the adult holding their arm out and the pupil wrapping their hand around the staff's lower arm. The adult's hand can then be placed over the child's hand for a little extra security if it is required.

4.5. The school places the following restrictions on lap-sitting:

- The school recognises that all instances of lap-sitting are inappropriate and therefore we prohibit this interaction between members of staff and pupils.
- Reception classes will allow pupils to sit on their lap if they require comfort for reassurance, particularly in the case of distress, this type of contact is only made with the consent of the child.
- The school understands that pupils are not always aware of the boundaries between staff and pupils and thus may try to engage in physical contact such as lap-sitting or inappropriate hand-holding and hugging.
- Should a pupil try to engage in any inappropriate physical contact, the member of staff will explain to the pupil why it is unacceptable and encourage them to engage in the school-hug or school-hand-hold instead.
- If a member of staff attempts to use one of the safe methods of touch and a pupil is unhappy with this, particularly with regards to those with SEND, the member of staff will retract immediately in order to respect the pupil's wishes.
- Appropriate touch involving pupils with SEND will be in line with their EHC plan or IHP.

## **5. Reasonable force**

- 5.1. The school understands that there are times when members of staff must provide physical intervention whereby a pupil presents danger to themselves or others.
- 5.2. All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force. In these instances, staff must always explain the reasons for their actions to the pupil and why it was necessary.
- 5.3. Reasonable force may be required in order to control or restrain a pupil in extreme circumstances, such as needing to guide a pupil to safety.
- 5.4. At all times, members of staff will ensure they use reasonable force in such a way as to avoid any injury to the pupil, but the school recognises that in some extreme cases, such as immediate intervention to prevent worse physical injury, this may not be possible.
- 5.5. The school can use reasonable force in situations when:
  - Disruptive pupils must be removed from the classroom and have previously refused to.

- Members of staff need to control disruptive pupils on school trips, or similar.
  - Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom when doing so would lead to a risk of their safety.
  - A pupil is attacking a member of staff or another pupil.
  - A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff must intervene to prevent this.
- 5.6. 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.
- 5.7. The school will ensure it has considered the risks involved when using reasonable force involving pupils with SEND, particularly recognising the additional vulnerability of this group.

## **6. Reporting inappropriate touch**

- 6.1. If a pupil attempts to engage in any inappropriate touching, the member of staff involved will report this immediately to the headteacher, in order to prevent any allegations of inappropriate physical contact. The headteacher will inform the DSL as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- 6.2. 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 DSL immediately.
- 6.3. The headteacher will keep a written record of all instances of reported inappropriate touch.
- 6.4. Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school's Staff Code of Conduct.

## **7. Training of staff**

- 7.1. The lead DSL will conduct annual safeguarding training for all members of staff in relation to safe touch, including use of reasonable force.
- 7.2. All staff will be regularly reminded of the methods of safe touch employed by our school and will communicate these to the pupils they are in contact with.
- 7.3. Training by Educator Solutions will take place annually for Step up training and every three years for Step On training.

## **8. Monitoring and review**

- 8.1. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the PSHE co-ordinator, who will make any necessary changes and communicate these to all members of staff.

- 8.2. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction.
- 8.3. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2020.