



Safe Touch and Positive Handling Policy

Mill Lodge Primary School and ARC

The term '**Physical Contact**' is used to describe the use of touch for many purposes in numerous different contexts.

For the purposes of the policy, the term "**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 into assembly
- Giving first aid to a pupil
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE & other lessons
- Administering medicine
- Using musical instruments

Whilst this policy recognises the importance of safe and appropriate physical contact, it is also important to clearly identify what constitutes inappropriate touch.

Inappropriate touch includes, but is not limited to:

- Touching a child in a way that may be interpreted as sexualised or grooming behaviour.
- Touch that is forceful, aggressive, or used as punishment
- Prolonged or unnecessary physical contact that is not required to support the child
- Touching intimate body areas unless this is required for approved intimate care procedures
- Any contact that causes a child to feel uncomfortable, distressed, or unsafe

We recognise physical contact is a necessary and integral part in the education of our students. It may be required to meet the needs of students within the following areas:

- Emotional development
- Physical development
- Personal/Social development
- Behavioural development
- Personal and intimate care
- Physical support and access to the curriculum

The policy has been prepared to support all staff who will encounter children working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for care and control. The purpose is to give staff the confidence to act in the best interests of the child. This policy will be reviewed annually by the BHS committee of the governing body.

The policy takes cognisance of relevant legislation, regulations and guidance including the most recent examples from the Department for Education, Department of Health and the Health and Safety Executive.

Within this policy there will be references to the most current government guidance and legislation.

This policy has a clear focus:

The paramount consideration is to safeguard the welfare of the child and to safeguard the welfare of staff and others working in school.

Duty of Care:

All staff have a duty of care towards the children and young people they look after, their colleagues and others, under Health and Safety Legislation. They have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with policies and risk assessments and participate in necessary training. They should look out for obvious hazards and reduce foreseeable risks wherever possible. The Children Act 1989 makes clear that in any decision involving a child the paramount consideration must be the child's welfare. Paramount means it should be the first thing people think about, and it should take precedence over all other considerations. For that reason, staff need to carefully consider what is in the best interest of the child, both in the short term and the longer term. In exceptional circumstances, staff may need to act in the best interest of the child and the use of reasonable force may be required to achieve this.

Mill Lodge School and ARC acknowledges that physical interventions which use varying degrees of reasonable force are only a small part of a whole setting approach.

Links to other policies

- Governor's Behaviour Principles
- Understanding and Supporting Behaviours
- Main school Behaviour policy
- Exclusions policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Combined Policy: Reasonable Force, Physical Restraint, Seclusion & Restrictive interventions
- Health and Safety Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school/setting:

- Understand their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care
- Understand that the paramount consideration is the welfare of the individual child
- Understand what constitutes appropriate touch as outlined above
- Understand that 'reasonable' force means that it is necessary and proportionate
- Are provided with appropriate training to manage risk and this training is maintained at an appropriate level.

Signed Consent form:

All children within the ARC have a signed consent form which shares with parents that during their child's daily routine, it may be necessary for staff to use safe touch in line with our school policy. It outlines that touch may be used in the following ways:

- Supporting with an educational task
- Activities which require physical support (changing for PE or TAC-PAC sessions)
- Providing care and comfort
- Physical contact with their intimate care needs

It reassures parents that these actions will only be undertaken by staff members who work closely with your child and that we require consent for our staff to safely use appropriate safe touch to help them to access their daily curriculum and learning. The consent form then shares that children who attend the ARC may also require support to keep themselves or others safe and staff may be required to use brief interventions when children are:

- Self-injuring
- Causing injury to other children, staff, parents, and visitors.
- Causing significant damage to property

It clearly stipulates that the paramount consideration is for staff to work in the best interests of the child. Intervention will only be used when no other effective alternatives are available. These signed consents are kept on the Behaviour Policy file on One Drive.

Physical Contact

There are a range of circumstances in which positive physical contact occurs between staff and pupils in order to support access to a broad and balanced curriculum such as using PE equipment. Examples of physical contact covers a wide range of positive physical interactions ranging from light touch to firm pressure.

Children learn who they are and how the world is by forming relationships with people and things around them. The quality of a child's relationship with significant adults is vital to their healthy development and emotional health and wellbeing. Some children who require emotional support from school may have been subject to trauma or distress or may not have had a positive start in life. It is with this in mind that staff seek to respond to children's developmental needs by using appropriate safe touch.

Attachment theory and child development identifies safe touch as a positive contribution to brain development, mental health and the development of social skills.

Physical Intervention

There needs to be a gradual and graded approach from staff when considering the use of reasonable force. Examples of low-risk physical interventions could be guiding or escorting a child to a safer place. Medium to high-risk physical intervention could be separating a fight or using a standing or seated restraint. All high-risk incidents involving physical intervention are recorded and reported.

See Combined Policy: Reasonable Force, Physical Restraint, Seclusion & Restrictive interventions for further guidance.

Reporting Inappropriate Touch

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.

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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Any concerns involving the Headteacher should be reported to the chair of governors.

Signed:

Policy Owner	J.Challender
Role:	Headteacher
Date Issued:	5 th March 2026
Chair of Governors Signature:	

Next Review Date:	Reviewed by:	Changes Made:	Chair of Governors Signature:

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