Much Birch C of E Primary School

Safe Touch Policy



'We will flourish and reach our God given potential'

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. **John 15:5**

All members of our whole school community are able to realise their God-given potential, enabling them to become equal, caring and active citizens whilst upholding true Christian values. We treat others, as we would like to be treated, with dignity and respect. Everyone is encouraged to flourish with hope and high aspirations

Updated 2 **yearly**

Review date Sept 2028

Head teacher Ms B Davies

Chair of Governors Rev. Mark Johnson

1. Legal framework

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

• The Children Act 1989

• Equality Act 2010

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

• Use of Reasonable Force in Schools, DfE

• Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE

• Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE

• Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention HMG

1.3. The school will implement this policy in conjunction with our Safeguarding & Child protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, Intimate Care Policy and Equality Policy.

2. Roles and responsibilities

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

2.2. The headteacher is responsible for conducting regular safeguarding training for all members of staff and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities, in line with the school's 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 headteacher.

2.6. The school has a responsibility for ensuring that it creates and promote 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 (Use of Reasonable Force in Schools, DfE, 2013, p.8)

4. Types of safe touch

4.1. Staff should ensure that safe touch only occurs in the presence of other adults or responsible children, and that it does not indicate favour towards particular pupils.

4.2. Pupils should never be touched in a way that could be misinterpreted as anything other than appropriate adult-child support.

4.3. Pupils should not be touched between the waist and mid-thigh, or on/near the chest (unless specifically required during a First Aid procedure or Team Teach physical intervention).

4.4. Types of Physical Contact The school recognises that certain types of physical contact between staff and pupils are inappropriate and that safe touch should never be invasive, humiliating or flirtatious.

The school places the following guidelines on hugging:

• At our school, staff using touch for reward or comfort will use the ‘shoulder-

hug' known as a 'school-hug', rather than a 'front' embrace

• The shoulder-hug is a sideways hug whereby the member of staff places their hands/arm on/around the pupil's shoulders.

• This type of hug prevents the pupil from turning themselves towards the member of staff (thus engaging in a 'front' embrace).

A child may only sit on an adult's knee for a short period and a specific purpose (e.g. for First Aid) – they should not sit too close to the body.

4.5. For pupils within the Early Years Foundation Stage, it may be more appropriate on occasion for closer physical contact, while appropriate child-adult relationships are being established. The points above still apply, however, except that sitting on the knee and shoulder-hugs might occur more regularly and be of longer duration, if such support is required by the child.

4.6. If a pupil requires assistance with changing clothes, great care must be taken to ensure that all physical contact is specifically and only for the purpose of the operation being carried out.

4.7. For intimate care (especially toileting), see the school's Intimate Care Policy.

4.8. 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 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 instead.

4.9. If a member of staff attempts to use one of the safe methods of touch and a pupil is unhappy with this, the member of staff will cease contact immediately in order to respect the pupil's wishes.

4.10. Appropriate touch involving pupils with SEND will be in line with their EHC plan or IEP.

5. Reasonable force

5.1. The school understands that there are times when members of staff must provide physical intervention if a child 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 must 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 is able to use reasonable force to:

• remove disruptive children from the classroom when they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;

• prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;

• prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;

• prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and

• restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts. (Use of Reasonable Force in Schools, DfE, 2013, p.5)

5.6. Schools cannot use force as a punishment – this is always unlawful.

5.7. The headteacher and authorised staff are able to use reasonable force to search for specified 'prohibited items' (namely: knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images, and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property). Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

6. Reporting inappropriate touch

6.1. 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.

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 headteacher immediately.

6.3. Where it is reported that a staff member has engaged, or is suspected to have engaged, in touch that is not appropriate in line with this policy and the Staff Code of Conduct, this will be handled in line with the Reporting Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy, or, where there have been multiple reports of inappropriate touch or an instance of touch which is severely inappropriate, the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

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

7. Training of staff

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

7.2. All staff will be regularly reminded of the methods of safe touch employed by our school, and will communicate this to the pupils they are in contact with.

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by SLT.