

# **Poringland Primary School and Nursery**

## **Safe Touch Policy**

**Date of Policy:** Summer 2023  
**Review Date:** Summer 2024

**Members of staff responsible:** Senior Leadership Team

## Safe Touch Policy

<b>Name of school:</b>	Poringland Primary School and Nursery
<b>Date of Policy:</b>	Summer 2023
<b>Next Review:</b>	Summer 2024
<b>Members of staff Responsible:</b>	Senior Leadership Team

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### **Statement of intent**

At Poringland Primary School and Nursery, we understand that appropriate relationships between staff and pupils are paramount to promoting the safeguarding of children at our School.

The guidance document 'Use of reasonable force in schools' (DfE, 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.

#### **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

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

- Use of reasonable force in schools (DfE, 2013)
- Working together to safeguard children (DfE, 2018)

1.2. The School will implement this policy in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, Disability Equality Policy, Gender Equality Policy and Race 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for conducting safeguarding training for all members of staff, and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities, in line with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection 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 Headteacher is responsible for communicating with parents/carers and ensuring that they are aware of this policy.
- 2.7. The school has a responsibility for ensuring that they create 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 or when using musical instruments.

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

- 4.1. 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.
- 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 to use 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 would deem inappropriate.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 Should a pupil try to engage in any inappropriate physical contact, the member of staff must explain to the pupil why it is unacceptable, and encourage them to engage in the school-hug or school-hand-hold instead.
- 4.7 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 retract immediately in order to respect the pupil's wishes.

- 4.8 Safe touching of a pupil by staff must only be in response to promoting the health and safety of the pupil, including emotional health. It should not be in response to the emotional need of the staff member.

## 5. **Reasonable force**

- 5.1. The school understands that there are times when members of staff must provide physical intervention whereby 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 in situations when:
- Disruptive children 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. (DfE, p.5);
- 5.6. Any occurrences of the use of reasonable force will be reported to the Headteacher, and recorded on the child's record within the school's online safeguarding recording system.

## 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. 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 Complaints Procedure. Governors will be made aware through the Complaints Procedure.

## 7. **Training of staff**

- 7.1. The school will organise annual safeguarding training for all members of staff. The school will also organise Step On training for key staff members.

## 8. **Monitoring and review**

- 8.1. 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.