

Safe Touch Policy

This Policy was adopted	Summer 2024
This policy is scheduled for review	Summer 2025

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection
- Accessibility Policy
- Looked After Children Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Positive Intervention Policy

Across the Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth CE primary Schools, we:

- provide a safe, happy environment which supports the learning of every pupil.
- provide a broad, balanced curriculum which is relevant and differentiated to meet the needs of the individual.
- communicate information using diaries, letters and newsletters, an internet-based Learning Platform or using parents/carers preferred form of communication.
- offer regular consultations to discuss pupil progress in addition to a pupil's School Report, EHCP and Transition meetings.

Our Vision, Values and ethos are at the core of everything we do.

RATIONALE

There are understandable fears and concerns voiced by school staff, parents and the general community about the appropriateness and use of touch during the provision of Teaching and Learning in a school setting. This policy intends to clarify the conditions and reasons for touch for pupils across the Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth Ce Primary School, and to give guidance and support for the safeguarding of both pupils and staff.

This Federation recognises that touch is essential in the provision of good quality and sensitive care when supporting our pupils. Used appropriately and with empathy, touch is the corner stone of the natural interactions between staff and the pupils we care for.

AIMS

- To outline the importance of touch
- To outline the importance of touch in the school setting
- To identify the reasons for touch during the routine Teaching and Learning of pupils

There are many occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with children which are appropriate and in the best interest of the child or young person. Reasons may include:

- Communication
- First Aid
- to comfort a child or young person in distress
- to direct a child or young person (holding hands, hand on shoulder etc)
- for educational skills (PE, Drama etc.)
- for life skills (changing for PE, toileting, using cutlery etc.)
- in an emergency to increase safety to the child or young person and staff

In an emergency incident staff may take into account the use of reasonable force and their responsibilities under duty of care.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and children or young people takes place; staff must consider the following:

- the child or young person's age and level of understanding
- the child or young person's individual characteristics and history

- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)

If a child or young person requires physical support on a regular basis this information will be documented on an individual plan such as a positive intervention plan or intimate care plan

GUIDELINES

It is important that all staff members are unambiguous and open as to the reasons for using touch.

The use of touch should be routinely and openly discussed in class meetings, staff meetings and in Annual Review situations.

Adults working with our pupils should be able to explain their practice; i.e. there must be clarity and transparency in all issues of touch. Wherever practicable, a description / rationale should be documented in Behaviour Plans and Care Plans after consultation with other professional agencies and particularly, parents.

Each pupil is an individual and consideration should be given to cultural, ethnic and gender issues in the use of touch.

Pupils may not want to be touched. Staff should be sensitive to any communication (verbal or non-verbal) pupils may give to indicate that touch is not welcome. Touch should provide a positive experience. It should also be provided with the consent of the recipient.

It is never appropriate for staff to touch a pupil's intimate body areas except as part of Medical / Hygiene care. *Please see school policy on Intimate Care.*

School staff members should feel confident and comfortable about questioning each other's behaviour and all should be aware of child protection protocol. If a school staff member has any doubts about the appropriateness of touch in any situation, it is imperative that these doubts should be raised and discussed with the Headteacher.

We recognise that our pupils can be open to abuse. The best method of prevention is teamwork and a transparency in all activities. School staff should try to support, monitor and assist each other during the Teaching and Learning process when delivering touch.