



Touch Policy

Reviewed by S&C Committee: 24th January 2017

Ratified by Full Governors on: 8th February 2017

Review Period: Every 3 Years

Next Review Due: Autumn Term 2019

Signature of FGB Chair *E Young*

This policy has been reviewed in line with the 9 principles set out in the Single Equality Policy and an initial screening Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out



TOUCH POLICY

This policy has been formulated by members of staff, in consultation with parents, to maximise the wellbeing and safety of all members of our school community.

This policy supports the Rights Respecting ethos of Parley First School by seeking to ensure all children have an education which meets their needs and encourages the highest attainment they are capable of (article 28) and recognising that they have a right to have their opinions taken into account (article 12).

At Parley First School we have decided to adopt a Touch Policy. This means that members of staff are able to physically guide, touch or prompt children in an appropriate way at appropriate times. It is extremely important that all staff have read and understood this policy to appreciate the reasons why we choose to hold/touch children and the appropriate ways to do so.

Why do we use touch?

We may choose to hold children for a variety of reasons, but in general times we would normally do so for either comfort or reward. We may also need to physically touch, guide or prompt students if they require personal care, assistance with writing, eating, dressing etc.

How do we touch?

Hugging

At Parley, we encourage staff that are using touch for comfort or reward to use a 'school hug'. This is a sideways on hug, with the adult putting their hands on the children's shoulders. This discourages 'front on' hugging, and the adult's hands on the shoulders limits the ability of the child to turn themselves into the adult. This can be done either standing or sitting.



Hand holding

We recognise that children sometimes enjoy being able to hold hands with adults around them. This is perfectly acceptable when the hand holding is compliant. However, if the hand holding is being used by an adult as a method of control to move children, this can be restraint. Therefore, we encourage the use of the 'school hand hold'. This can be done by the adult holding their arm out, with the children being encouraged to wrap their hand around the adult's lower arm. The adult's other hand can then be placed over the child's for a little security if it is required.



Lap sitting

At Parley we actively discourage lap-sitting. Children should be taught to seek comfort/attention through other means, for example, the school hand hold or the school hug. If a child attempts to sit on an adult's lap, it should be explained to them that it is not what we do at school and be asked to sit next to the adult, if it is appropriate or practical for them to do.

Exceptions

At times children may be in crisis or distress and hold an adult in a way which is not described above (e.g. a 'front on' hug or lap sitting). If this happens then the adult should ensure they inform a senior member of staff to protect themselves. The adult may then be asked to make a note of this, such as logging on MyConcern, in order to record and monitor the amount of times a child does this to see whether this is a 'controlling' behaviour, or whether the child is displaying distressed behaviour regularly.

A further exception to these guidelines could be for a child with specific needs, such as medical or attachment issues, and in these cases the expectations should be agreed between school and the parents, with written record of such discussions and consent given.

It should be noted that, although we have a Touch Policy and believe that contingent touch can be a positive experience for the children we care for, this does not mean that staff members have to touch children, or that all children will want to be touched. All staff should respect this and also be mindful to any cultural expectations and understandings with regards to touch.

Staff have a duty of care towards all students at Parley First School. Therefore, if a child is likely to be at risk from harm if a member of staff does not physically intervene in an emergency situation, action must be taken. The action taken will dependant on the dynamic risk assessment made at that moment in time.

This policy will be shared with all parents and carers when their child is admitted to our school.

If there are any questions or queries about this policy they should be shared with the Headteacher or Deputy at the earliest opportunity.