



Snettisham Primary School Touch Policy

At our school, we have a touch policy. This means that as a member of staff you are able to physically guide, touch or prompt children in appropriate way at the appropriate times. It is extremely important that you have read and understood this policy to appreciate the reasons why we may choose to hold/touch children and the appropriate ways in which we 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 Use Touch?

Hugging

At this school, if staff feel it is appropriate to use touch for comfort or reward, they are encouraged to use a 'school hug'. This is a sideways on hug, with the adult putting their hands on the child's shoulders. This discourages 'front on' hugging, and the adult's hands on the shoulder limits the ability of the child to turn themselves into you. This can be done either standing or sitting.



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 handholding is being used by an adult as a method of control or to move children, this can become a restraint. Therefore, we encourage the use of the 'school hand-hold'. This can be done by the adult holding their arm out, and the child encouraged to wrap their hand around the adult's lower arm. The adult's other hand can then be placed over the child's hand for a little additional security if it is required.

In summary, it is generally deemed appropriate to touch others on the lower arm which would appear to be regarded as a neutral zone in most cultures.



Lap-Sitting

Lap-sitting is considered to be inappropriate and is actively discouraged. Children should be taught to seek comfort/attention through other means, for example the school hand hold or hug. If a child attempts to sit on your lap, explain to them that this is not what we do here and ask them to sit next to you if it is appropriate and age appropriate.

At times, children in crisis or distress may hold you in a way which is not described as above (e.g. 'front on' hug / lap sitting'). If this should happen please ensure that you have informed a senior member of staff to protect yourself. You may be asked to make a note of this; this will be in order to record and monitor the frequency of the behaviour and to assess whether this is a 'controlling' behaviour, or whether the child is displaying distressed behaviour on a regular basis.

Please note that although we have a touch policy and believe that contingent touch can be a positive experience for the children that we care for, this does not mean that you have to touch children, and it should be realised that some children will not want to be touched. Please respect this.

We also have our 'positive handling' policy on restrictive intervention, please ensure that you are familiar with this.

Staff have a 'Duty of Care' towards the students in their care. Therefore if a student is likely to be at risk from harm if you do not physically intervene in an emergency situation, you must take action. The action you take will be dependant on the dynamic risk assessment that you make at that moment in time.

Parents/carers will be made aware of this policy when their child is admitted to this school.

If you have any questions or would like a further discussion regarding this policy please speak to the Head Teacher at the earliest available opportunity.