



Rationale

Our policy on Touch has been developed in the context of the LA Child Protection Procedures and Policies. It takes into account the extensive neurobiological research and other studies relating to attachment theory and child development that identify safe touch as a positive contribution to brain development, emotional regulation, mental health and the development of pro-social skills. Our school has adopted an informed, evidence based decision to allow safe touch as a developmental appropriate intervention that will aid healthy growth and learning.

The staff team receive training and regular case supervision with a specialist consultant and their day-to-day practice is monitored by the Head teacher and Thrive leaders. All staff must pay due regard to their own health and safety.

Clarity should be our aim, a child should never be left in any doubt about the member of staff's intention behind any physical contact.

There are five different types of touch/physical contact used, these are:

1. Casual / informal/ incidental touch
2. General reparative touch
3. Positive Handling (calming a "disregulating" child)
4. Contact play
5. Interactive Play as part of Thrive provision ("Rough and tumble" play)
See Annex 1 for 'Checklist of Safe Touch Categories'.

1. Casual / informal / incidental touch

All teaching and support staff use touch with pupils as part of a normal relationship: comforting a child, giving reassurance, and congratulation. At St Mary's School we care for very young children and so there may be times when staff have close physical contact, initiated by a child e.g. a hug. In some circumstances, touch might include putting an arm out to bar exit from a room, taking a child by the hand; the benefit of this action is that it is often proactive and prevents the child from getting into a situation that could escalate. All staff have completed training on the use of passive intervention strategies (PIPs) and Safeguarding training to support professional practice in these situations.

2. General reparative touch

Used by staff working with children who are having difficulties with their emotions for a number of reasons. Healthy development requires access to safe touch as one of the means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, sad or angry child. Touch used to regulate a child's emotions is both a needed developmental experience and triggers the releasing of the calming chemical, oxytocin, in the body.

3. Positive Handling (Calming a "disregulating" child)

Trained staff will restrain a child when behaviour is unacceptably threatening, dangerous, aggressive or out of control in order to avoid harm to self or others, damage to property, an offence being committed and/or a breakdown of good order and discipline. Any incident will be recorded and reported to the Head Teacher (Annex 1). Staff follow the Devon County Council PIP's training for positive handling and physical intervention.

Pupils who may have to be calmed in this manner may already have been identified and had a Positive

Handling Plan written for them (Annex 2). After a Positive Handling incident there will be a de-brief with the pupil and with the staff concerned. It is a legal requirement for a written report to be given to the pupil's parents as soon as practicable after the incident (Apprenticeships, Schools, Children and Learning Bill, April 2009).

Teachers and authorised school staff have a statutory power to use force in certain circumstances. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that school staff can use "reasonable force" to prevent or to stop a pupil from committing an offence, injuring him/herself or others, damaging property or behaving in a way detrimental to good order and discipline in the school. The use of force is "reasonable" if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it, and the degree of force is in proportion to the seriousness of the situation and the consequences the intervention is intended to prevent. Force should, wherever possible, be avoided and when necessary it must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.

ANNEX 1

Positive Handling Plan

Name

Class:

Date:

Behaviours/situations likely to result in Positive Handling: What is the behaviour? When does it occur? Where does it occur?

Strategies to use where possible before physical intervention:

Give time	Clear instruction	Give a count	Instruct other Pupils	Remove stimulus	
Give space	Distraction	State alternatives / consequences	Praise partial compliance		
Talk calmly	Reassure/remind	Other staff intervene	Repeat request		

Possible Positive handling strategies – physical intervention as per PIP’s training

Arm		Single elbow		Double elbow		Wrap	
Sitting		Kneeling		Standing		Shield	

Medical condition that should be taken into account:

Notes:

Record dates of Positive Handling incidents, adults involved and that Debrief process followed - see overleaf

Signatures:

Child: _____ Teacher: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ SEND Co-ordinator: _____

Headteacher: _____

Review Date:

ANNEX 2

Positive Handling Incident Report

IT IS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT THAT THE PARENT RECEIVES A COPY OF THIS REPORT AS SOON AS IS PRACTICABLE AFTER THE INCIDENT

Pupil: _____ Class _____ Date _____

Reported by: _____

Location: _____

What led up to incident?

What steps did you take to de-escalate situation?

Give time	Clear instruction		Give a count	Instruct other Pupils	Remove stimulus	
Give space	Distraction		State alternatives / consequences	Praise partial compliance		
Talk calmly	Reassure/remind		Other staff intervene	Repeat request		

Brief factual summary of what exactly happened?

Start time _____ End time _____

What was the pupil's response?

What was the outcome of the incident?

Reasons for intervention:

Actual injury to themselves. Give details:		Potential injury to themselves		Attempting to leave site	
Actual injury to staff/other pupil. Give details:		Potential injury to staff/other pupil		Other (state)	
Actual damage to property. Give details:		Potential damage to property		Other (state)	

Positive handling strategies used: Mild Firm

Arm		Single elbow		Double elbow		Wrap	
Sitting		Kneeling		Standing		Shield	

Length of contact _____

Adults involved _____

Other people present _____

Pupil debrief: Y/N Staff debrief: Y/N

Parent informed: Copy of this report (legal requirement)

Plus: Phone Verbal Letter

Any other relevant action taken afterwards?

Signed: Pupil (if appropriate) _____

Other adults involved _____

Parent _____

Headteacher _____

Date _____

Debriefing with pupil

The aim is to:

- Rebuild relationships
- Learn from what has happened
- Explore the link between feelings and behaviour

To take place when:

- Pupil who was held is under control and accepting directions
- All parties have had a period for recovery
- Ideally as soon as possible after the incident to make it effective.

Procedure (**IESCAPE-R**)

Insulate – find a quiet private place which is safe and comfortable – perhaps take a walk

Explore – what happened from the pupil's point of view – no judgement – no blame

Share – what you saw and what you felt – explain why you took the actions you did – apologies are OK

Connect – experiences to feelings and behaviour – discuss how feelings drive behaviour for all of us

Alternatives – work together to develop a list of alternative ways of dealing with difficult situations

Plan- try to develop limited choices so that the pupil can make the final decision

Enter – back into normal routines and activities allow settling time

Review Positive Handling Plan to record what has been decided.

Debriefing with staff

The aims of the process are:

- To talk about what happened in a non-blaming, supportive and caring manner with another member of staff
- To explore how the member of staff felt before, during and after the incident
- To use the opportunity to discuss underlying causes and issues that lead to the incident
- To examine what techniques were used and learn from the outcomes to inform future interventions (what worked and what did not)
- To develop a strategy or alternatives for next time which may be recorded on the pupils' Positive Handling Plan.