

West Earlham Infant and Nursery School

Positive Touch Policy

At West Earlham Infant and Nursery School we have a positive touch policy. This means that members of staff you are able to physically guide, touch or prompt children in appropriate ways at the appropriate times.

1. Why Do We Use Touch?

Staff may have physical contact with children for a variety of reasons, but in general terms they would normally do so for comfort, reassurance or reward. They may also need to physically touch, guide or prompt children if they require personal care, assistance with writing, eating, dressing etc.

2. How Do We Use Touch?

Hugging

- a. At this school, staff that are using touch for comfort or reward 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 shoulders limits the ability of the child to turn themselves into staff. This can be done either standing or sitting.

Hand-Holding

- b. We recognise that children, especially young 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 to move a child, and the child is reluctant this can become a restraint, and not covered within the remits of this policy. Therefore, we encourage the use of the 'school hand-hold'. This is done by the adult offering a supportive arm, and the child is encouraged to wrap their hand/arm around the adult's lower arm. The adult's other hand can then be placed over the child's for a little extra security if it is required.
- c. It is generally deemed appropriate to touch children on the upper arm which would appear to be regarded as a neutral zone in most cultures.

Lap-Sitting

- d. At West Earlham Infant and Nursery School we recognise that some children, especially very young children derive comfort from lap-sitting. Children should be encouraged to seek comfort/attention through other means, for example the school hand hold or hug, as they mature. Lap sitting should be used as a short term strategy to re-assure and calm children if it seems appropriate. When using Lap-Sitting we would sit the child on one knee, or for younger children sideways on. Staff should avoid allowing lap sitting when children appear to be using it for control or when they are on their own with a child. It should never be used as a restraint.
 - e. If a child makes any comment or action that may give cause for concern whilst sitting on an adults lap ensure that a member of the Senior Leadership team is informed. This may be recorded in order to monitor the amount of times the child is doing this to staff to see whether this is a 'controlling' behaviour, or whether the child is displaying distressed behaviour regularly.
3. Please note that although we have a positive touch policy and believe that contingent touch can be a positive experience for the children that we care for, this does not mean that staff have to touch children, it should also be recognised that some children will not want to be touched and it can act as a trigger for emotional outbursts if it causes anxiety for a child.
 4. Staff have a 'Duty of Care' towards the children in their care. In an emergency situation if a child is likely to be at risk from harm (either to themselves or others) staff may need to take action that involves physically intervening. The action Staff take will be dependent on the dynamic risk assessment that staff make at that

moment in time. Anytime that staff are required to intervene in this way it will be recorded and shared with parents/carers.

Related policies:

- Behaviour for Living Well and Learning Well
- Restrictive Physical intervention
- Health and safety
- Safeguarding incorporating Child Protection

Approval

This policy has been reviewed in line with the 2010 Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Act. Due regard has been given to Equality.

This policy will be adopted in **May 2017**. The date of the next formal review will be **May 2021** and every three year thereafter, unless statutory legislation changes.

Policy approved by the Head Teacher of West Earlham Infant and Nursery School.