



Kewstoke Primary School

Happy Children, Successful Learners, Growing Together

Safe Touch (including intimate care) policy



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Introduction

At Kewstoke Primary School we aim to provide the children with a nurturing and supportive environment. In order to achieve this, it is sometimes necessary for members of staff to have physical contact with children. The term physical contact is used to describe the use of touch for many purposes in numerous different contexts. Staff must be clear about the reason they are making physical contact with the child, and ensure that it is purposeful in meeting the needs of the child concerned. It is also important to remember that not all children like physical contact, and an understanding and knowledge of the child is therefore essential.

The Children Act 1989 and 2004 makes it clear that the paramount consideration in any decision should always fall within the best interests of the child concerned.

Aims

Our aim is to enable children to have sensory, personal development, social and emotional wellbeing needs met, whilst acknowledging the need to protect children and empower them with choices pertaining to physical contact. We are committed to ensuring that all members of staff responsible for the care of pupils will undertake their duties in a professional manner to ensure the safety and dignity of the children is protected.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of staff at our school have a duty of care towards pupils and must be aware of the boundaries involving physical contact.

The Headteacher and Safeguarding Leads are responsible for conducting regular safeguarding training for all members of staff and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities, in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

The Headteacher and Safeguarding Leads are responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of the guidance of safe touch with pupils.

All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that no pupil feels threatened or unsafe at our school as a result of inappropriate touch.

All members of staff have a responsibility to report any instances of inappropriate touch to the Headteacher/ Safeguarding Lead.

The Headteacher is responsible for communicating with parents/carers and ensuring that they are aware of this policy. It will be available in the school website.

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The school has a responsibility for ensuring that it creates and promotes a culture in which pupils' wishes and feelings are respected.

Rationale

The quality of a child's relationship with adults is vital to their healthy development and emotional health and wellbeing. Many children who require emotional support from school may have been subject to trauma or distress or may not have had a positive start in life. It is with this in mind that staff seek to respond to children's developmental needs by using appropriate safe touch. Attachment theory and child development identify safe touch as a positive contribution to brain development, mental health and the development of social skills.

This policy rests on the belief that every member of staff needs to know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. Hence, staff need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the difference. Equally, when a child is in deep distress, staff need to know when and how sufficient connection and psychological holding can be provided without touching.

All staff need to be clearly aware of the procedures within this policy, and always mindful of appropriate behaviour.

Different types of appropriate touch

1. Casual / informal / incidental touch

Staff use touch with pupils as part of a normal relationship, for example comforting a child, giving reassurance and congratulating. This might include taking a child by the hand (if age appropriate), patting on the back, high fiving or putting an arm around the shoulders. The benefit of this action is often proactive and can prevent a situation from escalating.

2. Reparative touch

This is used by staff working with children who are having difficulties with their emotions. Healthy emotional development requires safe touch as a means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, angry or sad child. Touch used to regulate a child's emotions triggers the release of the calming chemical oxytocin in the body. Reparative touch may include stroking a back, squeezing an arm, rocking gently, cuddling, or sitting on an adults' lap.

3. Contact/interactive Play

Contact play is used by staff adopting a role similar to a parent in a healthy child-parent relationship. This will only take place when the child has developed a trusting relationship with the adult and when they feel completely comfortable and at ease with this type of contact. Contact play may include tickle

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games, being supported to explore in messy play, being held or rocked in physical play or being helped to access playground equipment.

4. Positive handling (calming a dysregulating child)

Staff may use force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, a type of behaviour that may result in them harming themselves or another. It may also be a way of providing support for the child for them to regulate their emotions or their sensory needs.

5. Using touch to communicate and teach

We have a number of children who have communication needs, and it is often appropriate and very important to use touch to communicate with them, e.g. through interaction, to guide children in completing a task as part of a learning program or to find out about something by exploring materials and objects.

Reporting inappropriate touch

If a pupil attempts to engage in any inappropriate touch, the member of staff involved will report this immediately to the Headteacher/Safeguarding Lead, in order to prevent any allegations of inappropriate physical contact.

If another member of staff suspects or witnesses inappropriate physical contact, whereby the member of staff is willingly involved, they will report this to the Headteacher immediately. If the complaint involves the headteacher then the next most senior member of staff and the chair of governors must be informed, as outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Section.

Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All staff need to be aware of the school's Whistleblowing policy and report any incidents/concerns accordingly.

Reasonable force

The school understands that there are times when members of staff must provide physical intervention if a child presents danger to themselves or others.

All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force. In these instances, staff must always explain the reasons for their actions to the pupil and why it was necessary. If possible, Team Teach trained staff should intervene in the first instance.

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Reasonable force may be required in order to control or restrain a pupil in extreme circumstances, such as needing to guide a pupil to safety.

At all times, members of staff must ensure they use reasonable force in such a way as to avoid any injury to the pupil, but the school recognises that in some extreme cases, such as immediate intervention to prevent worse physical injury, this may not be possible. Where Team Teach holds are used this must be recorded, parents and the Safeguarding Lead informed. This will be monitored with the Safeguarding Governor regularly.

The school is able to use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom when they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground;
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts. (Use of Reasonable Force in Schools, DfE, 2013, p.5)

Schools cannot use force as a punishment – this is always unlawful.

The Headteacher and authorised staff are able to use reasonable force to search for specified 'prohibited items' (namely: knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images, and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property). Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

Children should not be pulled by the arm under any circumstances.

Training of staff

The Headteacher will provide regular safeguarding training for all members of staff in relation to safe touch.

All staff will be regularly reminded of the methods of safe touch employed by our school and will communicate this to the pupils they are in contact with.

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Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which is associated with invasive procedures relating to bodily functions, bodily products and personal hygiene which demands direct or indirect contact with or exposure of intimate parts of the body, such as cleaning up after a child who has soiled themselves. In addition, some children may need help with dressing/undressing or using the toilet. Most children can carry out these functions themselves but it is recognised that some are unable to due to physical disability, learning difficulties, medical needs or needs arising from the child's stage of development.

This Intimate Care Policy has been developed to safeguard children, support staff and ensure good practice is followed. Staff are checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and we are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional and caring manner at all times. We believe that the intimate care of children cannot be separated from other aspects of their learning and development and we believe that every child has the right to feel safe and secure. We do not discriminate against children who have not reached a stage where they can manage their own personal hygiene and as such welcome all children to participate in our school and provide appropriate support for each child on an individual basis. We recognise the need to treat all children with respect and dignity when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress, embarrassment or pain.

We aim to:

- Safeguard the rights and promote the welfare of all children and young people including those who may be more vulnerable to abuse.
- Provide guidance and reassurance to staff whose duties may include intimate care.
- Assure parents and carers that staff are knowledgeable about personal care and that their child's individual needs and concerns are taken into consideration.
- Remove barriers to learning and participation, protect from discrimination and ensure inclusion for all children and young people within our setting.

Individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child. We will work with parents of a child who requires intimate care to establish a preferred procedure for supporting the child. Where these procedures may require specialist training, we will seek out training for the staff who will be involved in a child's care, ensuring that the child's key-person and at least one other member of staff accesses the training. Staff members who are known to the child will take on that responsibility for changing children. The staff member who is involved will always ask the child for permission to assist them. The child will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy and independence that is possible given their age and ability. Careful consideration will be given to each child's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a child is toileted. Where possible one child will be catered for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for having more adults present. It is the parent's responsibility to provide nappies, disposal bags, wipes, changing mat.

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We believe that our partnership with parents is an essential principle in our setting and is particularly necessary in relation to children needing intimate care. We recognise that the information required to carry out intimate care is gained from parents as is prior permission. We acknowledge that cultural influences may affect what is deemed 'intimate' and ensure we pay regard to social, ethnic and cultural perspectives through open dialogue with parents. Parents should be encouraged and empowered to work with staff to ensure that their child's needs are identified, understood and met. When any intimate care is carried out on children with individual care plans, it will be recorded on their own personal record. All information concerning intimate care procedures is recorded and stored securely. We appreciate that sometimes children have toileting 'accidents' which are out of character for them. In the event of this, and in the absence of a personal intimate care plan, the child would be fully encouraged and supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and ability. Staff will encourage the child to do as much for his/herself as possible and parents will be informed the same day. On the rare occasion that a child is soiled to a point where they are unable to clean themselves to a comfortable state, parents would be contacted immediately so that the child could be taken home for bathing.

Child Protection procedures will be adhered to. All children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding to build their confidence and assertiveness about their own body and its worth. Confident and assertive children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable to abuse. If a member of staff has a concern about physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will follow our safeguarding procedures. If a child becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed. (See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures)

Personnel working in intimate situations with children can feel particularly vulnerable. This school policy can help to reassure both staff involved and the parents of vulnerable children. Action will be taken immediately should there be a discrepancy of reports between a child and the personal assistant. Where there is an allegation of abuse, the guidelines in the Child Protection procedures will be followed.

Guidelines for Changing Children

- If possible children should be changed standing up or using the variable height changing table, to avoid staff lifting children.
- The child's skin should be cleaned with a disposable wipe.
- Nappy creams/lotions should be labelled with the child's name and used only if prescribed for that child (by their parents) they must not be shared.
- Disposable gloves should be worn when changing nappies. The nappy should be folded inward to cover faecal material and double wrapped in a nappy bag. Soiled nappies should be disposed of into the bin provided. The disposal bin should be lined and emptied daily, replacing the used bin liner.

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- Any soiled or damp clothing should be placed in a plastic carrier bag in the bin provided in the Penguins toilet.
- Once the child has been changed and removed from the changing area, the surface should be cleaned with an antibacterial detergent spray or wipe and left to dry.
- Gloves, apron and any items used for cleaning the changing area will be wrapped and disposed of via domestic waste.
- Hands should be thoroughly washed afterwards.
- Complete the intimate care record.

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Appendix 1

Guidance from the Safer Working Practice Document states that it is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one pupil, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child.

This means that staff should:

- Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the pupil, an observer or any person to whom this action is described
- Never touch a pupil in a way which may be considered indecent
- Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny
- Never indulge in play fighting
- Always allow/encourage pupils, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed pupil is age appropriate
- Always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed pupil
- Establish the preferences of pupils
- Consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret or be uncomfortable with physical contact
- Always explain to the pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- Report and record situations which may give rise to concern
- Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender

Appendix 2



Kewstoke Primary School

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Dear Parent/ carer,

If a child wets or soils themselves whilst they are in school, it is important that measures are taken to have them changed and if necessary cleaned as quickly as possible. Our staff are experienced at carrying out this task if you wish them to do so or, if preferred, the school can contact you or your emergency contact who will be asked to attend without delay.

Kewstoke Primary School has an Intimate Care Policy which is available from the school office. Please fill out the permission slip below stating your preference.

Yours sincerely

Mr Neil Champs
Headteacher

Name of Child..... Class.....

Please delete as appropriate

I give consent for my child to be changed and cleaned if they wet/soil themselves whilst in the care of Kewstoke Primary School

I do not give consent for my child to be changed and cleaned if they wet or soil themselves. The school will contact me or my emergency contact and I will organise for my child to be cleaned and changed.

I understand that in the event that I or my emergency contact cannot be contacted, the staff will act appropriately and may need to come into some level of physical contact in order to aid my child.

Signature of Parent/Carer..... Date.....

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Appendix 3



Intimate care plan

Use this template for pupils who need regular support with toileting, washing and/or changing.

PARENTS/CARERS	
Name of child	
Type of intimate care needed	
How often care will be given	
What training staff will be given	
Where care will take place	
What resources and equipment will be used, and who will provide them	
How procedures will differ if taking place on a trip or outing	
Name of senior member of staff responsible for making sure care is carried out according to the intimate care plan	
Name of parent or carer	
Relationship to child	
Signature of parent or carer	
Date	
CHILD (FOR CHILDREN YEAR 1 TO 6)	
How many members of staff would you like to help?	
Do you mind having a chat when you are being changed or washed?	
PARENTS/CARERS	
Signature of child	
Date	

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