



St John Vianney Catholic Primary School

Safe Touch and Positive Handling Policy

This policy applies to all staff and children working at St. John Vianney School. Named members of staff have received 'Positive Handling' or training to know how and when to hold children in safe ways within government guidelines.

St. John Vianney School is adopting an informed, evidence-based decision to allow safe touch in special cases as a developmentally appropriate intervention that will aid healthy emotional growth and learning.

Research shows clearly that healthy pro-social brain development requires access to safe touch as one of the means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, sad or angry child. It is essential for all children to learn the difference between safe and unsafe touch and to experience having their strongest emotions contained, validated, accepted and soothed by a significant adult.

If children are behaving in unacceptable, threatening, dangerous, aggressive or out of control ways, they have not yet learned how their strongest emotional reactions can be contained, channelled and communicated safely. Specially trained staff will consider using safe touch as one of the means available to them, for example to calm a distressed child, to contain an angry or wild child and/or encourage or affirm an anxious child or to support a child with low self-esteem. Safe touch used to calm, soothe and regulate a child's emotions is a needed developmental experience.

Safe touch is one of the keyways of regulating children's emotions, but it is a strategy that fully trained staff will use in line with the whole school policy.

Positive handling is appropriate if a child: is hurting himself/herself or others, is likely to hurt himself/herself and/or others, is damaging property, is incensed and out of control, so that all verbal attempts to engage him/her have failed.

Trained staff team members are trained in the safest and gentlest means of holding a child that is entirely designed to enable the child to feel safe and soothed, and to bring him or her down from uncontrollable states of hyper-arousal. Such necessary interventions are fully in line with guidelines set out in the Government Document, 'New Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force in School.' (DfE 1998) and 'Use of Reasonable Force' (2013)

There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary: Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school; When comforting a distressed pupil; When a pupil is being congratulated or

praised; To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument; to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and to give first aid.

Our policy rests on the belief that every member of staff needs to appreciate the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. Guidelines for the use of Safe Touch - To ensure touch is only used appropriately, the following guidelines are to be followed: Parents/carers should be informed of the school policy on Touch. Parents/carers wherever possible should be involved in the Thrive Assessments and Action Plans and be regularly updated as to their child's progress through the program. Teachers/support staff should be trained in all aspects of safe touch.

TWO Adult rule: No adult should use safe holding when alone with a child. Both adults should have the closest / best relationship with the child. Where touch is used, contact should be brief and gentle, on clothed or publicly visible parts of the body: hands, arms, shoulders, head, hair, shoes.

When can reasonable force be used? The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used. Schools can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where 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; and restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot: Use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.
Source: Extract from Department of Education, Use of reasonable force Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies - July 2013 Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006

Signed: Miss J Cherry

Date: 10.12.22

Signed by the Headteacher: A D Thorpe

Ratified by FGB: Autumn 2022

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