Safe Touch Policy 2024-2026

St Andrew's CE Junior School

Approved by:	**Date:**
Last reviewed on:	
Next review due by:	February 2026

St Andrew's CE Junior School

Safe Touch Policy

Vision

Through experiences rooted in Christian Values, and through mutual Respect. We guide children to develop Compassion, Responsibility and Resilience in a caring environment

Rationale

St Andrew's CE Junior School believes that safe touch is to be encouraged, provided it is undertaken within a framework which is understood by all, and protects everyone's interests.

Touch is essential in order to provide sensitive, high quality care and to support natural interactions. Positive touch supports the development and emotional well-being of our learners and it is beneficial for both psychological and physiological development.

St Andrew's believes touch is an essential part of human relationships and supports the development of our natural interactions. To this end, staff at St Andrew's may use safe touch such as guides, prompts and reassurance to promote the feeling of safety, security and well-being.

The guiding principle of this policy is that touch, in all circumstances, must be appropriate and consensual, unless the circumstances giving rise for the need to touch are extreme and relate to the school's management of challenging behaviour. In such cases, contact with a child would only be initiated if it was deemed to be in the best interests of their own, other children's or staff member's safety.

Team Teach

Some staff are trained in Team Teach Positive Handling. This approach is first and foremost centred in de-escalation skills and any positive handling that occurs after this is in accordance with Team Teach guidelines.

The term 'positive handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. A clear and consistent approach supports all pupils, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, within an ethos of mutual respect, care, compassion and safety.

Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, damaging property, or in order to maintain good order. The school takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors to the school.

The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.

The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them

Physical restraint of children is an absolute final resort and all incidents are recorded on our CPoms safeguarding and behaviour tracking system. Please also refer to our Restorative Practice and Behaviour policy.

The policy refers to the outcomes framework in Every Child Matters (2003), Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Who Work with Children and Young People in Education (October 2015), The Children Act (2004).

Purpose for touch

Touch is important and may be used routinely for any of the following reasons:

For **communication:** to reinforce other communication (e.g. to gain or maintain attention) or to function as the main form of communication itself. Additionally, touch may be present to respond non-verbally with another or to make social connections. This type of physical form of communication may include handshakes, hugs, placing hand on shoulder, arm etc.

For **educational reasons:** touch may be necessary to direct children in educational tasks and essential skills. For example, support in PE or when moving learners between activities by way of support or guidance. Examples of this type of touch would include gentle guidance while touching hands, elbow or arm.

To **play:** play activities naturally include touch during play or PE/Games activities, and may include holding, tackling etc.

For **therapy:** the school offers therapeutic play, Relax Kids sessions and Story Massage. Generally, any type of touch involved will be on a peer to peer basis. Therapy touch may occasionally be adult initiated, but only with the consent of the child and in the presence of another adult.

For **emotional reasons**: to communicate warmth, to provide reassurance and to communicate security and comfort. Touch in this instance helps learners to understand and receive positive emotions and be able to communicate them. Examples of this type of touch may include short hugs, hand on shoulder, hand on forearm, ‘athletes embrace’ etc.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Restorative Practice and Behaviour Policy, and Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.**

This Policy will be reviewed in February 2026