



**Our Core Values: Honesty, Loyalty, Caring, Sharing and Forgiveness**

## **Offwell Church of England VC Primary School**

### **SAFE TOUCH POLICY**

**Approved: May 2012**

**Reviewed: April 2015**

**Next review: April 2018**

#### **Introduction:**

At Offwell School we believe that the use of touch is a vital aspect of our nurturing role. Touch not only promotes a child's social and emotional development but is also a highly effective and powerful method of non-verbal communication is key to the development of healthy relationships and a method of stress relief. This policy has been written to provide parents, governors, staff and pupils with information and guidance about the use of touch in our School.

If 'safe touch' is to be used it must be undertaken with the full knowledge and consent of parents/carers, by trained and supervised staff in carefully monitored situations where its therapeutic use has been agreed because it addresses an identified developmental need on the part of the child.

Our policy on Touch has been developed in the context of the LEA Child Protection Procedures and Policies.

#### **Touch can be used to:**

- Show acceptance
- Provide reassurance
- Demonstrate affection
- Calm and provide comfort
- Emphasise the spoken word
- Provide sensory stimulation
- Engage in personal care routines
- Deliver various therapy programmes
- Offer an alternative to spoken communication
- Remove a child from danger or keep a child safe

Staff should feel positive, relaxed and confident with its use and pupils should feel safe and secure.

Staff should always be aware of where they are and who they are with. It is best practice to ensure that all forms of touch are carried out with other adults present and open to the scrutiny and observation of others. Where possible touch should be avoided in an isolated one to one situation, when this is necessary the member of staff should ensure that a colleague is, 'close-to-hand'.

## Additional guidance about the use of touch:

- Where a pupil requires intimate personal care; staff should ensure that the pupil is comfortable with the staff member attending to their needs. A pupil's privacy and dignity should always be preserved.
- When a member of staff feels that it would be inappropriate to respond to a pupil seeking physical comfort, outward rejection should always be avoided in favour of diversion (or other strategy) and the reason (where appropriate), for avoiding physical contact should be given to the child.
- Where a child presents a danger to themselves or to others it will at times be necessary for staff to use a means of physical intervention as described in the relevant school policy. At such times staff should always take care to explain what they are doing and that the actions taken are for safety reasons. As the situation de-escalates, touch can be appropriately used to move from one situation of control to one of care.

Mrs A Billington – Headteacher

Dr P Ambler – Chair of Governors