

BEECH GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY ON PHYSICAL CONTACT

Aim

Because of the nature of the children in our care; their age, maturity and backgrounds, we endeavour to support them in a variety of different ways. In this way we hope to help children feel valued at all times in school.

Rationale

Some of our children do not understand, or are still learning to understand the appropriateness of physical contact. They look to us for approval and are testing our responses all the time.

Guidelines

It is often appropriate for children to be given comfort through physical contact, but this must be offered within the following guidelines;

- Always ensure there are other adults or responsible children around
- Never show favour to individual children
- Never touch a child between waist and mid-thigh or on the chest, except in Team Teach situations by trained staff
- Never touch a child in a way which could be interpreted as anything other than friendly adult to child support
- Where a child tried to get closer than is appropriate, adults should always kindly direct them towards a more appropriate form of contact
- Cuddles should be child-initiated, short, and side-by-side
- Never kiss a child and do not encourage them to kiss other adults
- A child should only sit on an adult's knee for a short time, not too close to the body, and for a specific reason such as injury
- Tickling is not appropriate
- For children in EYFS, appropriate relationships are still being established, and there may be greater need for physical contact within a nurturing environment, but this should always be within the guidelines
- Where children require help with changing or toileting, their dignity must be preserved at all times, and care must be taken to ensure that any contact is necessary for the purpose of the operation.

Appropriate forms of Physical Contact

- Hand shake
- Shoulder hug
- Linked arms
- Hand holding

- Team Teach approaches for trained staff

Children's Response to Touch

Staff must be aware that children respond to touch in different ways. Some children are over-demonstrative and demand physical contact, while others shy away from it. We must never assume that a child will accept a touch that is meant as a friendly gesture.

There may be children in school with a background of inappropriate physical contact, or abuse. They will be confused about adult-child contact and will need to be treated with additional sensitivity.

Children may make impulsive verbal approaches, which should be responded to positively, but with care as to how the response could be interpreted.

Safeguarding

Where a member of staff feels that a child is using physical contact in an inappropriate way, they must report the matter to Miss Pearson, Mrs Harrison, who will document the situation in accordance with Child Protection procedures.

John Dixon

September 2018