



## St. Benet's RC Primary School

### Staff Behaviour and Conduct Policy 2023 - 2024

#### Our Responsibilities to Safeguard in schools and settings

##### Purpose of the Policy

To provide guidance for staff and governors regarding their responsibilities of safeguarding in school and within the wider community, where appropriate. Through:-

- Keeping children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.
- Assisting adults working with children to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice.
- Supporting School Leadership and Management including school governance in setting clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to our school.
- Supporting safer recruitment practice.
- Minimising the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with children and young people.
- Reducing the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused
- Ensuring all who have a position of responsibility within school understand that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken.

#### Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults

##### Principles for the Whole Workforce

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Therefore it is important that **ALL** staff:-

- Ensure that they listen to and reflect on the voice of the child at **ALL** times and take seriously any concerns raised to them by a child.
- Staff to use CPOMS system to record all concerns even if they seem minimal concerns; so that DSL and/or DSD (Designated Lead and/or Deputies) can identify patterns in chronology.
- Ensure that they report any concerns of **harm** to any child (or significant adults e.g. parents) to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.
- Ensure that they record any concerning information shared directly with them by a child or observed/witnessed with the DSL **immediately** and that they record details

in CPOMS. (Note: This could include sharing information on behalf of the DSL to other agencies).

- Ensure that they maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and report any concerns regarding the behaviour of an adult/staff member in school directly to the DSL/Head Teacher or Chair of Governors if the allegation is in relation to the Head Teacher.
- Ensure that they attend regular training/updates to support them in recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse, particularly in support of early identification of needs of children to prevent an escalation of risk to the child.

## **Safe People**

**It is important that ALL staff understand that:-**

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This responsibility extends to a duty of care for those adults employed, commissioned or contracted to work with children and young people.
- Adults who work with children are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Adults should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.
- Adults should continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the settings policies and practice.
- Confidentiality is a key principle for all adults working in school and that sensitive information must be shared discreetly on a need to know basis.
- They have a responsibility to make professional judgements and not be influenced by friendship or pressure in difficult situations.
- They hold power and position of trust and will be judged as such.

**(Noting Under section 16 of the Sexual Offences Act 'it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child even if the relationship is consensual'.)**

**They have a responsibility to be alert for inappropriate influences in school (consideration of 'disqualification by association' (KCSIE, 2015) and the 'duty to prevent' (Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015) and how adults can influence and in turn be influenced by partners and be able to influence those they educate.)**

## **Propriety and Behaviour**

- The expectations for all staff working within our school community are that they:-
- Act in a fair, courteous and mature manner to pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- Co-operate and liaise with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure children receive a coherent and comprehensive educational service;

- Endeavour to assist the school to achieve its strategic objectives – in particular, by adopting a positive attitude about school to the wider community and the achievement of quality and equality for all.
- Respect for school property;
- Maintain the image of the school through standards of dress, general courtesy and following consistently school policy;
- Take responsibility for the behaviour and conduct of pupils in their care and sharing such responsibility elsewhere on the premises;
- Are fit for work (i.e. not adversely influenced by drugs, alcohol, etc.);
- Are familiar with job requirements (e.g. proper preparation, use of suitable methods/systems, maintenance of appropriate/required records, such as pastoral files.), including keeping up-to-date with developments relevant to the job.
- Be familiar with communication channels (i.e. who to go to for information required and who to pass information on to when there is a need) and school procedures applicable to both children and staff;
- Ensure all assessments are conducted in a fair and proper (prescribed) manner, and that procedures are strictly followed with respect to confidentiality and security;
- Respect the rights and opinions of others.

Off-duty hours are an employee's own personal concern. It is important, however, that people do not put themselves in a position where their duty to their profession and School conflicts greatly with their private interests e.g. staff must take care to ensure that their own personal or political opinions do not interfere with the provisions of balanced professional advice or their duty to carry out school policies.

### **Standards of Behaviour**

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

This means that staff should not:

- Behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or to act as an appropriate role model
- Make, or encourage others to make sexual remarks to, or about, a pupil
- Use inappropriate language to or in the presence of pupils
- Discuss their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of pupils
- Make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such
- Be over friendly with children/pupils or show favouritism towards an individual pupil or group of pupils
- Not take photographs of children contrary to our school policy

There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own children, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of children, loss of trust and

confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in - prohibition from teaching by the NCTL, a bar from engaging in regulated activity or action by another relevant regulatory body.

The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 set out grounds for disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 where the person or a person living in the same household or employed in the same household meets certain criteria set out in the Regulations. For example, an individual will be disqualified where they have committed a relevant offence against a child; been subject to a specified order relating to the care of a child; committed certain serious sexual or physical offences against an adult; been included on the DBS children's barred list; been made subject to a disqualification order by the court; previously been refused registration as a childcare provider or provider or manager of a children's home or had such registration cancelled. A disqualified person is prohibited from providing relevant early or later years' childcare as defined in the Childcare Act 2006 or being directly concerned in the management of such childcare. Schools and private childcare settings are also prohibited from employing a disqualified person in respect of relevant early or later years childcare

This means that staff should be aware that:

- Behaviour by themselves, those with whom they share a household, or others in their personal lives, may impact on their work with children
- Understand that a person who provides Early Years education or Childcare may be disqualified because of their "association" with a person living or employed in the same household who is disqualified.

### **Dress and Appearance**

Staff are expected to dress appropriately for their professional role in school. They need to remember they are role models for learners in the school; therefore they have a responsibility to model appropriate dress and appearance. The image that we project as professionals is associated with how we present ourselves and the image of the school in the community.

Adults should be neat, clean, smart and tidy, wearing clothes, including shoes, which are commensurate with their duties within the working hours.

It is up to individual staff to decide whether their appearance is appropriate guided by the principles above. However, revealing clothes, such as short skirts or low cut tops etc. should be avoided. Tattoos should also be covered and facial piercings should be discrete or covered. For health and safety reasons jewellery should be kept to a minimum and be appropriate to role. All employees should wear ID badges at all times within working hours.

Staff are encouraged to dress appropriately for delivering PE lessons or outside physical activities or visits. It is up to staffs discretion whether they change for such activities or stay in sports clothes for the day. When changing, staff must make use of the adult toilets in school.

St. Benet's R.C. Primary School is committed to promoting diversity and will therefore respect individual preference in terms of customs, culture, religion and tradition.

## **Gifts**

Staff conduct should never lead anyone to question a member of staff's interests, or lead anyone to think that they have been influenced by gifts and/or hospitality. This is important because staff's personal reputation and that of the school could be seriously compromised due to the fact that it is deemed a criminal offence to demand or accept a gift or reward in return for allowing you to be influenced as a part of the school.

Gifts offered by parents or students to school staff to express their thanks, such as boxes of chocolates or flowers etc. are perfectly acceptable without reference to SLT/Governors.

More valuable gifts (over the value of £30) need to be declared to SLT/Governors and registered on the schools 'Gifts and Hospitality' Register open for scrutiny and audit. Please note gifts of alcohol should be removed from access to children as soon as is practicable. Gifts of money should never be accepted.

## **Rewards and Favouritism**

It is acknowledged that there may be specific occasions when staff working with a child, may consider it appropriate to give a child or young person a small personal gift if it is of an insignificant value, e.g. pencil, a sweet, as a reward for their efforts in school (or as an end of year present to a whole class). Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be in some circumstances misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to 'bribe' or 'groom', so staff need to take care that the reasons for rewards outside those stated within the Behaviour and Discipline policy are open to scrutiny.

Equally staff should exercise care when selecting pupils for school teams, productions, trips and/or specific work tasks in order to avoid perceptions of favouritism or injustice. Similar care should be exercised when pupils are excluded from an activity. Methods of selection and exclusion should always be subject to clear and transparent criteria.

Remember the school treasure chest is always available for staff to use to reward hard work, good attitudes and sensible behaviour.

## **Infatuations & Crushes**

All staff need to recognise that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. They should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted.

Any member of staff who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, that a young person has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague, should immediately report this to the Head teacher or most senior manager. In this way appropriate early intervention can be taken which can prevent escalation and avoid hurt, embarrassment or distress for those concerned.

This needs to be read in conjunction with our CPD and understanding of Attachment needs.

This means that staff should:

- Report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with a member of staff
- Always maintain professional boundaries

The Head teacher (or senior manager) should give careful thought to those circumstances where the staff member, pupil and their parents/carers should be spoken to and should ensure a plan to manage the situation is put in place. This plan should respond sensitively to the child and staff member and maintain the dignity of all. This plan should involve all parties, be robust and regularly monitored and reviewed.

This means that senior managers should:

- Put action plans in place where concerns are brought to their attention

### **Communication with Children and Vulnerable Adults**

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, webcams, websites and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a child or young person. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny to protect themselves from allegation.

### **Social Contact**

Social networking, e.g. Facebook and texting is a way of life for many adults. Staff should be aware of the potential risk to their professional reputation and that comments made on a social network site which relate to the school, pupils, staff or governors could lead to a disciplinary action.

Please observe the following:-

- Staff should not use school equipment, or the school internet connection, to access or update personal social websites.
- It is strongly recommended that staff do not have parents or ex pupils as “friends.”
- Staff should use strong passwords and apply security settings so that all aspects of their profile are secure and controlled.
- Staff should NOT post anything on a social website or text, about the school community including about incidents, pupils, staff or governors.
- Staff are expected to uphold professionalism and dignity on a public website, which would include the use of language, including profile name, and content, including photos. They should think of this in respect of being a role model. E.g. they should not use inappropriate comments in relation to gender, race, disability, age, religion or sexual orientation.
- Images of pupils taken during school time or on educational visits must never be posted.
- Images of work colleagues or governors should not be posted without their permission. It is recommended that social contact outside of school with children



and their families should be limited to a respectful friendliness and school business should never be discussed in this informal setting.

It is also acknowledged that for some members of staff who may live in the community, due to their 'social circles' may have friendships with families of children in school. In these circumstances it is important that staff separate their role in school from their role in the community and maintain a strict level of confidentiality regarding school information at all times.

Remember we have a school website and a school Twitter account, and all that we put up on the sites should be checked by at least one other member of staff.

### **Digital Imagery and Use of Technology**

Photographs must be maintained securely for authorised school use only and disposed of either by return to the child, parents, or shredding as appropriate in line with Local Authority record retention schedules.

Storage should include reference to the permissions obtained and their currency and staff should be aware that images should not be removed from institutional computers and taken home. If permission is withdrawn for a photograph it must be edited from the storage immediately.

Staff have permission to take school IT equipment home to use for planning and assessment etc. Memory sticks are no longer encouraged for storage of work unless they are encrypted. This is so only staff are able to access information on them if they are accidentally mislaid. Staff working at home and needing access to the internet, need to take the responsibility of what is downloaded onto schools equipment. Inappropriate materials found on laptops could lead to disciplinary actions if staff have not taken due care of school property so it is therefore recommended that only staff use this equipment not family/friends in the home environment.

Passwords for access to all school IT equipment need to be changed on a regular basis to ensure a high level of security.

Personal mobile phones must not be used in learning spaces only when taking photographs for display and school social media purposes. All images once displayed in school or on social media must be deleted from the phone that day. Spot checks of personal phones will occur. The use of mobile phones within classrooms, meetings, training or staff meetings is not acceptable unless prior permission has been given by SLT. Emergency phone calls within teaching/INSET time will need to go through the school office.

### **Exposure to inappropriate images**

Staff should take extreme care to ensure that children and young people are not exposed, through any medium, to inappropriate or indecent images.

There are no circumstances that will justify adults: making, downloading, possessing or distributing indecent images or pseudo-images of children (child abuse images). Accessing these images, whether using the setting's or personal equipment, on or off the premises, or making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal.

If indecent images of children are discovered at the establishment or on the school or setting's equipment an immediate referral should be made to the Designated Officer, (DO) and the police contacted if relevant. The images/equipment should be

secured and there should be no attempt to view or delete the images as this could jeopardise necessary criminal action. If the images are of children known to the school, a referral should also be made to children's social care in line with local arrangements

Under no circumstances should any adult use school or setting equipment to access pornography. Personal equipment containing pornography or links to it should never be brought into or used in the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue working with children and young people.

Staff should keep their passwords confidential and not allow unauthorised access to equipment. In the event of any indecent images of children or unsuitable material being discovered on a device the equipment should not be tampered with in any way. It should be secured and isolated from the network, and the DO contacted without delay. Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves as this may lead to a contamination of evidence and a possibility they will be at risk of prosecution themselves.

## **Curriculum**

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit or of a political or sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This can be supported by developing ground rules with pupils to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe learning environment. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity and care should especially be taken in those areas of the curriculum where usual boundaries or rules are less rigorously applied e.g. drama

This means that staff should:

- Have clear lesson objectives
- Take care when encouraging pupils to use self-expression, not to overstep personal and professional boundaries
- Be able to justify all curriculum materials and relate these to clearly identifiable lessons plans.

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions requires careful judgement and staff should take guidance in these circumstances from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Care should be taken to comply with the setting's policy on spiritual, moral, social, cultural (SMSC) which should promote fundamental British values and be rigorously reviewed to ensure it is lawful and consistently applied. Staff should also comply at all times with the policy for sex and relationships education (SRE). It should be noted that parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided but not from the National Curriculum for Science.

This means that adults should not:

- Enter into or encourage inappropriate discussions which may offend or harm others
- Undermine fundamental British values
- Express any prejudicial views
- Attempt to influence or impose their personal values, attitudes or beliefs on pupils



## **Whistleblowing**

Staff must follow the guidance within the school's whistle blowing policy if they have any concerns about any individual/group of people working or volunteering within the school environment. Staff need to acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior leadership and/or Chair of Governors. This policy encourages staff to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation.

## **Handling Finance for Children**

Staff may receive money from parents or children e.g. in payment of clubs/dinners but must pass this money on to the office who has the responsibility for collecting, recording and processing such payments as soon as is practicable. Staff must use the office system for the monies to be recorded and passed securely on.

## **Safe Premises & Safe Places**

### **Lanyards**

Staff employed by the governors of St. Benet's will wear blue lanyards with the employees photograph. Blue tells the children that they are safe to be on their own with these adults. Staff also have the entry system fob attached to the blue lanyard. Staff must not leave this Lanyard unattended or where children could access this to leave the building unauthorised. If the lanyard is removed for any reason please place in a locked cupboard or drawer.

Green Lanyards will be issued to visitors who are DBS cleared and children know that they are o.k. to be on their own with these visitors.

Red Lanyards will be issued to visitors who must be accompanied at all times by a member of staff. Children know that it is not o.k. to be on there own with these visitors.

### **Intimate Care**

The school's intimate care policy needs to be followed at all times, this includes dealing with older children in circumstance due to medical conditions, illnesses or menstruation care. The use of the accessible toilets are available to all children in school if there is a need. Staff need to encourage our older children to self-care whenever it is possible however if children do require support in these circumstances, staff need to risk assess the situation and ask for a second adult to witness care given. Incidents of intimate care given for older children need to be noted in CPOMS. Intimate Care Plans should be in place where children have regular intimate care needs.

### **First Aid and Administration of Medicine**

First aid to be administered by appropriate adults with recognised accredited First Aid Training. All incidents of care given should to be recorded on appropriate paperwork and archived for further reference with office staff. In the case of more

serious injury IR1 electronic forms must be completed fully and parents and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) informed as soon as possible of incidents.

Medicine must be held securely in appropriate storage to prevent any accidental ingestion by children. They will be administered by staff with appropriate accredited training in medicines after a completed Health Care plan has been obtained from Parents/Carers. (See administering Medicines Policy).

Staff who require medication in school will need to keep it in a secure place where children will not be able to access it. Staff who require any critical medication in an emergency e.g. Epi pen, insulin etc. need to fully inform SLT and colleagues where their medication is kept in the event of an emergency.

### **One to One Situations**

Staff need to risk assess any 'one to one' situations with both children and adults. Staff must not put themselves at risk by not having access to back up support if they needed it in a hurry. E.g. Staff should not talk to Parents/Children if there are no other adults available to them in an adjoining room or wing. If staff at any time deems a situation to be of significant risk, they must always invite another colleague as witness and support to any conversations etc.

### **Home Visits**

Home visits must never be undertaken without two members of staff and a school mobile phone. Staff must inform office staff of addresses and families they are visiting and the approximate timings where possible. Staff need to risk assess home circumstances especially if they have not made an appointment e.g. Attendance visits so that if they feel they are at any risk they do not enter the home but talk to the family at the door.

### **Transporting Children**

Children must only be transported in staff cars where the member of staff has business insurance. Appropriate car seats for the height/age of the children must be used. Staff should not put themselves at risk by only transporting one child on their own.

### **Outings and Visits**

Appropriate risk management must be carried out fully before any outing or visit off premises following Schools Educational Visits policy. All paper work needs to be out in place and approved by Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) prior to visit, equally evaluations need to be completed including the 'Voice of the Child' feedback on return to school, to ensure improvements can be made in the future if needed. Staff on visits need to remember that they are acting 'in loco parentis' and have a legal 'duty of care' for the children at all times. Teachers must provide supervision of children throughout the journeys and visits according to professional standards and common sense. Reasonable steps must be taken to avoid exposing children to dangers which are foreseeable and beyond those which children can reasonably be expected to cope.

Please note: - If staff arrange visitors to school, they will need to be escorted at all times while children in the building unless the visitor holds a cleared enhanced DBS which needs to be verified by the school office.

## **Behaviour, Discipline and the use of Reasonable Force and Managing Challenging Behaviour**

Staff must follow the school's 'Behaviour and Discipline' Policy consistently when dealing with conflict in school or off site. De-escalation strategies should be always used first in challenging circumstances however in extreme situations when children need to be prevented from hurting each other or others, all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force as defined in the Department of Education's document 'Use of Reasonable Force': Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013. Staff with Team Teach training should be called upon in the first incident if appropriate and/or possible. Following a serious incident, the staff involved need to complete a Serious Incident report to be shared with SLT who will inform parents and Governors.

## **Safe Children**

Through the curriculum, staff will support children to develop their skills to protect themselves and stay safe as well as have a good understanding of what a safe relationship looks like. Staff will provide this support through the SRE curriculum, PSHE curriculum and SMSC education when opportunity arises. Any concerns regarding children's risk taking behaviours must be reported immediately to a DSL.

## **Social contact outside the workplace**

It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who sexually harm children often seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace with both the child and their parents, in order to 'groom' the adult and the child and/or create opportunities for sexual abuse.

It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with pupils or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence on children, and may bring the setting into disrepute (e.g. attending a political protest, circulating propaganda).

If a pupil or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family.

Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support a parent or carer. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member or seeks support outside of their professional role this should be discussed with senior management and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

This means that staff should:

- Always approve any planned social contact with pupils or parents with senior colleagues, for example when it is part of a reward scheme
- Advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a pupil which could give rise to concern
- Refrain from sending personal communication to pupils or parents unless agreed with senior managers
- Inform senior management of any relationship with a parent where this extends beyond the usual parent/professional relationship
- Inform senior management of any requests or arrangements where parents wish to use their services outside of the workplace e.g. babysitting, tutoring

## **Sexual Conduct**

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a pupil is unacceptable. It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a pupil under 18 years of age and sexual activity with a child will be a matter for criminal and/or disciplinary procedures.

Pupils are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions depending on their age and understanding. This includes the prohibition of sexual activity with children by adults in a position of trust.

Sexual activity involves physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts; however it also includes non-contact activities, such as causing pupils to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate the relationship so sexual abuse can take place. All staff should undertake appropriate training so they are fully aware of those behaviours that may constitute 'grooming' and of their responsibility to always report to a senior manager any concerns about the behaviour of a colleague which could indicate that a pupil is being groomed.

This means that staff should:

- Not have any form of sexual contact with a pupil from the school or setting
- Avoid any form of touch or comment which is, or may be considered to be, indecent
- Avoid any form of communication with a pupil which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive, provocative or give rise to speculation e.g. verbal comments, letters, notes, by email or on social media, phone calls, texts, physical contact
- Not make sexual remarks to or about a pupil
- Not discuss sexual matters with or in the presence of pupils other than within agreed curriculum content or as part of their recognised job role

## **Physical Contact and Personal Living Space**

Because of the nature of the children in our care, their age maturity and backgrounds, we endeavour to support children in a variety of different ways. We wish to help children feel wanted and valued at all times in the school.

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

It is often appropriate for children to be given some physical contact and comfort, but this must always be offered with the following caution:

1. Always try to ensure there are other adults or responsible children around.
2. Never show favour to individual children.
3. Never touch a child in the area between the waist and mid-thigh (or near the chest for older female children) unless a first aid procedure is required follow the school's intimate care policy. Never touch a child in a way that could be miss-interpreted as being anything other than friendly appropriate adult-child support.
4. Some very active children sometimes calm down and focus on a lesson when having a gentle stroke e.g. on their back. In these cases it would be useful to be recorded in either care plan or pastoral file.
5. Cuddles/hugs should be short and preferably side by side.
6. Never kiss a child, and do not encourage children to kiss adults other than their parents.
7. A child should only sit on an adult's knee for a short time and for a specific reason such as following an injury, and where possible not too close to the body.
8. For children within Foundation Stage, appropriate relationships are still being established, and there is a greater need for a more nurturing environment where it may be more appropriate for closer physical contact during some activities e.g. Parents passing children to staff when upset. However the above cautions still apply where possible, except that sitting on a knee, or longer cuddles may be more acceptable until the child is established and confident in school.
9. Where children require help with changing or toileting, the dignity of the child must be maintained at all times. Great care must be taken to ensure that all physical contact is specifically and only for the purpose of the task being carried out.

The basic concept of "personal space" is an important social rule. It's a simple idea to imagine that all of us have an invisible bubble around us where we feel safe, and if someone crosses into it we become uncomfortable. Most individuals instinctively sense when they enter someone else's personal space and when theirs is crossed. In school there is an expectation that staff respect children's personal space and support them to understand that when others invade that space then they have a right to share their discomfort with an adult who will take these concerns seriously. Equally staff are entitled to have their own personal space respected and therefore any individual who feels that either a child or another adult in school is not respecting this space, they must share this with a member of the SLT.

**This guidance will be provided to via to staff on induction and will be reviewed on an annual basis.**

**Staff will continue to be expected to read 'Guidance For Safer Working Practice for those working with children & young people in educational settings' May 2019 document on an annual basis and to sign to declare that they do.**

**Revised by: Headteacher, staff & governors: September 2023**

Next Review: Autumn 2024 or sooner if regulations / circumstances change