Castlemorton CE Primary School

Safe Touch Policy

LAB Approval:	Date: September 2026
Review Date:	Date: October 2029
Member of Staff Responsible:	Name: Amanda Smithson

Our Christian Vision

Our vision, as a church and community school, is to express the love of God, both in word and action, pursuing compassion, respect for others, courage, perseverance and justice, so that all our pupils may achieve their full potential as students and citizens, and make a difference in the world.

OUR VALUES Compassion Respect Courage Perseverance Justice

At Castlemorton C.E. Primary School, we recognise that appropriate, safe, and respectful touch can play an important role in supporting children's social, emotional, and physical development. Research in attachment theory and child development demonstrates that safe, positive touch can aid in emotional regulation, provide comfort, and reinforce a sense of security, especially for younger children or those experiencing distress. This policy provides guidelines to ensure that touch is used in a way that respects the safety, dignity, and emotional wellbeing of all pupils, while supporting their development in a safe, nurturing environment.

This policy is informed by relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Education Act 2002, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Contents

1. Purpose of the Policy 3
2. Legislation and guidance 3
3. The Role of Touch in Emotional Regulation and Attachment 3
4. Roles and responsibilities 3
5. Principles of Safe Touch 4
6. Situations Where Safe Touch May Be Appropriate 4
7. Types of Touch Not Considered Appropriate 4
8. Staff Guidelines for Safe Touch 5
9. Training 5

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that any touch between staff and pupils is appropriate, safe, and aligned with safeguarding principles.
- Outline the importance of appropriate touch for emotional regulation, comfort, and the development of positive attachments, which are foundational for emotional security and growth.
- Provide clarity to staff, pupils, and parents on the appropriate use of touch in school to support a child's social and emotional development in a safe and respectful way.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and visitors to Castlemorton C.E. Primary School.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy was written with regard to:

- **Children Act 1989 and 2004**: Mandates the protection of children's welfare and emphasizes the role of schools in safeguarding.
- **Education Act 2002**: Requires schools to promote the welfare of children and ensure a safe learning environment.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)**: Stresses the importance of protecting children from abuse and safeguarding their welfare, outlining schools' duty to ensure child protection.
- **Equality Act 2010**: Ensures that all children are treated with respect and free from discrimination.
- **The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**: Recognizes the right of every child to feel safe and supported.

These frameworks collectively inform our policy on safe touch to ensure appropriate, necessary, and safe interactions between staff and pupils.

3. The Role of Touch in Emotional Regulation and Attachment

We acknowledge that, in line with attachment theory, appropriate, safe touch plays a critical role in helping children regulate their emotions and form positive relationships. Research indicates that safe touch can provide comfort, reduce stress, and foster feelings of trust and security, which are vital for emotional development. Positive interactions through safe touch can support children in managing feelings of anxiety, sadness, or frustration and contribute to their sense of belonging within the school community.

Touch that is appropriate and respectful can help children build secure attachments with trusted adults, which are foundational to emotional resilience, learning readiness, and personal growth. When used with sensitivity and care, safe touch can reinforce positive attachments, helping children to feel supported, valued, and calm.

4. Roles and responsibilities

- **Local Governing Board (LAB)** are responsible for ensuring that this policy aligns with safeguarding requirements and that its implementation is reviewed periodically.
- **Headteacher** is responsible for policy implementation and ensuring staff are aware of safe touch practices and receive regular training on safeguarding and child protection.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** oversees adherence to safe touch practices, addresses concerns, and ensures that safeguarding procedures are followed.

- **All Staff** are responsible for following the guidelines for safe touch, reporting concerns, and maintaining professional boundaries.

5. Principles of Safe Touch

- Respect and Consent: Staff will be mindful to ensure touch is respectful and takes into account each child's boundaries and comfort level. Verbal consent will be sought whenever possible, even when providing comfort.
- Professional Boundaries and Transparency: Staff will use touch only in appropriate contexts, keeping interactions brief and ensuring they align with the child's needs and level of comfort.
- Appropriateness and Necessity: Touch will be used only when it is appropriate for the child's wellbeing and in contexts where it can provide support, comfort, or guidance in alignment with their social, emotional, and developmental needs.

6. Situations Where Safe Touch May Be Appropriate

Safe touch may be beneficial in certain situations, such as:

- **Emotional Comfort and Reassurance**: A light touch, like a hand on the shoulder, may be used to provide comfort when a child is experiencing distress, helping them to feel calm and supported. This can aid in emotional regulation, reinforcing that the child is safe and valued.
- **Medical Assistance and First Aid**: Staff may need to provide necessary physical assistance, such as checking for injuries or applying first aid. Verbal consent will always be sought, and any contact kept to what is necessary for the child's wellbeing.
- **Guiding and Directing**: Gentle touch, like a hand on the shoulder or back, may be used to guide children safely in situations where verbal instructions alone may not suffice.
- **Physical Support for Younger or SEND Pupils**: Some children may need assistance with personal tasks or physical support. Any assistance will follow individual care plans, ensuring that the child's comfort and dignity are prioritized.
- **Physical Intervention (in line with Positive Behaviour Policy)**: In cases where a child may pose a risk to themselves or others, minimal and appropriate physical intervention may be used to ensure safety. All interventions will follow the guidelines of our Positive Behaviour Policy and statutory guidance on "use of reasonable force" as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

7. Types of Touch Not Considered Appropriate

The following types of touch are not appropriate and are prohibited:

- I**nvasive or Forceful Touch**: Any form of touch that could be seen as controlling, forceful, or intimidating.
- **Intimate Contact**: Any contact with private areas of the body, unless necessary for first aid or as specified in an individual care plan.
- **Affectionate Contact that Could Be Misinterpreted**: Hugging, lap-sitting, or other physical affection that may be perceived as overly familiar.
- **Playful or Rough Contact**: Roughhousing or playful interactions, such as tickling, which can be misinterpreted and lead to discomfort for the child.

8. Staff Guidelines for Safe Touch

- **Seek Permission**: Always ask the child for verbal consent where appropriate, showing respect for their autonomy and personal boundaries.
- **Observe Non-Verbal Cues**: Staff should be attentive to the child's body language and stop any contact immediately if the child shows discomfort.
- **Explain Actions**: Provide an explanation before initiating touch to ensure the child understands why it is needed, particularly in situations of distress or first aid.
- **Minimal Contact**: Use the minimum touch necessary, keeping interactions brief and appropriate to the context.
- **Record and Report**: Any incident involving physical intervention or touch that could be open to misinterpretation should be documented and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with safeguarding procedures.

9. Training

Staff members receive regular training in safeguarding, child protection, and safe touch practices, in line with statutory requirements and best practice in emotional support. This policy will be reviewed biannually or in response to any new legislation or guidance to ensure it remains up-to-date and effective.