

Tas Valley Church Schools Federation

Safe Touch Policy



Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:-	Tas Valley Federation
On:-	
Chair of Governors:-	Diane Perry-Yates
Last updated:-	

Safe Touch Policy

Name of school:	Tas Valley Federation
Date of Policy:	Summer 2022
Next Review:	Summer 2025
Members of staff Responsible:	Senior Leadership Team

1. Statement of intent

- 1.1 At Tas Valley Federation, we understand that appropriate relationships between staff and pupils are paramount to promoting the safeguarding of children at our School.
- 1.2 The guidance document 'Use of reasonable force in schools' (DfE, 2013) makes clear that there are occasions when physical contact with a pupil, other than reasonable force, is appropriate and necessary.
- 1.3 This Safe Touch Policy has been created with the aim of ensuring that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities in terms of appropriate and inappropriate touch when involving pupils.
- 1.4 All children are entitled to receive an education in an environment where they feel safe, secure and respected. The Federation will dedicate itself to ensuring that no pupils feel threatened or disrespected, in terms of physical contact between themselves or a member of staff.

2. Legal framework

- 2.1 This policy has due regard to the following legislation, including, but not limited to:
 - The Children Act 1989
 - Equality Act 2010
- 2.2 This policy will also have due regard to the following guidance:
 - Use of reasonable force in schools (DfE, 2013)
 - Working together to safeguard children (DfE, 2018)
- 2.3 The Federation will implement this policy in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, Disability Equality Policy, Gender Equality Policy and Race Equality Policy.

3 Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 All members of staff within our Federation have a duty of care towards pupils, and must be aware of the boundaries involving physical contact.

- 3.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for conducting safeguarding training for all members of staff, and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities, in line with the Federation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 3.3 The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all staff engage in safe touch with pupils, and only where absolutely necessary.
- 3.4 All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that no pupil feels threatened or unsafe at our school as a result of inappropriate touch.
- 3.5 All members of staff have a responsibility to report any instances of inappropriate touch to the Headteacher.
- 3.6 The Headteacher is responsible for communicating with parents/carers and ensuring that they are aware of this policy.
- 3.7 The school has a responsibility for ensuring that they create and promote a culture in which pupils' wishes and feelings are respected.

4 What is safe touch?

- 4.1 For the purpose of this policy, safe touch is defined as physical contact that, if otherwise avoided, would be inhumane, unkind and potentially emotionally or physically damaging for the pupil.
- 4.2 Safe touch should never be invasive, humiliating or flirtatious.
- 4.3 The Federation recognises that the following are instances when safe touch may occur between staff and pupils:
 - Comforting an upset or distressed pupil;
 - Congratulating or praising a pupil;
 - Holding the hand of a pupil to guide them, such as when crossing a road or walking to assembly;
 - Giving first aid to a pupil;
 - Demonstrating exercises or techniques, e.g during PE lessons, musical instruments;
 - Administering medicine.

5 Types of safe touch

- 5.1 The Federation understands that certain types of physical contact between staff and pupils are inappropriate, such as face-to-face hugging, lap-sitting and holding hands to coerce or restrain.
- 5.2 Within our Federation, we encourage staff to use a sideways hug, whereby the member of staff places their hands on the pupil's shoulders. This technique

was demonstrated as part of Step On Training; it prevents the pupil from turning themselves towards the member of staff, and thus engaging in a face-to-face embrace, which could be deemed inappropriate.

- 5.3 A number of staff have received Step On training, including techniques to guide a pupil to safety.
- 5.4 The school understands that pupils are not always aware of the boundaries between staff and pupils, and thus may try to engage in physical contact, such as lap-sitting, hand-holding and hugging.
- 5.5 Should a pupil try to engage in any inappropriate physical contact, the member of staff must explain to the pupil why it is unacceptable, and encourage them to engage in the school-hug or an appropriate hand hold instead.
- 5.6 If a member of staff attempts to use one of the safe methods of touch and a pupil is unhappy with this, the member of staff will retract immediately in order to respect the pupil's wishes.
- 5.7 Safe touching of a pupil by staff must only be in response to promoting the health and safety of the pupil, including emotional health. It should not be in response to the emotional need of the staff member.

6 Reasonable force

- 6.1 The Federation understands that there are times when members of staff may have no alternative but to provide physical intervention whereby a child presents danger to themselves or others.
- 6.2 All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force. In these instances, staff must always explain the reasons for their actions to the pupil and why it was necessary.
- 6.3 At all times, members of staff must ensure they use reasonable force in such a way as to avoid any injury to the pupil, but the Federation recognises that in some extreme cases, such as immediate intervention to prevent worse physical injury, this may not be possible.
- 6.4 Any occurrences of the use of reasonable force will be reported to the Headteacher, and recorded using the appropriate school safeguarding form.

7 Reporting inappropriate touch

- 7.1 If a pupil attempts to engage in any inappropriate touch, the member of staff involved will report this immediately to the Headteacher.
- 7.2 If another member of staff suspects or witnesses inappropriate physical contact, whereby the member of staff is willingly involved, they will report this to the Headteacher immediately.

7.3 Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school's Safeguarding Policy and Complaints Procedure.

8 Training of staff

8.1 The school will organise annual safeguarding training for all members of staff. The school will also organise Step On training for a number of staff members (2 year certification).

9 Monitoring and review

9.1 This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher, who will make any necessary changes and communicate this to all members of staff.