



INFINITI SCHOOL

Touch Policy

To be considered in conjunction with our **behaviour** and **safeguarding** policies

Reviewed by Governing Body – May 2023
Next Review Date – May 2024



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Statement of intent

At Infiniti School, we understand that appropriate relationships between staff and pupils are paramount in promoting the safeguarding of children.

The DfE's guidance document, 'Use of reasonable force in schools', which was published in 2013, makes clear that there are occasions when physical contact with a pupil, other than reasonable force, is appropriate and necessary.

This 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.

All children are entitled to receive an education in an environment where they feel safe, secure and respected. The school will dedicate itself to ensuring that no pupils feel threatened or disrespected, in terms of physical contact between themselves or a member of staff.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Roles and responsibilities

- All members of staff at our school have a duty of care towards pupils, and must be aware of the boundaries involving physical contact.
- The headteacher is responsible for conducting regular safeguarding training for all members of staff and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities, in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.
- The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all staff engage in safe touch with pupils, and only where absolutely necessary.
- All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that no pupil feels threatened or unsafe at our school as a result of inappropriate touch.
- All members of staff have a responsibility to report any instances of inappropriate touch to the headteacher.
- The headteacher is responsible for communicating with parents/carers and ensuring that they are aware of this policy.
- The school has a responsibility for ensuring that it creates and promotes a culture in which pupils' wishes and feelings are respected.



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What is safe touch?

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.

Safe touch should never be invasive, humiliating or flirtatious.

The school understands that the following examples are instances of safe touch which 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 during PE lessons
- Administering medicine
- Using musical instruments

Types of safe touch

Staff should ensure that safe touch only occurs in the presence of other adults or responsible children, and that it does not indicate favour towards particular pupils.

Pupils should never be touched in a way that could be misinterpreted as anything other than appropriate adult-child support.

Pupils should not be touched between the waist and mid-thigh, or on/near the chest (unless specifically required during a First Aid procedure or Team Teach physical intervention).

Types of Physical Contact

The school recognises that certain types of physical contact between staff and pupils are inappropriate, e.g. cuddling, lap-sitting, and that safe touch should never be invasive, humiliating or flirtatious.

The school places the following restrictions on **hugging**. At our school staff using touch for reward or comfort will use the ‘shoulder-hug’, rather than a ‘front’ embrace, which the school would deem inappropriate. The shoulder-hug is a sideways hug whereby the member of staff places their hands on the pupil’s shoulders. This type of hug prevents the pupil from turning themselves towards the member of staff (thus engaging in a ‘front’ embrace).



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Lap-sitting is inappropriate and prohibited.

A child may only sit on an adult's knee for a short period for a specific purpose (e.g. for First Aid) – they should not sit too close to the body.

If a pupil requires assistance with changing clothes, great care must be taken to ensure that all physical contact is specifically and only for the purpose of the operation being carried out.

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 or inappropriate hugging. Should a pupil try to engage in any inappropriate physical contact, the member of staff will explain to the pupil why it is unacceptable and encourage them to engage in the "school-hug" instead.

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 cease contact immediately in order to respect the pupil's wishes.

Physical intervention and reasonable force

The school understands that there are times when members of staff must provide physical intervention if a child presents danger to themselves or others.

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.

Reasonable force may be required in order to control or restrain a pupil in extreme circumstances, such as needing to guide a pupil to safety.

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 school recognises that in some extreme cases, such as immediate intervention to prevent worse physical injury, this may not be possible.

The school is able to use reasonable force to:

- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight;
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- Restrain a pupil who is causing significant damage to school or personal property.

Schools cannot use force as a punishment – this is always unlawful.



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This section should be read in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy.

The headteacher and authorised staff are able to use reasonable force to search for specified 'prohibited items' (namely: knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images, and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property). Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules. The senior leadership team may use an electronic wand to scan for a prohibited item. If we suspect that a child has a prohibited item on them, they will be refused entry to the school building until that has been turned over.

Reporting inappropriate touch

If a pupil attempts to engage in any inappropriate touch, the member of staff involved will report this immediately to the designated safeguarding lead or DSL on call in order to prevent any allegations of inappropriate physical contact.

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 designated safeguarding lead or DSL on call immediately.

Where it is reported that a staff member has engaged, or is suspected to have engaged, in touch that is not appropriate as outlined in this policy and the Staff Code of Conduct, this will be handled in line with the reporting procedures as outlined in our child protection and safeguarding policy.

A record of all instances of reported inappropriate touch will be kept on CPOMS.

Training of staff

The headteacher will conduct regular safeguarding training for all members of staff in relation to safe touch.

All staff will be regularly reminded of the methods of safe touch employed by our school, and will communicate this to the pupils they are in contact with.

Staff Items

Radios, fobs and personal staff items must not be touched by students. If they do, parents/carers will be contacted and asked to come in for a meeting.



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Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Governing Body.