



## **Physical Contact and Physical Handling Policy**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Children and Behaviour Management Policies.

### **Physical Contact Policy**

Staff at Great Orton School can form close bonds through the nature of their work with children. Children need contact with familiar, consistent carers to ensure they can grow confidently, feeling self-assured.

At times children need to be cuddled, encouraged, held and offered physical reassurance. Intimate care routines throughout the day are essential to children's basic needs. This area can provide challenges to settings as in recent years discussion around physical contact and the implications of child protection have arisen. Some early years practitioners now believe that they must limit physical contact even with very young children.

At Great Orton School we believe friendly physical contact is central to warm, personal relationships and to the good quality care of young children. Good quality practice in early years encompasses a full understanding of child protection. However, early years practitioners are also responsible for promoting the development of young children, based on secure attachment and emotional security. The behaviour of all practitioners needs to support children as they grow as individuals and learn to value themselves.

### **Acceptable Comforting**

If a child requires comforting (following an accident, or on parents departure from school) and if in the short term cuddles will help, these will be given.

Occasionally, when separating a child from a parent /carer it is necessary to physically remove/ transfer the child to a member of staff, with adult's consent.

Sitting a child on an adult's knee is often a way of giving comfort or calming a child, this will be done on the child's request or with their consent.

Occasionally there is no alternative to picking a child up, but for Health & Safety reasons this is a 'last resort'.

Other activities, often instigated by the children themselves, we will explain is not appropriate. This includes any form of kissing on cheek, forehead or lips when a parent is not present.

### **Physical Contact in Play**

Catching a child as part of an agreed game, or holding a child around upper body, e.g. assisting them on bikes, stilts, helping them to jump, bounce, hop etc. are acceptable physical contacts that staff may from time to time engage in during play. Although such games and activities may be initiated by the child, there will be occasions when it may be adult-led. It is vital any contact must be on the child's terms and with their willing participation. The adult will always be sensitive to the child's feelings and body language as they may not always communicate verbally. At Great Orton School all staff are trained and give due consideration to Safeguarding, First Aid and Physical Handling when assisting children in their play.

### **Positive handling**

The positive use of touch is a normal part of human interaction. Touch might be appropriate in a range of situations:

- giving guidance to children (such as how to hold a paintbrush or when climbing)

- providing emotional support (such as placing an arm around a distressed child)
- physical care (such as first aid or toileting).

Staff must exercise appropriate care when using touch (please also refer to our Safeguarding Policy). There are some children for whom touch would be inappropriate such as those with a history of physical or sexual abuse, or those from certain cultural groups. The school's policy is not intended to imply that staff should no longer touch children.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 20/03/2017

To be reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_