

Wallop Primary School
Positive Physical Touch Policy

Produced By:	K. Simons Headteacher
Approved for School: Headteacher: K Simons Date: 20/01/2026	 (Signature)
Approved by Governing Body: Chair/Deputy Chair: J Hannan Date: 20/01/2026	 (Signature)

At Wallop Primary School, we understand that appropriate relationships between staff and pupils are paramount in promoting the safeguarding of children. The DfE's guidance document, 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools', which was published in April 2026, makes clear that there are occasions when physical contact with a pupil is appropriate and necessary:

There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- *to give first aid*
- *to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or on a school trip, or when helping a pupil to a space they have chosen to access to selfregulate*
- *to comfort a distressed pupil*
- *to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake*
- *to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument*
- *to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching*

(Use of Reasonable Force 2026)

Aims

This Positive Touch Policy has been written 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. We believe that all children and adults are entitled to work in an environment where they feel safe and respected. The school will dedicate itself to ensuring that no one feels threatened or disrespected, in terms of physical contact. We also want children to feel safe in being comforted at school and we believe that appropriate touch plays an important role in the development of communication and positive relationships. The Government makes it very clear that schools should not have a no-touch policy in schools. If this were the case, our staff would not be able to congratulate children with a high five or even give first aid.

Guidelines on Physical Contact with Students

We expect our staff at Wallop Primary School to use professional judgement at all times. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for staff gratification, or represent a misuse of authority. We also make sure that consideration is made to learners for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. We recognise that for some children (and adults) positive touch may be uncomfortable because of their cultural background, or because they have been abused, or simply because they are not used to or comfortable with it.

We consider there to be three areas where appropriate touch would be positive:

1. Casual/informal/comforting touch
2. Reparative touch
3. To safeguard

Staff will always consider if touch is appropriate, necessary and proportionate in the current situation and context and will always be in the best interest of the child and therefore child led.

1. Casual / Informal / Incidental Touch

Staff can use touch with children as part of a normal professional relationship, for example, comforting a child, giving reassurance and congratulating. This might include a high-five or resting a hand on an arm or shoulder. There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact such as a hug for our younger pupils and an arm round the shoulders as they get older. Children may ask for a hug. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time. Staff must consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed child and make sure that the physical contact is what the learner wants. It might be appropriate to hold a learner's hand if they are distressed. Staff should ask the child first or be led by the child. Staff may offer children a hug for reassurance on the understanding that children might say no and this is okay. If staff hug a child, where possible this will be side on and one handed round the shoulders. If children instigate a front hug then staff will aim to move the hug to be side-on using a phrase such as "I'm just going to go to the side like this so we can talk as well". Staff will never hug children from behind.

Staff should remain self aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. It is particularly important that staff understand this both to protect their own position and the overall reputation of the school. Staff who are required to provide personal care to children are trained and follow clear protocols. Staff should avoid being alone one-to-one with children using positive touch as even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child.

As a general principle, staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils so as to not alienate pupils or staff who do not wish to offer casual or informal positive touch. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to a teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils.

2) Reparative touch

This is used by staff working with children who are having difficulties with managing or understanding their emotions and a reparative conversation is key to Wallop Primary Schools Behaviour Management Policy:

The Wallop Primary rules: Sanctions

- 1) 1st Reminder
- 2) 2nd reminder
- 3) Last chance
- 4) Time out
- 5) Reparation

Healthy emotional development can be supported through safe, positive touch as a means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, angry or sad child. Touch, such as a hand on the arm or shoulder, or a sideways hug, can help to regulate a child's emotions as it triggers the release of the calming chemical oxytocin in the body. This will be age and stage appropriate. Staff will avoid children sitting on their laps but if a child instigates



Every Learning Minute Matters

this, staff will ensure it will never be face to face and will not last longer than necessary. Staff should avoid children lifting their feet off the ground during a hug.

3) To safeguard (see also Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy)

Restrictive Intervention will only be used as a last resort in order to prevent children from:

- 1.causing injury to themselves
- 2.causing injury to other pupils
- 3.damaging property
- 4.having a negative impact on the school or class ethos
- 5.causing injury to staff.

The overriding principle relating to physical intervention is that the best interests of the child take precedence over every other consideration. In line with the schools Behaviour Policy, physical intervention is regarded as a last resort and should only be used in exceptional circumstances.

Physical Intervention will normally only be carried out by Team Teach trained members of staff, however all staff have a right to use an appropriate level of reasonable force. In an emergency, for example, if a child were at immediate risk of harm, or about to inflict injury on someone else, then any member of staff would be entitled to intervene, including those without specific training. It is unlawful for a member of staff to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a student, or which is primarily intended to cause pain or humiliation. Physical interventions should only be used when dialogue, diversion and de-escalation strategies have failed to stop the unsafe behaviour and should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result, taking into account the age and size of the child. Physical Intervention will only be carried out if it is considered necessary, proportionate and reasonable. The decision to use any physical intervention must take account of the immediate circumstances of the situation, coupled with prior knowledge of the student and be based upon an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention. For pupils with SEND or additional vulnerabilities, staff will have regard to any individual behaviour plans, risk assessments, or agreed strategies when considering the use of physical intervention.

Any physical intervention or touch should avoid contact that might be misinterpreted as sexual and respects the cultural expectations of the individual.

Wallop Primary School does not expect staff to physically intervene with children. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Where an employee has taken action to use Physical Intervention with a child, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will support staff involved to make a written report of the incident, which the headteacher will keep a paper copy of and it will also be uploaded to CPOMS. Parents or carers will be informed of any significant incident involving physical intervention, in line with the school's Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies, unless doing so would place the child at further risk. Staff who have used Physical Intervention strategies will always be offered a debrief with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Where appropriate, following any physical intervention, staff will support the child to take part in a restorative conversation to help them understand what happened, express their views, and rebuild relationships. Incidents will be reviewed by staff and leaders to identify learning, inform support strategies, and minimise the need for future physical interventions.

Date of review: January 2026	Date of implementation: January 2026
Next review due: January 2027	Reviewing Committee: FGB