



## Safe Touch Policy

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<b>Next Review</b>	May 2027

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## Vision and Values

Our school vision is to provide an *outstanding, nurturing, learning environment*, where all our pupils can achieve their full potential and progress to lead happy and fulfilling lives.

Our mission is to provide each and every pupil with the best possible education, delivered in an environment that is supportive, caring and safe.

### *“Getting it right for every pupil”*

At Stone Bay we focus on *Evolving Excellence* in all that we do, working towards making our school the best it can be for pupils, staff and families. We are creating lasting *Trust* with all our stakeholders, *Empowering* each other to learn and grow. By adhering to policies and clear processes we ensure *Fairness* and transparency in our decision making and actions, whilst ensuring we are *Collaborating* with others and always looking for ways to help each other to deliver excellence for our pupils.

## Rights Respecting Schools

The Unicef UK Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. The RRSA seeks to put the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of a school's ethos and culture to improve well-being and develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential. A Rights Respecting School is a community where children's rights are learned, taught, practised, respected, protected and promoted.

Stone Bay has been awarded the Silver Award by UNICEF. This is awarded to UK schools that show good progress towards embedding children's rights in the school's policy, practice and ethos, as outlined in the RRSA Strands and Outcomes

## Staff wellbeing

The Leadership Team and the Governing Board of Stone Bay School are committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and to providing suitable support for all staff. Taking action to prevent ill health and promote good health makes good educational and business sense, as sickness absence carries high costs both in monetary terms and in terms of the impact upon performance, teaching and learning, morale and productivity, which may disrupt or compromise pupil progress.

All members of staff are entitled to be treated fairly and professionally at all times. The Governing Board of Stone Bay School takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all members of staff and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty.

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Stone Bay School we understand that appropriate relationships between staff and pupils are paramount to promoting the safeguarding of children at our school.

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 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.

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.

## RATIONALE:

There are circumstances in which physical contact is necessary in order to meet the emotional, safety and care needs of the children. Research has established that physical contact is important in developing relationships; the circumstances depend on the age and understanding and individual needs of the child. The paramount consideration is the welfare of the child.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. This policy has due regard to the following legislation, including, but not limited to:

- The Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010

1.2. This policy will also have due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE 'Use of reasonable force in schools' 2013
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015

1.3. The school will implement this policy in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy and Equality Policy.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- All members of staff at Stone Bay school have a duty of care towards pupils, and must be aware of the boundaries involving physical contact.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for conducting annual 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 Head Teacher and DSL are 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 Head Teacher or DSL.

- The Head Teacher is responsible for communicating with parents/carers and ensuring that they are aware of this policy
- The school has a responsibility for ensuring that they create and promote a culture in which pupils' wishes and feelings are respected.

## DEFINITION OF 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, or when using musical instruments.
- When hand over hand support is required to complete a task.
- Supporting a pupil/student with personal/intimate care. There must also be communication between the member of staff and pupil/student whilst carrying out such tasks.

## TYPES OF SAFE TOUCH

- The school understands that certain types of physical contact between staff and pupils are inappropriate, such as hugging, lap-sitting, holding hands or kissing.
- The school recognises that the only appropriate places to touch pupils are on the shoulders, arms and hands.
- Except in the case of demonstrating skills during sports lessons, we allow the following:
  - When demonstrating how to use sporting equipment or sports skills staff may need to touch children to support and guide them, for example in curling, Boccia and football.
  - When learning climbing skills staff will need to use a guiding hand to support younger children
  - When younger children are using the climbing equipment staff may need to support them getting up and down-this must be done in sight of others. Staff must lift from under the armpits and place the child down gently.
- Staff will limit lone-working, when this is necessary.

## The school places the following restrictions on hugging:

- At Stone Bay school we encourage staff using touch for reward or comfort to use the 'school-hug', rather than an embrace.
- The school-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 and thus engaging in a 'front' embrace, which the school would deem inappropriate.
- If it is deemed appropriate for individual pupils/students to be able to access a 'school hug' this will be recorded on their individual well-being plan and a member of the Leadership team must be informed this has happened.

### The school places the following restrictions on lap-sitting:

- The school recognises that all instances of lap-sitting are inappropriate and therefore prohibits this interaction between members of staff and pupils.
- Reception class may allow pupils to sit on their lap if they require comfort or reassurance, particularly in the case of distress; this type of contact is only made with the consent of the child. The child must be sat sideways or facing outwards and never in a front embrace.
- 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 hand-holding and hugging.
- 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.
- 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.

### REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH

- If a pupil attempts to engage in any inappropriate touch, the member of staff involved will report this immediately to the Head Teacher or DSL, 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 Head Teacher or DSL immediately.
- The Head Teacher and DSL will keep a written record of all instances of reported inappropriate touch.
- Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct and Managing allegations against staff.

### TYPES OF INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH

- A front embrace.
- Kissing a pupil/student. We need to be teaching the children protective behaviours as it wouldn't be appropriate for them to kiss someone in a supermarket or other public place.
- The touching of a pupil/student's back (unless using PROACT-SCiP touch support or Two person touch support).
- Placing your hand on a pupil/student's thigh or knee.
- Asking a child to give you a kiss.

## TRAINING OF STAFF

The Head of Care and DSLs will conduct 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.

## MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICY

This policy is reviewed every 3 years by the Head of Care who will make any necessary changes and communicate this to all members of staff.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)
- Police Act 1987 (Criminal Records) (N02) Regulations 2009

Further Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children ( March 2015, Feb 2017, July 2018, December 2023)
- Guidance for Safer Work Practices for Adults who work with Children & young People- (2022)
- Keeping children safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for schools & colleges (DfE) 2023
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

## LINKED POLICIES

Safeguarding Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Well-being Policy

Code of Conduct Policy