



# James Bateman Junior High School

## Touch Policy

In our Nurture group, we have a touch policy. This means that as a member of staff you are able to physically guide, touch or prompt children in appropriate ways at the appropriate times. It is extremely important that you have read and understood this policy to appreciate the reasons why we may choose to touch children and the appropriate ways in which we do so.

### Why Do We Use Touch?

We may choose to hold children for a variety of reasons, but in general terms we would normally do so for either comfort or reward. We may also need to physically touch, guide or prompt pupils if they require personal care, assistance with writing, eating, practical skills etc.

### How Do We Use Touch?

#### **Hugging**

In our Nurture group, we encourage staff that are using touch for comfort or reward to use a 'hug'. This is done sideways on, with the adult putting their hands on the child's shoulders. This discourages 'front on' hugging, and the adult's hands on the shoulders limit the ability of the child to turn themselves into you. This can be done either standing or sitting.

#### **Hand-Holding**

We recognise that children sometimes enjoy being able to hold hands with adults around them, this can also be used to reassure and comfort a child. This is perfectly acceptable when the hand-holding is compliant.

At times children may when in crisis or distress hold you in a way which is not described above. If this should happen then it should be recorded in a separate log book which is monitored by a senior member of staff in order to protect yourself. The logging of such incidents will also determine whether the pupil is regularly distressed and enable other strategies to be employed.

We have a touch policy as we believe contingent touch can be a positive experience for children, particularly those in the Nurture group. However it should be recognised that some pupils will not want to be touched and therefore this will be respected.

Staff have a 'Duty of Care' towards pupils in their care. Therefore if a pupil is at risk of harm if you do not physically intervene, you must take action. The action taken will depend on the risk assessment undertaken at the time.

Parents/carers will be made aware of this policy as part of the information session they attend when their child is admitted into the Nurture group.