



Formally adopted by the Governing Board/ Trust of:-	Corvus Education Trust
On:-	4 th & 6 th May 2020
Chair of Governors/Trustees:-	Stuart Page/Claire De'Ath <i>De'Ath</i>
Date for Review:-	Summer 2023

SRBManor Field Policy for Safe Touch/Safe Holding.

(An addition to the Manor Field Touch Policy)

Why is this needed?

Children attending the SRB at Manor Field have significant difficulties with managing their behaviour due to interruptions in their emotional development and other neurological difficulties.

Safe holding is a key opportunity for emotional learning.

A child without boundaries is a danger to themselves and contributes to school communities that do not feel safe. Therefore their ability to learn is affected and harm to learning of self and others is caused.

Safe touch is developmentally necessary as it is recognised as a physical way of soothing, calming and containing distress. Research studies have indicated the necessity of human contact and touch in the healthy development of children.

To whom does this policy apply?

All adults and children working at the SRB. Named members of staff need to have had STEP training in order to know how and when to hold children in safe ways. As a Thrive based unit, **adults trained in the Thrive Approach** are able to identify and use safe touch as a developmental intervention.

The SRB is adopting an informed, evidence-based decision to allow safe touch in special cases as a developmentally appropriate intervention that will aid healthy emotional growth and learning.

This includes: Allowing a child to sit on an adults lap and massage of hands and feet.

Research shows that healthy brain development requires access to safe touch as a means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, sad or angry child. It is essential that children learn the difference between safe and unsafe touch and have their strongest emotions contained and soothed by a significant adult.

In recognition of this, specially trained staff will consider using safe touch as one of the means available to them to **support a child in their learning.**

Safe touch is one of the key ways of regulating a child's emotions but it is a strategy used at the SRB by fully trained staff **only under supervision in line with the whole school Touch Policy.**

Guidelines for the use of Safe Touch – Lap-Sitting.

Teachers/Support Staff should be trained in all aspects of safe touch.

Parents should be informed of this policy.

No adult should use safe holding when alone with a child. When safe containment is required the adults involved should have a positive and secure relationship with the child.

The need to sit on an adults lap should always be child led and not the need of the adult.

The child should always sit back facing to the adult. This is a safeguarding requirement for the supporting adult and child.

Adults need to be aware of where body contact is made. Consider where hands and arms are placed if necessary.

Contact should be gentle and comforting in order to contain the child and give a safe boundary.

Contact should not be forced. Where force occurs, this is a restraint and should be logged in accordance with the restraint policy.

Where possible, encourage the child to sit next to you in a 'safe hug' sideways position.

Other strategies to use include: breathing more deeply, talking in a quiet and gentle voice, slowing the pace of the activity, provide clear consistent boundaries and expectations.

Guidelines for the use of Safe Touch – Massage

Parents should sign a consent form allowing their child to engage in Thrive Activities that include safe touch.

Adults should be trained in the Thrive Approach or closely supervised by a Licenced Practitioner.

Massage should only take place on a child's hands or feet.

The child has the right to refuse and this should be respected.

If the adult is comfortable, it is acceptable for the child to massage the adult's hands.

Massage should take place in a quiet, public space e.g. a quiet area of the classroom.

The adult and child should never be alone when massage is taking place.