



## Little Brown Hare Pre-School Touch Policy

Policy reviewed and updated: November 2018

Next review: November 2019

Signature:  Executive Head teacher: Date: 29-11-18

Signature:  Chair of Governors: Date: 29/11/18

Touch is essential in order to provide sensitive and good quality care for the children we support. Used in context, and with empathy, touch supports the development of our natural interactions with the children at Little Brown Hare Pre-school. In play or for emotional reasons children of any age who are at early levels of development are likely to be quite tactile and physical.

We may also need to physically touch, guide or prompt children if they require personal care, assistance with writing, eating, dressing, walking alongside busy roads etc.

### How do we use touch at Little Brown Hare Pre-school

**1. HUGGING** – At Pre-School, we encourage staff that are using touch for comfort or reward to use a 'Pre-School hug'. This is a sideways on hug, with the adult putting their hands on the child's shoulders. This discourages 'front on' hugging, and the adult's hands on the shoulders limits the ability of the child to turn themselves onto you. This can be done either standing or sitting.

**2. HAND HOLDING** – We recognise that children sometimes enjoy being able to hold hands with adults around them. This is perfectly acceptable when the hand holding is compliant. At Little Brown Hare Pre-School we would encourage all children to be independent however, we would take the hand of a child to give reassurance and to communicate security and comfort if this was deemed appropriate for the emotional well-being or safety of the child concerned.

**3. LAP SITTING** – At our Pre-School we discourage lap-sitting. Children are encouraged to seek attention through other means, for example the Pre-School hug. If a child attempts to sit on your lap, we would explain to them that this is not what we do here, and ask them to sit next to a member of staff or peer. However, lap sitting may be deemed appropriate in some circumstances and where it is necessary and justifiable.

At times, children in such crisis or distress decide to hold in such a way which is not described as above (e.g. 'front on' hug/lap sitting). If this should happen we would give the child guidance as to the more appropriate methods of touch listed above.

The use of touch is discussed openly and regularly between staff.

Gender and cultural factors have relevance in issues of touch. The emotional and communication needs of the individual will be discussed with all concerned and due equal consideration.

Please note that although we have a touch policy and believe that contingent touch can be a positive experience for the children that we care for, this does not mean that we have to touch children and we realise that some children will not want to be touched and we respect this.