



Touch Policy

'Building for Successful Futures'

Formally adopted by the Governing Board of	Fred Nicholson School
Chair of Governors	Hilary Bradshaw
Policy Holder	Headteacher
Policy Contributor	Heads/Leads of Areas
Last updated	Summer 2020
To be Reviewed	Summer 2021 (Full Committee)



Touch Policy

'Building for Successful Futures'

Introduction

Touch can be used to provide sensitive and good quality care for the children and young people we support. Used in context, and with empathy, touch supports the development of our natural interactions with the children and young people we care for. 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.

Aims

At Fred Nicholson School we aim to apply touch in order to support the wellbeing and safety of our children and young people.

This means that a member of staff is able to guide, touch or prompt children in an appropriate way at the appropriate times. The aim of this policy is to set out the reasons why we may choose to use touch and the appropriate ways in which we do so.

Broad Guidelines

We may choose to use touch for a variety of reasons, generally touch would be for comfort, safety or reward. We may also need to physically touch, guide or prompt students if they require personal care; support with attention, as a technique to aid with behaviour management; as part of manual handling; first aid; physiotherapy or assistance with writing, eating, dressing etc.

When touch is planned or foreseeable it should be with the permission of pupils and staff involved; this may include peer to peer touch (a safe hug or massage) or staff to pupil touch. There are exclusions to this where touch is carried out without permission. This is dependent on the needs and abilities of pupils. When it is known touch will be used but it is not possible or it is inappropriate to request permission, this will be included in the relevant behaviour or care plan. This does not include contingent touch. Staff are able to use contingent touch to prompt learning or reassure. Staff should use their professional judgement as to whether permission needs to be sought in such instances. At times staff and peers may unintentionally touch one another for example bumping into someone or brushing past someone as they pass each other. Staff and pupils accept that this is part of working alongside others. If staff or pupils feel uncomfortable with an instance of unintentional touch they should report this following school's safeguarding or whistle blowing procedures.

Staff should follow safeguarding guidance to ensure they are not putting themselves or a pupil in a vulnerable position. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.



How touch is used in Fred Nicholson School

1. SAFE HUG

At our School, we encourage staff that are using touch for comfort or reward to use a 'Safe hug'. To give a safe hug contingent touch is used by standing side by side and using closed mittens to place hands on either side of the child's shoulders (refer to Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy) This discourages 'front on' touching, 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, sitting, kneeling or crouching.

2. LINKING ARMS

We recognise that children sometimes enjoy being able to hold hands with adults around them and that for some children this is an automatic response. A more appropriate and safer alternative would be to offer an arm. At our school we encourage all children to be independent, however we would use offering an arm to give reassurance and to communicate security and comfort if this was deemed appropriate for the emotional wellbeing or safety of the child concerned. Where children attempt to hold hands an arm should be offered.

3. LAP SITTING

At our School we actively discourage lap-sitting. Children are encouraged to seek comfort/attention through other means, for example a safe hug. If a child attempts to sit on your lap, explain to them that this is not what we do here, and direct them as to where to sit. A nagging doubt will be completed on CPOMS.

4. MASSAGE

As part of the many therapeutic interventions we have at Fred Nicholson School we use Massage. This is done over the clothing and focuses on the hands, feet, back, head & shoulders. Pupils may participate in massaging their peers as positive touch and for them to gain an understanding of personal space, appropriate touch and the importance of permission.

Any form of massage delivered between staff and pupil will be part of planned intervention specific for the child and only used when it has been recognised as a sensory need, as part of de-escalation, to develop self-awareness and self-regulation or as a strategy used to reassure or calm anxious pupils. This will be identified on a pupil's PLP and/or individual risk management plan. Parents will be aware of identified strategies used to support pupils.

Touch can be used to develop self-awareness and meet sensory needs. Techniques can be used to try and stimulate nerve endings, particularly from the upper arm down, different textures of materials are used going from firm patting, hands or spatulas to soft materials ending with fanning.

A programme (TAC PAC) may be used to develop muscle tone and awareness and to calm, to develop self-regulation and a sense of their self.



5. INTIMATE CARE

Some pupils require a higher level of personal care around toileting. Please refer to individual intimate care plans and our Intimate Care Policy.

6. MOVING AND HANDLING

Some pupils require physical or mechanical support moving around school. Please refer to individual handling plans and our Safer Person Handling Policy. Staff involved in manual handling and hoisting receive appropriate training.

7. RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Some pupils require restrictive intervention to support with behaviour and keep themselves or others safe. Please refer to individual risk management plans and our Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy. All staff receive Step On training at the earliest possible opportunity, those working directly with pupils (teaching, care and pastoral staff) will have Step Up training at the earliest opportunity after the start of employment.

8. FIRST AID

When administering first aid it is often appropriate and necessary to use touch. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and are able to administer treatment for minor first aid incidents such as a minor bump, cut or graze. More serious incidents will be dealt with by a qualified first aider. Parents / carers will be informed if first aid has been administered. Please refer to individual medical care plans and our Health and Safety Policy and Staff Handbook.

9. PHYSIOTHERAPY

Some of our pupils, particularly those with a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy, require physiotherapy. The physio will come into school once a half term and see the designated pupil. It is good practise that the lead TA attends these sessions to be shown, take records of exercises given and sometimes put the pupil at ease when communication can be an issue. These can then be passed to the PE department where they can be completed in the fitness suite once a week.

Where possible these exercises should be completed independently however there are occasions where touch, a supporting arm or hands to encourage and support the use of, and flexing of, muscles and tendons, is applied. The physio will advise and direct staff to ensure good practise

10. OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY – SENSORY INTEGRATION

Some of our pupils have input from our Occupational Therapist. Techniques used may well involve pressure. The Therapist will devise and deliver programmes to pupils and advise staff on how to use different equipment where appropriate.

E.g. a young person may lie prone on the floor and a yoga ball may be pressed down on top of them, so delivering pressure to a pressure seeking individual. This has a calming effect.



The therapist will advise, support and monitor delivery of these programmes on a weekly basis.

If appropriate some of our pupils will undertake sessions in the Therapy room. The therapist will develop an individual programme for each pupil, and advise, support and monitor the delivery of these sessions.

At times, children in crisis or distress initiate physical contact in a way other than those described above (e.g. 'front on' body contact/lap sitting). If this should happen we would give the child guidance as to the more appropriate methods of touch listed above, we would record witnessed behaviours and the adult's actions using our recording methods. Parents or carers would be informed when appropriate.

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 will be given.

We believe that contingent touch can be a positive experience and this policy supports this. However, touch is not appropriate in all situations and we realise that some children will not want to be touched and we will try to respect this, however there may be times when staff need to use touch to ensure the pupils safety and wellbeing or the safety and wellbeing of others. Such instances will be recorded and where appropriate parents or carers informed.



Definitions

Contingent Touch: this is touch involving little, if any, active resistance such as reassuring touch, physical prompts and guides and unobtrusive personal safety responses to low risks.

Links to Other Policies

Please also refer to the following policies:

Personal Intimate Care

Health and Safety

Physical Intervention

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Protect me

PSHCE

Safer Person Handling

Safeguarding including Child Protection

Staff Handbook

Equality Impact Statement

The Governors have reviewed this policy giving due regard to their responsibilities with respect to the equalities agenda, in line with recent legislation. They believe that the policy reflects a positive attitude and approach to all members of the school community.

Policy Approved by:

Chair S & D Committee

*To be ratified on 09.12.20