



The Willow Centre

Positive Touch Policy

Rationale

Positive touch is a basic human need. At The Willow Centre we interact daily with young children, many of whom, are naturally tactile and affectionate. We want to make sure that their needs are met and that they develop caring, positive relationships with others. If a child initiates contact or needs reassurance, we want our staff to feel confident that they can respond naturally without fear of unfounded accusations.

We want parents and carers to feel confident that we will respond appropriately to their children's needs, and to understand that positive touch may be a part of that response. We believe that avoiding using positive touch when appropriate would have a negative effect on the children in our care.

Physical prompts, guides and reassurances are necessary in a range of settings. Staff should, when appropriate, feel able to use touch to comfort and communicate with pupils.

To use touch/physical support successfully staff must;

- be non-abusive, with no intention to cause pain or injury
- be in the best interests of the child and others
- have a clear education purpose or to improve social relationships
- take account of gender issues

Examples of Acceptable Touch

The following guidance gives examples of situations where positive touch is appropriate. This list is not exhaustive and there will be many more instances where it may be used appropriately.

- First Aid – e.g. cleaning wounds, applying plasters
- Personal hygiene – e.g. changing soiled clothing, cleaning themselves. 2 members of staff must be involved in these situations. Each parent/carer will have signed a personal care agreement
- Getting changed for PE – e.g. dressing, tying hair back
- During lessons – e.g. supporting in PE, showing how to hold a pencil/ scissors, using a mouse, holding musical instruments
- Responding to their initiated contact (following guidance on hugs)
- Reassuring and comforting children – e.g. when they are upset, worried or in need of guidance.
- Praise – e.g. reaffirming “Well done” with a gentle pat on the shoulder. This should only occur in public area and not in private
- Safety

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Support, Guide and Escort

The following are a list of appropriate physical means of support, guidance and escort.

- Hand on shoulder
- Supportive Hug
- Supportive Arm
- Offering an Arm
- Closed Mitten Escort

The above should only be used by members of staff who have received *Herts Step On Training*.

Restrictive Physical Intervention

Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used if a child has it specifically noted in their Individual Risk Management Plan. The only exception being in an emergency, where there is immediate risk of harm to life.

Leadership

It is the responsibility of the Provision Lead to ensure that all staff have received appropriate Positive Touch and Physical Intervention training. The Provision Lead should ensure all staff are aware of any pupil who finds physical touch unwelcoming due to background, sensory needs etc. This information should be recorded on the child's Individual Risk Reduction Plan.

If there are any concerns about inappropriate touch by a member of staff or by a child, these should be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or one of the Deputy Safeguarding Leads in their absence) and these concerns will be dealt with following Peartree Spring School's safeguarding procedures