



Category	Behaviour Management		
Document Name	Touch Procedure		
Accountable Body	RADIUS Trust		
Reference	BM.P1.05	Date Approved/Reviewed	16 th March 2017
Version	4	Next Update Due	Summer 2018

Related Policies

Document	Reference
Behaviour Management Policy	BM.P1
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	SC.P1

Reference Material

Guidance
National Curriculum
Guidance for safe working practice (GSWP)
Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016
The DfE - Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for Head teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies’ July 2013
Guidance for Safer Working Practice for education professionals – Safer Recruitment Consortium / NASS 2015
Safeguarding Disabled Children DfE 2009

Related Documents

Name	Reference
Behaviour Management Procedures	BM.P1.01
Staff Code of Conduct	SC.P1.T8

1. Statement of intent

At Brantridge School we ensure that children are given positive experiences of touch and that believe that educating them around safe touch will allow them to safeguard themselves now and in their future lives.

Our touch procedure reflects our shared understanding that touch is essential to child development. Which promotes

- brain development
- positive mental health
- The development of social communication skills.

At Brantridge School, we use evidence based practice to allow touch to aid healthy growth and learning.

The Governing Body aim to ensure that all staff and volunteers at Brantridge school know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. Staff need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the difference and feel confident to promote this accordingly. Equally, when a child is in deep distress, staff are



trained to know when and how sufficient connection and psychological holding can be provided without touching. Through this proactive approach young people are empowered to identify, communicate about and respond to both appropriate and inappropriate touch.

Throughout this procedure document, the word 'staff' is used to include those employed at Brantridge School and Radius Trust who have been provided with additional training and guidance in dealing with the emotional aspects of young people with special educational needs. Pupils, students and children are described as 'children' throughout this document.

2. Aims

- To promote the well-being of children in the knowledge that nurturing touch is a basic need and a powerful tool to help children develop into healthy, well balanced human beings.
- To give children the chance to experience nurturing touch at school across the waking day curriculum, in a safe and creative way.
- To promote an ethos of respect of self and others, within peer massage children request permission before they begin, and say thank you to each other, when they finish the guided routine.
- To give the children a voice - those who do not wish to receive/give a massage can say no and sit and relax / observe, or do an air massage.
- To develop positive communication – children are encouraged, while practicing the massage routine. Children are encouraged to feel safe and to say what they like or dislike, how much pressure and at what pace the massage should be done for them.

To encourage a sense of unity throughout the school, all staff will be trained in 'peer massage' in both education and residential departments.

3. Touch and development

"Everything that newborns and infants know about the universe they learn through their physical sensations." (Bar-Levav, 1998, p.53)

- Biologically, touch is the first sense to develop. By the 7th week of pregnancy, the baby reacts to touch.
- Feel good chemicals are released in the brain through caring interactions.
- Touch promotes positive development of the brain.
- Children who experience warm physical affection have fewer issues with anger and aggression.
- Many children often learn best through touch and movement.
- Being next to a calm person can promote natural calming hormones and aid body and brain systems returning to balance (Margot Sunderland).

There is a biological need for touch, an actual hunger for touch that can be met only in contact with another human being.

4. The impact of positive touch

Access to physical proximity and positive touch has been shown to:

- improve concentration
- improve co-operation



- increase a stronger sense of self and higher self-esteem/confidence
- reduce aggressive behaviour
- encourage a calmer classroom environment
- encourage empathy and respect for their peers
- enable the children to recognize difference between good and bad touch
- encourage a more relaxed and focused feeling in the school
- discover differences between people
- encourage and develop the imagination
- improve communication

5. Children's rights and appropriate touch

Our procedure adheres to the belief that every individual needs to appreciate the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. Social rules that say what behaviour is appropriate around other people can be difficult for some children to pick up. Many of us learn these social rules by observation but some children will not be able to do this and they will need to be actively taught this skill. At Brantridge school we cover building awareness and learning about touch in PSHE lessons, the waking day curriculum, sessions with identified key workers and in school confidential reporting system 'Borris the school minion and peer massage.'

There are five different types of touch and physical contact that may be used, these are:

Casual / Informal / Incidental Touch

Staff use touch with pupils as part of a normal relationship, for example, comforting a child, giving reassurance and congratulating. This might include putting an arm out to steady a child, taking a child by the hand, patting on the back or putting an arm around the shoulders. The benefit of this action is often proactive and can prevent a situation from escalating.

General Reparative Touch

This is used by staff at Brantridge School when working with children who are having difficulties with their emotions and as strategies to promote positive mental health and de-escalate. Healthy emotional development requires safe touch as a means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, angry or sad child. Touch used to regulate a child's emotions triggers the release of the calming chemical oxytocin in the body. Reparative touch may include stroking a back, squeezing an arm, rocking gently, cuddling, tickling, sitting on an adult's lap, or hand or foot massage. This also includes the peer massage routine.

Interactive Play (Rough and Tumble Play)

Play may include child led play e.g. imaginative role play, sports. In addition, this may include an adult chasing and catching the child or an adult and child playing a game of building towers with their hands. Interactive play may include: throwing cushions each other or using soft foam bats to 'fence' each other.

This sort of play releases the positive chemicals in the brain.



6. Positive Handling (Calming a dysregulating child)

Trained staff will restrain a child when behaviour is:

- Unacceptably threatening, dangerous, aggressive or out of control;
- In order to avoid harm to self or others or damage to property;
- To avoid an offence being committed and / or a breakdown of good order and discipline.
- Please see behaviour management policy.

7. Teaching young people about appropriate touch

We believe that every child attending school should experience positive and nurturing touch every day. This belief shapes our whole school approach to promoting the physical, social, spiritual, mental and emotional wellbeing of all pupils and staff. By learning to recognise your own states of emotion, tension and relaxation you can begin to control them at will. Staff at Brantridge school may use peer massage routine to promote the learning of appropriate touch and to support relaxation and wellbeing.

8. Peer Massage

At Brantridge school staff have been trained in peer massage and children are taught about appropriate touch. The massage programme empowers children to share how and if they want to be touched as well as actively encouraging them to communicate and give feedback to one another. In classes where peer massage has not been implemented, staff are particularly mindful to ensure that the same messages are conveyed to children about respecting other people's rights to be touched or not touched as well as appropriate ways and places to touch other. Peers

- Massage has been linked to changes in physiological factors, including: a reduction in cortisol, an increase in oxytocin, which regulates calmness and healing (Uvnas-Moberg, 1998), alteration of brainwave patterns which allows increased concentration (Field et al, 1996), and increased vagal tone which causes the release of substances that reduce heart rate.

The key benefits are:

- Relaxation
- Social communication
- Optimises learning
- Safeguarding – my body, your body

The process:

In groups, young people stay wearing their normal school clothes and give massage to each other on the back, shoulders, head and arms for around 15 minutes. The young people work in pairs and learn a simple massage sequence

- Those who wish to take part sit ready and find a partner. Those who do not wish to take part watch and benefit in this way.
- The person giving the massage asks permission before touching their partner's back.
- Everyone uses a 'whisper/air voice'
- The actions are all simple and slow.



- Each action is carried out 3 times to ensure the body o???
- We give names to each stroke for consistency and to overcome initial 'surprise' so the students are able to relax and enjoy each new move.
- Everyone is encouraged to communicate about what they like and don't like e.g. "press more firmly" or "more gently")
- The person who has GIVEN the massage thanks the other child for being allowed to give them a massage.

There may be times when a student requests that an adult completes the massage routine. Verbal consent needs to be given from both the student and staff member for completing the moves in this programme.

Brantridge Peer Massage



Glasses



Cat grip



Baker



Scoops



Forehead strokes



Hairdresser



Slide



Climbing the rope



Bunny Hops



Hearts



Butterfly



Bear walk



Skating



Brushing the horse



Brushing off snow



Thankyou

We are committed to Partnership with Parents.

- If the peer massage programme is being offered to a class, a letter is sent home informing parents about peer massage process and parents/carers give written permission for their child to choose whether they want to take part before they can participate. This is part of our admissions process. (see appendix 1)



- The young person can then decide for themselves if he/she wants to take part. Those not wanting to take part sit quietly, relax and observe or do an air massage, or massage a teddy/cushion.
- The children are encouraged to share the massage programme with their parent/carers and siblings at home.
- Parents are given a positive action which helps calm their children.
- Provides an activity which the child and parent/carer can share together.

Staff are happy to discuss any aspect of this policy with parents/carers should they have any questions or want further clarification.

9. Safeguarding

Staff should always consider and abide by the Staff Code of Conduct. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that all practice is safe and ensure that the best interests of the young person is the paramount consideration. By 'Appropriate Touch' we mean touch that is not invasive, hostile, punishing, humiliating or could possibly be considered as sexually abusive. Should any such touch be used it would be deemed as the most serious breach of the Code of Conduct warranting the highest level of disciplinary action. We should all expect to be observed by others and be prepared to discuss any concerns we have in a professional manner. Any member of staff who is concerned about another member of staff's practice should discuss their concerns with the designated safeguarding lead or another member of the safeguarding team.

Our Safeguarding Policy outlines the necessity to ensure all young people are safe in their bodies and their feelings and how the staff work together to ensure this is the case. Where staff are acting in the best interests of the child, they will be supported by the school.

This procedure reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole teaching staff and has the full agreement of the Governing Body.

This Policy was first implemented by the Governing Body in *****

Date:

Review Date:



Brantridge School

Live, Laugh, Learn

Appendix 1. Consent form

Date:

Ref: Peer massage in school.

Dear Parent/Carer

One of our goals at Brantridge School is to support students to develop their emotional wellbeing. At Brantridge we are able to offer peer massage. This is an inclusive programme that helps children to understand the importance of positive touch. This happens through a carefully structured routine of clothed peer massage. Children wear their normal school clothes and give massage to each other on the back, head and arms. They take part in ten to fifteen minutes massage.

Research from schools worldwide shows that there are a huge range of benefits for children involved in such a program that go beyond initial relaxation. The children develop their social skills and language through close communication and they develop a sense of self as well as a deeper understanding of appropriate touch. Children have also shown increased concentration and ability to access their learning after these short sessions, thus maximising on the quality of their learning time. Importantly massage in schools supports students to learn to respect themselves, and other children.

Each child gives permission for massage to take place. If children do not want to give or receive massage they are allowed to sit and watch or alternatively massage a teddy, cushion or carry out the moves on their own body.

We therefore request that you give consent for your child/children to decide if they would like to take part in the sessions. This is important as it empowers children to make decisions about how they take part.

If you have any questions or want to discuss this further then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please complete the reply slip below and return it to school as soon as possible.

Thank you

Rebecca Williams

Speech and Language Therapist



Brantridge School

Live, Laugh, Learn

Peer massage at Brantridge School

Date:

Name of child _____ Class _____

I allow my child to decide if he wishes to take part in giving and receiving clothed massage as part of massage programme at Brantridge School.

Signature _____

Print name _____ Parent/Carer

Date _____

Please return this slip to the school office. Thank you