



# Physical Contact

*(Excerpt from the 'Village School Intimate Care Policy')*

All staff engaged in the care and education of children and young people need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact.

The expectation at The Village School is that staff will work using a 'limited touch' culture and that when physical contact is made with pupils this will be in response to the pupil's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be **appropriate given their age, stage of development and background**. For example sitting pupil on your knee could be appropriate in early years in order to comfort a pupil who is distressed but not as a matter of course during the school day and not as a pupil progresses through keystone 2 and beyond.

Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the pupil, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must therefore always be prepared to justify actions and accept that **all physical contact be open to scrutiny**.

Physical contact which is repeated with an individual child or young person is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is formally agreed by the pupil, the school and those with parental responsibility.

Some pupils may require more physical contact **to assist their everyday learning**, including the use of specific strategies such as 'Intensive Interaction', Yoga, Movement, dance, PE, in swimming or just 'physical prompting' for educational purposes.

Where pupils have a Positive Behaviour or Moving and Handling or Medical plans this may mean **more frequent physical contact**. This includes strategies recommended by the Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists specifically. Also for pupils who have epilepsy or other medical conditions where management includes physical support.

The general culture of 'limited touch' will be **adapted** where appropriate to the individual requirements of each pupil. The arrangements must be **understood and agreed by all concerned**, justified in terms of the pupils needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

Wherever possible, consultation with colleagues should take place where any deviation from the arrangements is anticipated. **Any deviation and the justification** for it should be documented and reported in plans or risk assessments.

Extra caution may be required where a child has suffered **previous abuse or neglect**. In the pupils view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and **lead to staff vulnerable to allegations** of abuse.

Some such pupils may seek out inappropriate physical contact.

In such circumstances staff may discourage the child **without causing them a negative experience**. Ensuring that a witness is present will help to protect staff from such allegations.

Name of policy: Physical Contact
Effective from: September 2013
Next review: September 2017

### Revision history

Date	Details	Author
Sept 2016		Sue Jones

