



Intimate Touch Policy for [PL6 Learning Hub]

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework regarding appropriate touch in a professional setting for staff, volunteers, and others working with children and young people under 16 at [Name of Provision]. It aims to create a safe environment where physical contact is carefully considered and appropriate for the well-being and dignity of all involved.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and external professionals working within the provision who may come into contact with children and young people under the age of 16.

Definitions

1. **Intimate Touch:** Refers to physical contact that involves touching a person in a way that could be considered inappropriate, personal, or sexually suggestive. This may include touching private areas of the body, or actions that could be perceived as overly familiar or invasive.
2. **Appropriate Touch:** Includes physical gestures such as handshakes, high-fives, comforting a child who is upset, or guiding a child gently by the arm (with their consent). All appropriate touch must be respectful and non-invasive.

Principles

- **Respect and Dignity:** Physical touch should always respect the personal boundaries and dignity of every young person. It should be done in a way that makes the young person feel safe, valued, and in control of their body.
- **Minimize Physical Contact:** Avoid unnecessary physical contact, especially in private or non-public settings. Always ask for consent where possible, and only proceed with touch if it is necessary for the situation (e.g., guiding a student to a safer area or providing first aid).
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Be aware that different cultures and backgrounds may have varying views on physical touch. It is important to be respectful and ask if unsure about a young person's comfort with touch.
- **Staff Training:** All staff members will receive training on appropriate boundaries, safeguarding, and how to handle sensitive situations regarding touch. Regular

safeguarding training will include elements about physical contact and the importance of consent and respect for personal space.

Guidelines for Appropriate Physical Contact

1. **Comforting/Support:** Appropriate touch, such as a light pat on the back or a gentle hug, is allowed when comforting or providing reassurance. However, hugs should only occur if the child initiates or expresses a clear need for them.
2. **Guiding or Assisting:** When providing guidance or assistance (e.g., leading a child to another area), light, non-intrusive touch on the arm, elbow, or back can be used. Always seek verbal consent before any physical contact.
3. **First Aid:** In emergencies or medical situations, staff may need to provide physical contact as part of first aid or health care procedures. In these instances, staff should explain their actions to the young person and seek consent where possible.
4. **Discipline:** Physical contact should never be used as a form of discipline. No corporal punishment or any physical restraint is permitted unless it is necessary to prevent immediate harm, and in such cases, it must always be reported and documented appropriately.
5. **Personal Space:** Respect personal space. It is important that staff observe and respect non-verbal cues indicating discomfort from the young person. Physical touch should not happen without the young person's consent, even in non-intrusive situations.

Unacceptable Touch

The following actions are prohibited:

- **Invasive Touch:** Any contact that involves touching private body parts (e.g., genitals, breasts, or buttocks).
- **Sexualized Behavior:** Any form of sexualized behavior or touch, including suggestive gestures or comments.
- **Touch for Punishment:** Any form of physical touch used as punishment or to exert control over the young person.

Reporting Concerns

If any staff member has concerns about inappropriate touch or behavior, whether by another staff member, student, or external professional, they should report it immediately through the safeguarding procedures. All allegations will be treated seriously and investigated thoroughly.

- Concerns should be reported to [Greg Western g078954653919], and a written record should be made.

Staff and Student Communication

- **Communication with Parents/Caregivers:** In instances where physical contact is required for medical or emotional support, staff should communicate the nature of this contact to parents or caregivers when appropriate, ensuring transparency.

- **Student Awareness:** Children and young people should be made aware of their right to personal space and should feel encouraged to speak up if they are uncomfortable with physical touch.

Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains up to date and reflective of best practice. Any updates will be communicated to all staff, volunteers, and students.

Conclusion

This Intimate Touch Policy ensures that staff members at [Name of Provision] understand the importance of maintaining boundaries, creating a safe space, and engaging in respectful, appropriate interactions with all young people. By adhering to these guidelines, we uphold our duty of care and commitment to safeguarding the welfare of those in our provision.