

# POSITIVE TOUCH POLICY

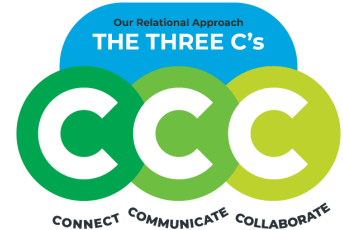
The Board of Trustees, CEO and Strategic team are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and require all staff and volunteers to demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work.

<b>This policy was approved by the Local Advisory Board on:-</b>	<b>Mar 2026</b>
<b>The policy owner is:</b>	<b>The Place Lead, at Arden Grove Infant and Nursery</b>
<b>This policy is:</b>	
<b>This policy is to be published on the:</b>	<b>The Place website</b>
<b>This policy will be reviewed by the Local Advisory Board in: (unless earlier review is recommended by the Trust)</b>	<b>March 2028</b>
<b>Policy Version:</b>	<b>V.02</b>
<b>Signed by the Chair of Local Advisory Board</b>	

## The Place at Arden Positive Touch Policy (2026)

### 1. Purpose

The Wensum Trust is committed to safeguarding, inclusion, and the promotion of positive relationships across all its schools. All interactions, modelling and teachings within The Wensum Trust are guided by our relational approach, enabled by The Three Cs.



We recognise that positive relationships between children and trusted adults are essential for healthy emotional development.

Appropriate physical contact, when used correctly, can support children's wellbeing, brain development, and social skills.

The policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Self-Regulation Policy
- Restrictive Interventions including use of Reasonable Force and Seclusion Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Restrictive Interventions, Including use of Reasonable Force, in Schools, Guidance for Schools in England, 2026

### 2. The Philosophy

All our staff receive training to understand how to support children in managing their emotions and behaviour. They have an awareness of the basics of neuroscience and some of the important changes that take place in the body when the stress response is activated.

The Place adopts an evidence-based approach which supports the use of safe touch as a developmentally appropriate way to help children regulate their emotions and engage in learning.

We know that many emotional, and therefore behavioural challenges stem from poorly developed stress-regulation systems. Healthy emotional development requires safe touch as a means of calming, soothing and containing distress, particularly 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. Positive, appropriate touch—such as hugging or holding hands—is crucial to help children feel secure and form strong, healthy relationships.

### 3. The Principles

We acknowledge that some children are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's

reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact and form of communication which is acceptable to the child.

When considering appropriate physical contact, staff must take into account:

- The child's age and level of understanding
- The child's voice
- The child's individual needs and experiences for example early life trauma or sensory difficulties
- The duration of contact
- The environment (contact should not occur in private without others present)

## 4. Types of Appropriate Physical Touch

### a) Casual or Everyday Touch

This includes everyday, positive appropriate contact such as:

- Holding hands, greetings or to praise
- An arm around the shoulders or sideways hug
- Hugging when initiated by the child. (We will not move a child initiated hug into a sideways hug)
- To provide first aid or intimate care

These actions provide comfort, reassurance, and encouragement.

### b) Reparative (Supportive) Touch

Used to support children experiencing emotional distress and to teach emotional regulation strategies. Appropriate touch can help calm a child and support emotional regulation. Examples include:

- Sitting alongside a child
- Gentle physical reassurance (e.g. holding a hand, or rubbing a back)
- Structured activities such as peer massage, play-based interactions

All such contact must be age-appropriate and, where possible, visible to other staff.

### c) Touch in Play and Learning

Physical contact may occur naturally during supervised play activities, such as:

- Role play
- Physical games
- Guided learning or sensory activities
- To demonstrate how to use equipment etc

### d) Force, Physical Intervention or Restraints

This is only used when necessary to prevent:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Damaging property
- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing disorder among children at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

It is always a last resort and must follow the school's Restrictive Interventions including use of Reasonable Force and Seclusion Policy.

## **5. Teaching of Appropriate Physical Touch**

Through everyday teaching and modelling children are supported to understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch and that every setting and every person needs to be treated differently in this respect.