



WALDORF KNOLL ACADEMY

41 IYA ABUBAKAR CRESCENT
JABI
ABUJA.

08099997721, 08099997722, 08099997723
Info@waldorknollacademy.com
www.waldorknollacademy.com

Touch/Physical Contact Policy

Introduction

Touch and physical contact is essential in order to provide sensitive, high quality care and educational provision.

Used in context and with empathy, touch supports the development of natural interactions with the young people we teach and care for.

This policy sets out the reasons for physical contact between an adult and young person.

Purpose of touch and physical contact at Waldorf Knoll Academy

Touch and physical contact may be used for:

Communication

- Placing a hand on someone's shoulder when speaking to them.
- Greet someone (shaking hands).
- Supporting early communication (e.g. sensitively directing, guiding, supporting children in an educational task).

Learning

- To assist, prompt and enable interactions with peers and staff.
- To support engagement with resources and classroom activities.
- Dance.
- PE.
- Climbing.
- Using the trampoline.
- Intensive interaction.

Transitions

- Offering a hand to guide, prompt a student during changes between activities.

Play

- Many aspects of play activities naturally involve touch.

Emotional reasons

- To communicate affection and warmth.
- To give reassurance.
- Reduce risk of harm.
- Protect children and young people from danger by physically intervening.

Intimate care:

- To give medical and nursing care.
- Assist students after they have used the toilet to ensure that their bottom is clean

Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Waldorf Knoll Academy

Students within the Early Years and Foundation Stage are by definition much younger than students elsewhere in school. Children can be as young as two years of age when starting school, and are still developing emotional and physical skills and abilities. Students are encouraged to develop meaningful relationships with members of staff that they work with on a daily basis. This often involves physical contact.

Many statements from the Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) area of the EYFS documentation explain how very young students would need consistent physical contact and reassurance from a familiar adult this can include cuddles, being held and comforted.

At Waldorf Knoll Academy, within the EYFS we would suggest that as far as possible appropriate physical contact would be in clear view and with other adults present wherever possible.

Guidelines for staff

Staff need to be clear and open about why they are using touch and be able to explain their practice.

Staff may be concerned about the issue of age-appropriateness. However, the developmental age and emotional and communication needs of the individual are far more important than actual age. While gender and cultural factors have relevance in issues of touch, the emotional and communication needs of the individual are due equal consideration.

As far as possible, the young person involved should consent to any touch given and staff should be sensitive to any verbal and non-verbal communication they give that might indicate that they don't want to be touched. It should always be considered by staff that for touch to provide positive experiences it should be consensual.

Staff should be sensitive to any changes in the young person's behaviour (e.g. overexcitement or negative reactions) that might indicate the need to reduce or withdraw touch; particularly during play or intensive interaction.

The people we support should be given opportunities to touch each other while interacting and playing, as would happen naturally for any child or young person. Attention should always be given to ensure that both parties are happy with this.

Staff must be aware of potential hazards in respect of sexual issues:

- Staff must be sensitive to the danger of touch being misunderstood and triggering sexual arousal and must be alert to all feedback signals from the person they are working with.
- It is *never* appropriate for staff to touch a young person's intimate body areas except as part of intimate or medical care.
- It is not appropriate for staff to kiss students.

If staff are in any doubt about issues concerning appropriate touch or observe any practice that causes concern they should discuss this with the Lead Person for Child Protection. The lead person for child protection at Waldorf Knoll Academy is Dr. (Mrs) Adebimpe Alder and she can be reached at dralder@waldorfnollacademy.com or 08099997723.