



Positive Touch Policy

Updated: 11/05/2017

At UK2Learn Guardianship we are a caring community, so we do not regard touch as a negative, but rather 'Positive Touch' when used correctly. Very few people would adhere to a no touch policy if it applied to people they care about.

Purpose of having a 'Touch Policy'

Positive touch is a basic human need. As a guardianship agency we interact daily with young people, some of whom are naturally tactile and affectionate. We want to make sure that their needs are met and that they develop caring, positive relationships with others. If a child initiates contact or needs reassurance, we want our staff and host families to feel confident that they can respond naturally without fear of unfounded accusations.

We want parents to feel confident that we will respond appropriately to their children's needs, and to understand that positive touch may be a part of that response. We believe that avoiding using positive touch when appropriate would have a negative effect on the children under our guardianship.

The following guidance gives examples of situations where positive touch is appropriate. This list is not exhaustive and there will be many more instances where it may be used appropriately.

Examples of Acceptable Touch

- First Aid – e.g. cleaning wounds, applying plasters
- Responding to their initiated contact – e.g. returning hugs, holding hands;
- Reassuring and comforting children – e.g. when they are upset, worried or in need of guidance.
- Praise – e.g. reaffirming "Well done" with a gentle pat on the shoulder.
- Safety – e.g. crossing the road, preventing children from hurting themselves, e.g. placing your hand firmly around the child's wrist, arm or hand.

Physical Touch

The use of any physical contact should always be undertaken with due consideration. UK2Learn Guardianship does not condone the uncontrolled or unconsidered use of force, nor does it condone the use of physical intervention.

Physical prompts, guides and reassurances are necessary in a range of settings. Staff should, when appropriate, feel able to use touch to comfort and communicate with pupils. Such use of touch must be done in a professional manner, avoiding any possible perception of inappropriate behaviour or even abuse.

To use touch/physical support successfully staff and host families must;

- be non-abusive, with no intention to cause pain or injury
- be in the best interests of the child and others
- have a clear education purpose or to improve social relationships
- take account of gender issues

Suzie Mackie, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), should ensure that staff and host families are aware of any student who finds physical touch unwelcome. Such sensitivity may arise from the pupil's background, personal history etc. This information should be recorded in the student's central file in the office.

If there are any concerns about inappropriate touch by a member of staff or by a child, these should be immediately reported to the DSL (or one of the DSLs in their absence) and these concerns will be dealt with following UK2Learn Guardianship's safeguarding procedures.

Suzie Mackie can be contacted 24 hours, seven days a week on + 44 7787 556963