

# SAFE & POSITIVE TOUCH POLICY & PROCEDURES

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## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 These guidelines are intended to support staff in their roles working with clients with profound and complex needs at Jigsaw and to protect clients within a safeguarding context.
- 1.2 This includes:
  - The context and importance of positive physical contact (also called touch)
  - A Statement of Intent (The purpose of positive physical contact)
  - Guidelines for Staff
  - How to work collaboratively to ensure a person-centred approach.

## **2. Definitions**

- 2.1 “The Trust” means Jigsaw School, Jigsaw Plus, Jigsaw Trust and Jigsaw Trading 2013 Limited (Café on the Park)
- 2.2 ‘Heads of Divisions’ are as follows: Director of Education (Jigsaw CABAS® School); ABA Consultant (JigsawPlus); Commercial Development Manager (Jigsaw Trading); Chief Executive Officer (Trust Shared Services).
- 2.3 ‘Staff’ or ‘Staff member’ refers to employees, bank workers and volunteers.
- 2.4 ‘Intimate area’ refers to any primary genital area: groin, inner thigh, buttock or breast. It may also include other areas of the body e.g. head, where for cultural and/or faith reasons, this is also viewed as an intimate area of the body.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff working with adult clients of Jigsaw.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 For clients who have profound and complex needs who are at the earliest stages of development the use of touch is recognised as a fundamental communication tool.
- 4.2 The use of touch to communicate positive messages between humans is well researched and shows how a lack of touch, particularly at the early stages of development can have negative effects on all aspects of a person’s physical and emotional well-being.
- 4.3 Physical contact with other people is a natural aspect of living and enables people to share emotions and pass messages to each other about care, respect and enjoyment of being with another person. Learning about giving and receiving physical contact is a vital part of learning for life.
- 4.4 Jigsaw aims for clients to develop social relationships, communication, citizenship and self-determination.
- 4.5 Positive physical contact supports learning strategies as it encourages and stimulates interaction, developing the skills necessary to understand intentional communication. Learning through touch and about positive touch is part of everyday living and therefore it is absolutely appropriate it is discussed within the curriculum and viewed as an opportunity for learning.

- 4.6 For clients who find physical contact challenging and themselves use physical touch that challenges others, the withdrawal of physical contact will not improve their understanding or learning. Appropriate touch can only be learnt when there are examples of positive touch to follow.
- 4.7 For clients who also have sensory impairments the use of touch is essential to enable them to understand their environment and activities. Body signing is an example of an acceptable method of developing communication skills.
- 4.8 For clients for whom non-verbal communication strategies are the only strategies available the use of physical contact to communicate becomes one of the most important strategies to develop and promote positively.
- 4.9 People with profound and complex needs may rely on caregivers to meet their basic human needs such as eating, drinking and going to the toilet. They may be used to touch that has a functional purpose. It is important that people also experience touch that is focused on their social, emotional and educational needs.
- 4.10 Developing a person-centred approach supports knowing the individual well and what is important 'to' them. This understanding is vital to developing use of touch with individual clients and responding to the individual's needs.
- 4.11 Our clients are from a wide diversity of cultures, faith groups and ethnicities. It is recognised that within these communities the use of touch, particularly with regard to gender, has important meanings. We will always seek to ensure clients' receive appropriate care and treatment with regard to their faith and culture and we will work with families and carers to develop our understanding and practices around positive physical contact in this regard.
- 4.12 If positive physical contact, usually in the form of touch, is recognised as having a vital role in an individual's development then strategies to use touch must be balanced with guidelines that safeguard clients and staff.
- 4.13 Safeguarding client's needs is central to our work. If we recognise physical contact as important educationally, emotionally, socially and physically we must also recognise the need to keep clients and staff safe from inappropriate or unwanted touch and provide an open, honest environment where everyone can discuss issues around physical contact.
- 4.14 People with learning difficulties have been the subject of abuse, both intentional and non-intentional. The best way to prevent abuse and promote safeguarding is through transparency and openness in all situations. Opportunities for communication between staff and families and carers alongside multi-disciplinary partners is crucial to the promotion of a person centred curriculum and the aims of Jigsaw.

## **5. Policy Statement**

- 5.1 This list demonstrates the ways in which positive physical contact may take place, but will not be exhaustive.
- 5.2 To develop client's communication in an educational and social context
  - Demonstrate acknowledgment of a person, greetings and goodbyes.
  - To encourage interaction and extend the fundamentals of communication

- Reciprocate touch to show you have 'heard' someone.
- To give reassurance and emotional support
- To prompt an action or support continuing an action
- To initiate an activity e.g. using hand over hand.
- Massage for therapeutic and educational purposes.
- Encouraging the acceptance of touch, particularly for people who are tactile defensive.
- To explore tactile resources which stimulate interest and interaction.
- To show you are having fun together-a pre-requisite of good learning.
- To communicate a mutual enjoyment of another person's company, an appreciation of their personality and the gifts of their personality that they bring to Jigsaw.

### 5.3 **To meet client's care needs:**

- To provide medication.
- To assist in eating and drinking.
- To assist in personal care needs, including: going to the toilet, washing hands or face, brushing hair.
- To support mobility.
- To support a client out of their wheelchair for positive positioning and back to their wheelchair.
- To support a client whilst out of their wheelchair, following a physiotherapy plan.
- To prevent dangerous situations to the client or to others.

### 5.4 **Staff may not use physical contact to:**

- Exploit or force a client to do something.
- Touch genital areas unless necessary whilst providing intimate care.
- Satisfy the staff member or the needs of the organisation above the needs of the client.
- Engage in sexual contact or encourage sexualised behaviour.
- Punish or reprimand.
- Make jokes at the client's expense, to humiliate or force affection.

5.5 All of the above examples constitute abuse if it is intentional or not and will be investigated by Jigsaw Safeguarding Team.

## **6. Follow Jigsaw Policy and Procedures**

6.1 Staff will follow the Safeguarding Adults Policy at all times. This includes the reporting of any concerns and liaison with the Safeguarding Officer or deputy.

- 6.2 Jigsaw will provide an environment where physical contact with clients is discussed openly and honestly. Any staff queries will be dealt with promptly and documented as a record that discussion has taken place.
- 6.3 There may be some specific uses of touch which are in place to support a client to protect their safety or that of others. This must be documented in client Behaviour Guidelines and Risk Assessments and only staff trained in these forms of touch may use them. They must always be recorded and lead to a discussion around the prevention of triggers and escalation using a PROACT-SCIPr-UK® approach.

## **7. Understand the client and how they give consent**

- 7.1 The client should always give consent to the type of physical contact they receive. Staff may have to interpret how a client who does not use verbal communication gives consent. The understanding of this should come from information collated during assessment and through regular discussions with staff, the client's family, carers or representatives.
- 7.2 If in doubt about consent issues discuss your views with your Line Manager.
- 7.3 Jigsaw will discuss physical contact with the client's representatives to ensure the client's voice is represented in any decisions made regarding touch.
- 7.4 All staff will be clear why and how touch is being used with any client. This comes from understanding the individual client's needs through reading information which explains these in a person centred context e.g. Client Profile, Risk Assessment, Behaviour Guidelines.
- 7.5 Staff will be sensitive to the verbal and non-verbal communication of clients when assessing if touch is consensual. There may be exceptions when physical contact is not wanted by the client but is necessary for their protection or that of others. This physical contact should be documented in risk assessments, behaviour guidelines and the client profile. It should always be reported and discussed by staff to ensure abuse is not taking place or staff are being put at risk of allegations.

## **8. Know why you are using touch with an individual**

- 8.1 Take responsibility to record the client's preferred physical contact and use of touch to communicate.
- 8.2 Read client's supporting documents and clarify any questions you have about the kind of physical contact you think you should be having.
- 8.3 Understand why the use of touch is important to our client's education and well-being.

## **9. Work as a team to protect clients and staff**

- 9.1 Staff will work as a team to regularly assess and review positive physical contact for any client and its implications for members of staff working with the client.
- 9.2 If you have any concerns over the use of touch report them immediately to the Learning Support Manager, another senior member of staff or the Safeguarding Officer.
- 9.3 The use of positive physical contact must be balanced with a sensitivity to clients who may become sexually aroused by certain types of touch. Staff will avoid any touch to chest and genital areas of the body, regardless of gender, unless absolutely necessary e.g. permitted

when involved in personal, intimate care where staff must maintain the dignity of the client as paramount.

## **10. Maintaining open communication**

- 10.1 It is acknowledged that staff will have a range of emotional responses to physical contact with clients, dependent on culture, gender, age, ethnicity and faith.
- 10.2 Staff must not be placed in situations where they feel unable to support clients because they do not understand why physical contact is being encouraged or feel uncomfortable in carrying them out.
- 10.3 Staff should feel they can discuss these issues openly and with their Line Manager to resolve difficulties as soon as possible.
- 10.4 Staff are not expected to have physical contact that they are uncomfortable with: this would negate any positive benefits that touch brings as positive touch must be mutually consensual.
- 10.5 Ways to support clients through positive physical contact should be documented and regularly reviewed by staff, including but not only at client reviews.

## **11. Ensure physical contact is not only for functional purposes**

- 11.1 Many of our clients receive touch for functional purposes such as personal care and assistance with eating and drinking. These forms of touch should be sensitive to individual need and follow any available plans and guidelines for the individual.
- 11.2 Learners will also learn about communication through these forms of touch and so it is important opportunities for interaction are maximised throughout the day. Giving medication or PEG feeding can be excellent opportunities for supportive and positive touch.

## **12. Potential risks**

- 12.1 The use of positive physical contact may give rise to sexual arousal in a client, although this is not intentional. This may be because the client is experiencing the physical and psychological changes in puberty or have not developed their understanding of sexualised behaviour.
- 12.2 In this case it will be necessary to review how physical contact is used by staff to reduce this risk and promote the client's understanding of their behaviour so they may have greater control over their own emotional responses.
- 12.3 If a client touches a member of staff in an intimate place or in a way that makes the staff member feel uncomfortable, but the client has no intention or understanding that this causes discomfort, staff may need to withdraw from physical contact but not seek to reprimand the client as this may encourage more of this behaviour through the negative response.
- 12.4 If this behaviour continues it will need to be discussed and strategies developed to support alternative behaviour and recorded on the client's Behaviour Guidelines.
- 12.5 Staff will always be supported if they feel they have been touched by a client in a way either intentionally or non-intentionally that is uncomfortable for them.

- 12.6 Staff are not expected to tolerate forms of touch they are uncomfortable with but do need to develop their understanding that some clients with profound and complex needs will not have the cognitive understanding to deliberately cause pain or social embarrassment.
- 12.7 Clients may have learnt behaviour, over time, which has always produced a response that is stimulating to them. Understanding the client's individual learning needs and the social and cultural meanings of touch will enable staff to develop a greater understanding of their client's needs.

## **13. How to work collaboratively to ensure a person centred approach.**

- 13.1 At the heart of ensuring staff and clients are safeguarded around physical contact is the need to communicate as a team, share information and respond to different perspectives with respect and understanding.
- 13.2 Hearing the client voice is essential to understanding how clients prefer to communicate physically and to receive positive physical contact. Staff training which encourages understanding of how learning takes place for people with profound and complex needs is central to developing this understanding.
- 13.3 Recognising the value of positive physical contact in our clients' lives and harnessing it to promote the fundamentals of communication through a person centred curriculum is key to clients' achievement and success.
- 13.4 This document intends to give staff the protection to undertake their responsibilities with confidence and to ensure clients are safeguarded within a learning environment.

## **14. Implementation**

### **14.1 Distribution**

- 14.1.1 This policy will be available to all staff via the Jigsaw intranet.
- 14.1.2 This policy will be available to all clients at commencement of placement.

### **14.2 Training**

- 14.2.1 All staff will receive training as part of their induction.

### **14.3 Roles & Responsibilities**

- 14.3.1 The Heads of Divisions are responsible for reviewing this policy annually or as required.
- 14.3.2 The Learning & Support Manager is responsible for ensuring that all staff are appropriately trained to deliver the requirements of this policy.
- 14.3.3 All staff are responsible for reading and following the guidelines outlined in this policy.

## **15. Policy Review**

- 15.1 This policy will be updated as necessary to reflect best practice and to ensure compliance with any changes or amendments to relevant legislation.
- 15.2 This policy was last reviewed in March 2018.



## 16. Version History

No.	Date	Amendment
1.1		

## 17. Related Legislation & Guidance

Document	Location

## 18. Related Internal Documentation

Document	Hard Copy Location	Electronic Copy Location
Safeguarding Adults Policy		Operations / PAWS / POLICIES /
Behaviour Support Policy & Procedures		Operations / PAWS / POLICIES /
Privacy, Dignity & Respect Policy		Operations / PAWS / POLICIES /
Mental Capacity Act Policy		Operations / PAWS / POLICIES /
Risk Assessment Policy		Operations / PAWS / POLICIES /
Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy		Operations / PAWS / POLICIES /
Administration of Medication Policy		
Staff Code of Conduct Policy		
Confidentiality Policy		