



1. Introduction – Statement of Intent

Our policy on touch has been developed using the 'Guide for Safer Working Practice for Adults working with Children and Young People' (2019).

Throughout this Policy document, the word 'staff' is used to include those employed at Sound Church and authorised regular volunteers i.e. those who have been provided with additional training and guidance in dealing with the emotional aspects of young people with special educational needs. Children and Young People are described as 'young people' throughout this document.

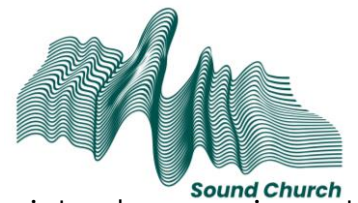
2. General

Many jobs within the children's workforce require physical contact with children as part of their role. There are also occasions when it is entirely appropriate for other adults to have some physical contact with the child or young person with whom they are working. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, adults should only touch children in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities.

Not all children and young people feel comfortable about physical contact. Permission should be sought from a child or young person before physical contact is made. Where the child is very young, there should be a discussion with the parent or carer about what physical contact is acceptable and/or necessary.

When physical contact is made with a child this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity, and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Adults, nevertheless, should use their professional judgement at all times, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible – use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

Physical contact which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person is likely to raise questions unless there is explicit agreement on the need for, and nature of, that contact. This would then be part of a formally agreed plan or within the parameters of established, agreed and legal professional protocols on physical contact e.g. sport activities or medical procedures. Any such arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.



3. Guidance

Sound Church staff should always consider and abide by the following points when carrying out their duties:

- Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority.
- Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, or an observer.
- Play fighting is not acceptable between adults and children, or adults and adults in front of children.
- Do not indulge in horseplay.
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.
- Children are required to undertake self-care tasks independently, such as toileting. Please refer to our Child Protection Policy.
- When a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, it is the responsibility of the adult to sensitively deter the child. Such incidents must be recorded in the Child Protection Report Form (SP1.1)
- Where a child presents a danger to themselves or to others it will, at times, be necessary for staff to use means of physical intervention. At such times, staff should always take care to explain what they are doing and that the actions taken are for safety reasons.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that all practice at Sound Church is safe and appropriate. We should all expect to be observed by others and be prepared to discuss any concerns we have in a professional manner. Any member of staff who is concerned about another member of staff's practice should discuss their concerns with the Chair of Trustees.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Sound Church recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations which may cause the need for a physical intervention. The key principals are that any physical intervention should follow a **dynamic risk assessment** and be:

- **in the best interest of the child;**
- **reasonable and proportionate;**
- **intended to reduce risk;**
 - **the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.**

The Post Incident Support Structure for Children, Young Person and Staff

People take time to recover from a serious incident. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if necessary. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the appropriate system (injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice). Time needs to be found for both staff and students for recovery and for the possible depression that will follow a distressing incident as well as the time needed to repair relationships. ***The outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.***



Recording

Whenever a physical intervention is used the incident must be recorded in the serious incident book. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should if possible be completed within 24 hours.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. They will also carry out a regular analysis of physical intervention incidents and issues.

4. Complimentary Policies

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the following Policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Vision and Values Guidance Documents

Appendix A



Positive Touch Policy – Consent

- I / we have read and understand the Positive Touch Policy
- I / we agree are in agreement with the principles and practices outlined in this policy.
- I / we understand there are occasions when physical contact with a young person in school is proper and necessary, as outlined in this policy.

- I / we would like to discuss this policy further.

Childs Name	
Parent(s) Name	
Parent(s) Signature	
Date	