



Peer Massage Policy

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Document Control

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1	27.04.26	New policy	I.Webb

Approval

Meeting	Date	Chair
Teaching & Learning Committee	May 2026	H. Brocklehurst

Peer Massage Policy

For Adults Working with Children

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how peer massage is planned, delivered, and supervised safely within school. It ensures that peer massage supports pupils' wellbeing while maintaining clear safeguarding arrangements, professional boundaries, and consistency with the school's Staff Code of Conduct.

In addition to wellbeing outcomes, the Peer Massage Programme plays a key role in explicitly teaching pupils about consent, personal boundaries, and bodily autonomy. Through structured and repeated practice, pupils learn how to ask for consent, how to respond appropriately to others' choices, and how to recognise and respect personal boundaries.

This policy should be read alongside the schools:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- PSHE / Wellbeing Curriculum

2. What Is Peer Massage?

Peer massage is a structured, adult-supervised wellbeing activity in which pupils use simple, agreed techniques to massage one another over clothing only, within clearly defined physical, emotional, and behavioural boundaries.

Our Peer Massage Programme is an integral part of the school's culture, fostering a positive and healthy understanding of touch while reinforcing the importance of consent, communication, and respect for personal boundaries from a young age.

A central aim of the programme is to teach pupils that consent is essential in any interaction involving personal space or touch. Pupils are supported to understand that:

- Consent must always be asked for and clearly given
- Everyone has ownership of their own body
- It is acceptable to say no, stop, or change their mind at any time
- Consent can be withdrawn, even if it was previously given

Peer massage is not therapy or treatment, and participation is always voluntary. Pupils may choose not to participate or may stop at any point without explanation or consequence.

3. Rationale and Wellbeing Benefits

The programme harnesses the benefits of positive, appropriate touch to support pupils' emotional wellbeing. When pupils engage in peer massage, the body releases oxytocin, sometimes referred to as the "happy hormone".

Oxytocin plays a key role in:

- **Reducing stress:** helping lower cortisol levels and promote relaxation

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- **Building trust and connection:** supporting bonding and positive peer relationships
- **Strengthening emotional resilience:** contributing to emotional regulation and emotional health

Alongside these benefits, peer massage provides a practical, age-appropriate context in which pupils can learn and rehearse consent-based behaviours, directly reinforcing safeguarding messages around boundaries, respect, and appropriate touch.

4. Relationship to the Staff Code of Conduct

All peer massage sessions must be delivered in full accordance with the school's Staff Code of Conduct. Adults are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional behaviour, safeguarding practice, and appropriate boundaries at all times.

In particular:

- Adults must maintain clear professional boundaries with all pupils
- Adults must never massage children
- Peer massage is strictly between pupils only
- Adult conduct must never be open to misinterpretation
- Adults must act as positive role models, explicitly modelling respect, consent-led language, and calm communication
- Any concerns regarding conduct, boundaries, or safeguarding must be reported immediately in line with safeguarding procedures

Failure to follow this policy in conjunction with the Staff Code of Conduct may result in safeguarding concerns being raised.

5. Programme Details

- Each peer massage session lasts approximately 15 minutes
- Sessions take place once per day, providing regular opportunities for pupils to practise consent and boundary-setting
- Teachers lead and facilitate sessions but do not massage children
- Only children massage other children, following taught techniques and agreed boundaries
- Children who do not consent to be massaged are provided with alternative, equally valued options, including:
 - Self-massage
 - Relaxation or mindful stillness
 - Performing the massage movements in the air

These alternatives ensure inclusion while fully respecting pupils' choices and reinforcing that consent is a personal decision.

6. Ground Rules: Expectations for Adults

Adults are responsible for explicitly teaching, reinforcing, and monitoring the following ground rules in every session, with a clear emphasis on consent and personal boundaries.

Consent

- Pupils must always ask for consent before beginning any massage
- Silence, lack of response, or hesitation does not constitute consent
- Consent must be clear, verbal, and freely given
- Adults must reinforce that learning to ask for and respect consent is a key purpose of the programme, not just a rule

Right to Stop or Change Mind

- Pupils may say “stop” at any time, and this must be respected immediately
- Pupils may change their mind, even if they initially agreed
- Adults must intervene immediately if consent is not respected

Respect and Communication

- All pupils’ views, feelings, and boundaries must be respected
- Pupils must follow their partner’s instructions
- Pupils must not repeatedly question a partner to change an answer
- Calm, kind, and respectful behaviour is expected at all times

Appropriate Touch and Boundaries

- Massage takes place over clothing only
- Only approved techniques may be used
- Any breach of boundaries must result in the session being stopped immediately

Adult Involvement

- Adults supervise, observe, and support only
- Adults must remain visible and actively supervising throughout

Session Environment

- Sessions must be calm, structured, and predictable
- Relaxing music may be used appropriately
- Rooms must be arranged to allow clear supervision at all times

Beginning and Ending Sessions

- Ground rules must be revisited at the start of every session
- Pupils are encouraged to thank their partner at the end
- Adults reinforce positive choices and respectful behaviour

7. Sample Massage Moves Used in the Programme

The programme incorporates simple, age-appropriate massage moves, taught and supervised by staff. All moves are carried out over clothing only and used only with consent.

Approved examples include:

- Breathing
- Cat Grip
- Baker / Kneading
- Hearts
- Scooping
- Forehead Stroke
- Sliding Board
- Butterfly
- Bear Walk
- Ice Skating
- Brushing the Horse
- Brushing Off the Snow

Pupils may refuse or stop any specific move at any time.

Children who do not join in can complete the moves in the air or complete them on their hand using resources as seen below.

**** Please note – if a child is completing a hand massage this will be the only time a massage is completed with no clothes on.**



8. Monitoring and Reporting

Adults must remain vigilant throughout all sessions. Any concerns, discomfort, or breaches of consent or boundaries must be:

- Addressed immediately, and
- Reported in line with the school's safeguarding and recording procedures

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly in line with safeguarding guidance, staff training updates, and school practice.