

All8 Sensory Support Safe Physical Touch Policy



SECTION A: POLICY PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy explains All8 Sensory Support's position on the use of healthy, positive touch and provides basic guidance to meet developmental needs and safeguard children at all times. It should be read alongside All8 Sensory Support's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Intimate Care Policy, and any relevant behaviour or physical intervention policy where these apply.

All practice under this policy must be child-centred, proportionate, respectful, developmentally appropriate and consistent with current safeguarding expectations, including the principle that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

SECTION B: VALUES STATEMENT

Healthy touch is a basic human need. There are numerous physical and emotional benefits of healthy touch within the context of safe and caring relationships. Withholding positive touch can also have negative consequences for children and our community.

All8 Sensory Support wants to ensure that the needs of children are met and that they develop caring, positive relationships with others. For example, if a child initiates contact or needs reassurance, we want adults to feel confident that they can respond naturally without fear of unfounded accusations. We also want others (including family members and other professionals) 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.

Staff must consider each child's age, stage of development, communication needs, disability, neurodivergence, sensory preferences, culture, previous experiences and expressed wishes when deciding whether any form of positive touch is appropriate.

Where possible, adults should seek the child's consent before offering physical contact and should stop immediately if the child indicates, verbally or non-verbally, that they do not want touch. A child should never be pressured to accept physical contact, even where the adult's intention is positive.

SECTION C: EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE TOUCH

Healthy touch includes physical contact in everyday tasks, greetings, encouragement and reassurance, nurturing, and protecting children. The following examples are not exhaustive and highlight situations where healthy touch is appropriate and encouraged:

- Greetings such as handshakes and fist bumps
- Assisting with hygiene and dressing
- First aid such as cleaning an injury or applying a bandage
- Support with tasks such as a sports activity
- Responding to their initiated contact to return a hug or hold hands
- Providing a hand hold or hug to reassure a worried or upset child
- Offering praise through a pat on the shoulder or high five
- Ensuring safety by guiding or supporting a child away from immediate risk, in line with relevant organisational policies.

Staff should avoid touch that could reasonably be misunderstood, appears secretive, is unnecessary, is unwanted by the child, or is inconsistent with this policy, the child's support plan, or professional boundaries.

SECTION D: TYPES OF TRAINING PROVIDED TO STAFF

All Staff at All8 Sensory Support receive training on the developmental needs of children related to touch, the content of this policy, strategies to respond to feedback from children, and types of touch that are unacceptable (e.g. controlling, violent, or sexual contact). Training also includes safeguarding responsibilities, professional boundaries, recognising when a child may not want touch, adapting support for children with communication or sensory needs, and recording or reporting concerns promptly.

SECTION E: PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CONCERNS

The protection and safety of children through ethical practice is our priority. Anyone who has concerns about inappropriate touch from an adult or child should report their concern immediately to the Designated Safeguard Lead (Ali Alderton) who will deal with the report according to organisational safeguarding, ethics and policy. Should your concern regard this person then you should contact Safeguarding Lead Kirsten Harwood.

This policy reflects current safeguarding expectations as at September 2026 and should be reviewed sooner than the stated review date if national guidance, local safeguarding

arrangements, organisational practice, or the needs of children using the service change.

Date adopted 01.09.2026

Date to be reviewed 01.09.2027