



Physical Touch Policy

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Physical Touch Policy

1. Policy Statement

- Nescot College recognises the importance of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries while acknowledging that there may be circumstances where physical contact between staff and students is necessary or unavoidable. This policy aims to protect both staff, students and guests by providing clear guidance on acceptable physical contact within the educational setting.

2. Scope

- This policy applies to:
 - All college staff (teaching and non-teaching)
 - Students
 - Volunteers and visitors
 - Contract workers
 - Anyone working on behalf of Nescot College
- Glossary
 - See Appendix 1

3. Objectives

- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students
 - To protect staff and guests from allegations of inappropriate conduct
 - To provide clear guidelines on appropriate physical contact
 - To maintain professional boundaries while supporting students' needs
 - To comply with relevant safeguarding legislation and guidance

4. Policy

General Principles

Staff and guests should operate on the principle that they should avoid physical contact with students unless it is necessary and proportionate.

When physical contact is necessary, it should be:

- Minimal
- Age-appropriate
- Gender-sensitive
- Culturally appropriate
- In response to the student's needs
- With the student's consent where possible
- In view of others whenever feasible

Acceptable Physical Contact

Physical contact may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Emergency Situations
 - To prevent immediate harm to the student or others

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- To prevent damage to property
- During emergency evacuation procedures
- Educational Context
 - Demonstrating techniques in PE, dance, or practical subjects
 - Providing first aid
- Supporting students with special educational needs or disabilities
 - Emotional Support
 - Brief consoling touch on the shoulder or arm in cases of distress
 - Handshakes or high-fives for congratulatory purposes

Unacceptable Physical Contact

The following types of physical contact are never acceptable:

- Any form of corporal punishment
- Intimate touching
- Physical contact as a punishment
- Physical contact when a student has refused consent
- Contact in isolated areas
- Unnecessary or prolonged physical contact

Use of Reasonable Force

In line with Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:

- Reasonable force may be used to prevent students from hurting themselves or others
- Any use of reasonable force must be proportionate to the circumstances
- All incidents involving reasonable force must be documented on an incident form
- Staff should receive appropriate training in de-escalation techniques

Recording and Reporting

- All instances of significant physical contact must be recorded on an incident form and on CPOMs, if pertaining to a student
- Reports should be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and if involves a member of staff reported to the Chief People Officer (under DDSL role allegations made against staff)
- Parents/guardians should be informed when significant physical contact has occurred
- Any concerns about inappropriate physical contact must be reported immediately

Role of Security Team

Nescot College has a security team that is trained and licensed in accordance with the Security Industry Authority (SIA) standards for Door Supervisors. The security team plays a key role in supporting this Physical Touch Policy by:

- Providing expertise in safe, lawful, and proportionate physical intervention techniques.
- Responding to incidents where physical intervention may be required to prevent harm, such as fights, assaults, or the destruction of property.
- Documenting all instances where security personnel have needed to use physical force, in line with SIA and college reporting procedures.

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- Liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head of Safeguarding to ensure any safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly.
- Maintaining up-to-date knowledge of relevant legislation, such as the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Use of Reasonable Force guidance.
- The security team's SIA Door Supervisor training equips them with the skills and knowledge to manage challenging situations while respecting individual rights and professional boundaries. Their involvement ensures a consistent, lawful, and trauma-informed approach to physical contact within the college environment.

5. Responsibilities

- a. Senior Leadership Team
 - Ensure policy implementation
 - Provide necessary training
 - Review and update policy regularly
 - Handle any complaints or allegations
- b. Head of Safeguarding (DDSL)
 - Maintain records of reported incidents
 - Provide guidance to staff
 - Liaise with external agencies when necessary
 - Review incident patterns and recommend improvements
- c. Staff
 - Read, understand, and comply with this policy
 - Attend relevant training
 - Report any concerns promptly
 - Maintain appropriate professional boundaries
 - Document any significant physical contact
- d. Guests
 - Maintain appropriate professional boundaries
 - Report any concerns promptly
 - Report any significant physical contact
- e. Students
 - Respect personal boundaries
 - Report any concerns to appropriate staff members
 - Understand and follow college guidelines on appropriate behaviour

6. Related legislation and documents

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version)
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93 and 165)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest version)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004

7. Approval and Review

Policy Originator:	Assistant Principal, Learning Support and Student Experience
Approved by:	CLT
Date Approved:	Autumn 2024
Review Interval:	Yearly
Last Review Date:	Autumn 2024
Next Review Date:	Autumn 2025
Audience:	Staff, Guests and Students
Entered on SP:	Autumn 2025

8. Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

- **Appropriate Physical Contact** Physical interaction that is necessary, proportionate, and suitable for the educational context and the student's needs.
- **Corporal Punishment** Any form of physical discipline or punishment involving the deliberate infliction of pain or discomfort, which is strictly prohibited.
- **De-escalation Techniques** Methods used to reduce the intensity of a potentially volatile situation without using physical intervention.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** The appointed person responsible for leading on safeguarding and child protection matters within the college.
- **Duty of Care** The legal obligation to safeguard students from harm while they are participating in college activities.
- **FE (Further Education)** Post-16 education that typically follows secondary education but is not part of higher education.
- **Gender-sensitive** Approach that takes into account and respects different gender identities and cultural perspectives regarding physical contact.
- **Inappropriate Physical Contact** Any form of touch that violates professional boundaries, causes discomfort, or could be interpreted as having sexual, threatening, or discriminatory implications.
- **Intimate Care** Any care which involves washing, touching, or carrying out an invasive procedure to intimate personal areas, requiring specific procedures and trained staff.
- **Physical Intervention** Direct physical contact between persons where reasonable force is used to control, restrain, or guide a student's actions.
- **Professional Boundaries** The physical, emotional, and behavioural limits that define the relationship between staff and students.
- **Reasonable Force** The minimum amount of force necessary to prevent a student from causing harm to themselves or others, or damaging property.
- **Safeguarding** The action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
- **SEND** Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- **Significant Physical Contact** Any instance of physical contact that goes beyond brief, incidental touch and requires documentation.
- **Staff** All adults working in the college environment, including teachers, support staff, volunteers, and contractors.

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- **Student** Any person enrolled at the college, regardless of age.
- **Vulnerable Adult** A person aged 18 or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

Usage Notes

- These terms should be interpreted within the context of Further Education and UK safeguarding legislation
- Definitions may be updated to reflect changes in legislation or best practice
- Staff should familiarise themselves with these terms as part of their safeguarding training