



St Thomas's
CE Primary School

Sensory Massage Policy

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Part of



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Church of England
Trust**

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We are a Christian Faith school with a happy, caring, sharing atmosphere that recognises the worth of everyone in our multicultural, multi-ethnic community. We recognise the centrality of the spiritual development of our pupils and promote this through the whole of our curriculum.

It is our intention that the children should experience the wonders of God's world. They should respect each other and learn to live in peace with themselves and their neighbours. This is fostered through good links with the community that the school serves.

Our aim is to enable the children to realise their full potential through the quality of education we give them. This is achieved through a professional dedicated staff, each of whom seeks to provide the highest standards of teaching and learning

Policy on Sensory Massage Over Clothing for Children with Complex Needs in a Primary School

1. Introduction

This policy provides guidance on the practice of sensory massage over clothing for children with complex needs at St Thomas's Primary School. Sensory massage is a therapeutic approach aimed at providing calming sensory input, promoting relaxation, and supporting emotional and sensory regulation. The practice will be used with children who may benefit from sensory input as part of their individualised learning and support plan. This policy ensures that sensory massage is delivered in a respectful, safe, and effective manner in line with the needs of each child.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define the practice of sensory massage over clothing for children with complex needs.
- Ensure the approach is implemented consistently and appropriately across the school.
- Provide a framework for ensuring that sensory massage is used in a safe, ethical, and effective manner.
- Protect the dignity and well-being of children with complex needs during sensory activities.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, including teaching assistants, teaching staff, and therapeutic support staff, who may be involved in sensory massage activities for children with complex needs in the primary school setting.

4. Key Principles

- **Respect and Dignity:** Sensory massage must be carried out with respect for each child's individual preferences, sensitivities, and cultural considerations. It must always be over clothing, ensuring that the child's privacy and dignity are maintained.
- **Individualised Approach:** Sensory massage is a therapeutic intervention that should be tailored to meet the specific needs, preferences, and sensory profiles of each child.
- **Parental/Carer Consent:** Parental or carer consent is required before sensory massage is implemented with a child. Parents or carers will be informed of the purpose, procedure, and benefits of sensory massage, and their permission will be sought. Consent must be updated periodically.
- **Training and Competence:** Staff members should follow guidance on sensory massage using the following you tube videos:
 - Circle of life sensory massage story
 - A thousand years sensory massage story
 - A million dreams sensory massage story
 - A whole new world sensory massage story
 - Remember me sensory massage story

Staff must be knowledgeable about the potential benefits and risks and be competent in understanding and responding to children's physical and emotional cues.

- **Safety and Well-being:** Sensory massage should be used to promote the well-being of the child. It must never cause distress, discomfort, or harm. Staff must be alert to signs of over-stimulation or discomfort and must stop immediately if the child expresses a desire to stop or becomes distressed.

5. Procedure for Sensory Massage

- **Timing:** Sensory massage should be conducted in a calm, quiet, and safe environment where the child feels comfortable. Sessions should be brief and structured, typically lasting no more than 10-15 minutes, depending on the child's needs and preferences.
- **Techniques:** Sensory massage should be gentle and non-invasive. It is performed over clothing and may include light touches and tapping. The techniques used should be adapted to each child's sensory processing needs and may vary from child to child.
- **Monitoring and Observation:** During each session, staff should monitor the child's reactions and ensure that the massage is supportive, calming, and not causing any distress. This includes observing body language, facial expressions, and verbal cues. If the child shows signs of discomfort, the session must be adjusted or discontinued immediately.

- **Documentation:** Each sensory massage session should be documented in the child's individual records, noting the techniques used, duration, and any relevant observations (e.g., signs of enjoyment or discomfort). This helps ensure consistency and tracks progress over time.

6. Safeguarding and Protection

- **Boundaries and Respect:** Staff must respect personal space and boundaries, ensuring that the massage is always over clothing and that no inappropriate areas are touched. Sensory massage should never be carried out in a private or isolated area without clear justification. It should always be in the presence of another staff member, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- **Staff Conduct:** All staff must adhere to a strict code of conduct that ensures the highest standard of professionalism and ethical behaviour. Staff must maintain appropriate physical boundaries and respect the child's autonomy throughout the session.
- **Reporting Concerns:** Any concerns regarding the well-being of the child during sensory massage, or any complaints from the child or others, should be reported immediately to the safeguarding lead or headteacher, following the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

7. Parental/Carer Involvement

Parents and carers should be kept informed about the sensory massage practices being used with their child. Regular communication will ensure that any concerns or feedback are addressed, and that the practice aligns with the family's preferences and understanding. Parents/carers may also be offered the opportunity to observe or participate in the process to ensure consistency at home.

8. Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of sensory massage sessions should be regularly evaluated by staff who use the techniques. Adjustments to the approach should be made based on the child's responses and feedback, with a focus on achieving the best outcomes for the child's sensory regulation and overall well-being.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required, to ensure it remains in line with best practices and meets the evolving needs of children with complex needs.

9. Conclusion

Sensory massage, when conducted properly and with respect, can provide significant benefits for children with complex needs. This policy ensures that sensory massage is conducted in a safe, effective, and ethical manner, promoting the well-being and dignity of all children in our care.

