



Dulwich Wood

My world, your world, our world

Dulwich Wood Peer Massage Policy

The school policy peer massage reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole teaching staff and has the full agreement of the Governing Body.

Aims

- To promote the wellbeing of children in the knowledge that nurturing touch is a basic need and a powerful tool to help children develop into healthy, well balanced human beings.
- To give children the chance to experience nurturing touch at school, in a safe and creative way.
- To promote an ethos of respect of self and others, as children request permission before they begin, and say thank you to each other when they finish the routine.
- To give the children a voice - those who do not wish to receive/give a massage can say no and sit and relax / observe, or do an air massage.
- To develop positive communication – children are encouraged, while practicing the massage routine, to express their preferences regarding the strokes. They can say what they like or dislike, and how much pressure and at what pace the massage should be done for them.
- To encourage a sense of unity throughout the school, children will share in a full massage at least once a week.

Objectives

- To improve concentration
- To improve co-operation
- To increase a stronger sense of self and higher self-esteem/confidence
- To reduce aggressive behaviour
- To encourage a calmer classroom environment
- To encourage empathy and respect for their peers
- To enable the children to recognize difference between good and bad touch
- To encourage a more relaxed and focused feeling in the school
- To discover differences between people
- To encourage and develop the imagination
- To improve communication

Rationale

Touch and Development

Did you know....?

- Biologically, touch is the first sense to develop and the last to leave us. By the 7th week of pregnancy, the baby reacts to touch.
- Feel good chemicals are released in the brain through caring interactions. The body and brain will stop growing if there is a lack of touch- some animals even die!
- Families and cultures that express warm physical affection have fewer issues with anger and aggression.
- Many children often learn best through touch and movement.

"Pausing a moment between an impulse and an action is a life tool. Developing this strength helps a child physiologically and emotionally. But it's a strength that must be learned - we are not born with it."

Dr. Bruce Perry

The Brain

The simple brain:

- The primary function of the reptilian brain is survival;
- We share the limbic system with every mammal on the planet – it is home to our emotions.
- The neo-cortex is the home of conscious thought; it lets us make choices.

Massage engages different parts of the brain and helps children to develop their ability to choose what to do instead of acting on instinct.

What is Peer Massage?

Relaxation is a skill that can be learnt and the great news is, it gets easier with practice! Relaxation can take many forms and there are plenty of approaches to choose from, the most important thing is to find what works for you. By learning to recognise your own states of tension and relaxation you can begin to control them at will.

We believe that every child attending school should experience positive and nurturing touch every day..... everywhere in the world. This belief shapes our whole school approach to promoting the physical, social, spiritual, mental and emotional wellbeing of all pupils and staff.

Massage in Schools is a programme of positive touch and clothed peer massage, introduced to the UK in 2000 by its founders Mia Elmsater and Sylvie Hetu. The clothed massage is for children 4-12 years old. The children learn a simple massage sequence which is given by the children to each other, working in pairs. They wear their normal school clothes and give massage to each other on the back, shoulders, head and arms.

Children have the right to choose whether or not to take part in a session. It takes 10-15 minutes. (A child not wanting a massage is asked to sit and watch, do an air massage or massage a teddy or cushion if appropriate) The child should always be able to see the other children during the massage.

The Process

- Children who wish to take part sit ready and find a partner. Those who do not wish to take part watch and benefit in this way.
- We use a 'whisper voice'
- Ask permission.
- The actions are all simple and slow.
- Each action is carried out 3 times.
- We give names to each stroke.
- Children are encouraged to communicate about what they like and don't like (e.g. press more firmly or more gently)
- The child who has GIVEN the massage thanks the other child for being allowed to give them a massage.

