Student Contact Policy

**Manchester Vocational and Learning Academy**

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| **Approved by:** | Linda Guest |  |
| **Last reviewed on:** | 1st September 2024 | |
| **Next review due by:** | September 2026 | |

This policy has been written to reduce the chances of physical contact between students which could escalate into confrontations or be interpreted by the students (or others) as inappropriate.

**Reasons for adopting the policy**

Some students at our school have specific needs and vulnerabilities. It is not appropriate for staff to identify which these students are to other students. We have therefore decided to adopt a policy that we can apply to everyone.

**Principles of appropriate contact**

Every individual has a different threshold for contact that they feel is appropriate or others. The safest way to approach physical content is to assume that this is not appropriate unless the student has given specific consent for this. We therefore encourage students to avoid touching others if possible.

On occasions, students might need to touch each other to take part is lessons and activities – for example a sporting activity. If an individual student has difficulty with this, they should make staff aware so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Sometimes students will appreciate physical contact when they are in need of comforting. Staff and students should always ask permission to touch another pupil to ensure that they feel comfortable with this. Contact should be minimal, appropriate and carried out with witnesses.

**Rules for physical contact**

Some behaviours are inappropriate in all circumstances. This incudes:

* Contact that could be interpreted as physical aggression including pushing, hitting, pinching, scratching.
* Contact that simulates these behaviours such as play fighting.
* Contact with inappropriate areas of the body
* Boisterous behaviour that could result in students coming to physical harm

**Failure to adhere to the rules**

Failure to adhere to the rules will result in staff taking action in line with the school behaviour policy. The action taken will be proportionate to the incident but can include students losing gained time, phone calls home to parents and in severe cases a fixed-term or permanent exclusion.

When a sanction has been issued, this will be logged on CPOMS and this information will be shared with the referring school.