

Melton College Safe Touch Policy 2024

What is safe touch?

Safe touch is physical contact that is supportive, welcomed and affirmative

Safe touch is physical contact that, if avoided, would be inhumane, unkind and potentially emotionally or physically damaging for the student

Safe touch is never invasive, humiliating, belittling or flirtatious

Safe touch is visible, witnessed touch

Safe touch is welcomed or initiated by the student (unless a safety intervention)

Safe touch is not imposed (except for safety) and is ended if unwelcomed or unwanted

Safe touch situations

Comforting an upset or distressed student

Congratulating or praising a student

Saying goodbye to a student

Greeting a returning student

Holding the hand of a student for reassurance or guidance, such as when crossing a road

Giving first aid to a student

Acting to prevent injury, such as when a student is stuck in one of our trees

Types of safe touch

Hand shaking

High fives

Fist bumps

Putting an arm around a student's shoulders

A sideways hug with a hand on each shoulder

Hand holding for reassurance, safety or guidance

A brief "standard" hug – only appropriate when saying goodbye at course end

A teacher should opt out of any physical contact if they feel uncomfortable, unless to do so would put the child or others at immediate risk of harm.

If a teacher attempts to use one of the safe methods of touch and the student is unhappy with this, the teacher should retract immediately in order to respect the student's wishes, unless to do so would put the student or others at immediate risk of harm.

Age appropriate touch

Lap sitting -None of our students are young enough for lap sitting to be appropriate

Kissing -Is inappropriate with junior students but may be entirely appropriate with parents/Gold Course where cultural norms allow for, say, cheek kiss greetings.

The cultural dimension to touch

Different cultures have different attitudes to touch. Should this lead to a student trying to engage in inappropriate physical contact, within our cultural context of that of the other party, try to explain why it is inappropriate but always encourage an appropriate alternative.