



NIMBLE FINGERS MUSIC STUDIO

GENEVIEVE FROST

POLICY ON APPROPRIATE USE OF TOUCH

As a professional member of the EPTA (European Piano Teachers Association), I am obliged by our *Code of Conduct* to confirm in writing the physical contact that is a common feature of good piano teaching, and which I use in lessons. When completing the Nimble Fingers Music Studio *Registration Form* you will be required to sign that you have read and accept this Policy as part of my *Terms and Conditions* for providing tuition. EPTA state in their Safeguarding Code of Practice the following:

“Any physical contact with pupils can be potentially subject to misinterpretation or even malicious allegations. The best advice is to avoid touching your pupils and to develop strategies for teaching through demonstration and modelling. If a teacher feels that touching is essential to their pedagogic style, they are to obtain prior permission in writing from the parent and pupil, and will encourage a parent/guardian to attend the lessons. However, it is not appropriate to touch a child on the trunk of the body unless there is a justifiable reason (e.g. to administer first aid)”.

Piano playing is a highly complex physical activity and even the smallest habitual problem with tension, posture or misalignment can over time lead to debilitating performance-related injuries such as tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome and focal dystonia, as well as contributing to shoulder and spinal problems. Touch is used to identify tension, correct alignment and help students develop their own kinaesthetic awareness. This work is crucial for beginners and essential where players have developed physical habits which require somatic (movement) retraining.

- Touch is limited to: hands, wrists, the arms, shoulders and back.
- The purpose of touch is always explained when physical contact is necessary, so that the student is able to engage positively and effectively in learning.
- Where possible, I prefer a parent to participate in any use of touch, so that they can support their child while practising during the week, ensuring that harmful habits don't develop.
- I always check before using touch in my teaching, obtaining on-the-spot permission in addition to the general permission granted by acceptance of this Policy.
- Physical contact is never used unnecessarily, inappropriately, or without consent.

As a member of the EPTA, I am guided by all of their policies on safeguarding.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with me.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/school-discipline-new-guidance-for-teachers>

[2] <https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/should-schools-have-a-no-touch-policy/>

This Policy is written and revised by Genevieve Frost for Nimble Fingers Music Studio 2019.