



Massage at Beormund



“To say that the growing child is affected by her environment is rather an understatement; she is affected by the impressions of the world as deeply as she is affected by the substance of the world...Making sense of the world begins with the sense of touch.”

Martyn Rawson and Michael Rose

Massage has become an integral part of the school day here at Beormund and boasts a successful, therapeutic way to settle children after morning break.

The approaches used at Beormund are based upon (and can be found at) the Massage in Schools Programme <http://www.massageinschools.com/>. In the 1990's Ewa Westman and Mia Elmsäter developed a programme in Sweden from which most of the main strokes in this programme were drawn. During the same period of time in Canada Sylvie Hétu developed ideas of integrating massage in day-to-day activities and school curriculum which was taught at teachers' conventions. In both countries, the ideas spread with success and were able to claim that 'Children doing the simple routine of our programme lower their stress levels, increasing their chance for better concentration at school and better sleep at home.'

Benefits of Massage at Beormund School

Massage in School can benefit the child in a variety of ways:

- Help provide an open, safe and secure environment for children to grow and develop
- Develop a sense of touch – particularly good for tactile/physical learners
- Help foster and improve relationships – more respect for each other
- To reinforce appropriate touch and talk about who/when others can touch you
- Giving children the opportunity to verbalise their choices regarding touch.
- A feeling of being individually acknowledged
- Improved circulation
- To help foster a sense of calm in the classroom
- To gain self respect and a better body image
- Relaxation and emotional wellbeing – learning how to slow down and 'be'.

For the adults, the programme provides:

- a more harmonic classroom – establishes a settled atmosphere after morning break - children are much calmer and ready to learn
- extends the curriculum – another dimension to physical education
- a practical tool to use against Bullying
- teaches body and mind – the whole child
- links to accelerated learning
- ways to bring children together – to foster greater compassion and empathy.

We believe that when the child develops in an atmosphere of calmness, safety, honesty, trust, tolerance, happiness, concentration, support and appreciation, they benefit from such surrounding.

Massage Strokes

At Beormund School we timetable massage for 10 minutes each day after morning break. This assists the children in calming themselves and being in a positive frame of mind to learn. The approaches are consistent across the school.

In order to provide the right space and atmosphere to massage, the lights are dimmed/turned off. Chairs are set up in a row ready for the children. Relaxing music is playing quietly. Some staff choose to display a slideshow of relaxation pictures such as waterfalls, beaches, calming sights.

Children choose the most comfortable way to be seated without a back to the chair. The child giving the massage **stands** behind their partner to ensure they are able to move around and massage easily and quietly.

The expectation is that someone will lead the session and will determine the pace of the massage by clearly signally each massage stroke. This is the only voice that should be heard. During the massage contact should be maintained at all times between the two participants.

Ask Permission: Those children not wishing to partake **must** sit with the other children and either watch, copy in the air, work with an adult or give a class soft toy an appropriate massage. This ensures all children receive the benefits of Oxytocin. Children need to fully participate to achieve full shillings.

Eye Glasses: With flat hands, fingers together, make three* circles around the shoulder blades. Stroke out to the arms and hold – maintain hold.

Cat Grip: Stand at the side of the person receiving massage with one hand behind the neck and the other hand on the forehead. Take a 'cat grip' around the neck and make gentle movements with fingers on one side and the thumb on the other side.

Baker: Place hands on shoulders again and make gentle movements with the palm and thumb – knead gently.

Scooping Ice Cream: Stand behind the left side of the person's back. Place your right arm on the shoulder and make gentle half circles with arm and wrist. Repeat with the left arm on the right shoulder.

NOTE: children may choose to opt out of the following two massage strokes and are able to supplement either with an alternative option(s).

Forehead Stroke: Place fingers on the forehead and stroke out to the sides. Hold the head for a couple of seconds.

Hairdresser: Place fingers on top of hair, and make circles with fingertips.

Sliding Board: Move down with sliding board. Stroke from the head down the neck and over the shoulders. After the final time this stroke is done, keep one hand on the shoulder and continue the next stroke. Always keep contact with the person you are massaging.

Climbing down a rope: Kneel down to one side of the person receiving the massage. Place one hand just under the armpit. Press firmly yet gently and 'climb', hand over hand, down to the hand. Climb back up again.

Bunny hops: Climb down a rope (see above). Press gently with thumbs in the palm of the hands. Climb back up the rope.

Hearts: Begin almost at the base of the spine, moving up with one hand on either side of the spine, move the hands upward making a heart-shaped formation, and coming back down to the base of the spine. Continue making larger and larger heart formations. Note: this stroke is not on the spine.

Bear-walk: Place hands on either side of the spine, almost at the bottom of the spine. Press one hand after another 'walking' up the back. When you get to the neck 'walk' back down again. Do gently to begin with, then harder and harder.

Ice-skating: Place hands side on to either side of the spine at the base of the back. Using a sliding motion hands alternate in short bursts up either side of the spine to the top and back down together in one long stroke.

Butterfly: Hands are placed flat on the back together. The right hand slides up to gently squeeze the shoulder muscle. As this hand slides back to the centre of the back, the other moves cross literally to squeeze the opposite side.

Petting the dog: Stroke with one hand at a time from the neck and down the centre of the back.

Brushing off the snow: Stroke hands rather quickly from the head down the shoulders and from the head down the back.

The child giving the massage should say, "**Thank you**".

Children then swap places