



POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

Rationale

The School believes that to deny pupils all physical contact with adults is to deny a basic human need and expression of care and concern for all pupils. However physical contact must be appropriate for the age, understanding and sex of the child and must never threaten or be sexually inappropriate.

Staff must be sensitive to:

- Cultural backgrounds.
- The need to maintain pupils' personal space.
- Any concerns that a pupil may have been sexually abused and will either seek physical contact or positively avoid it.

Physical contact may be appropriate:

- When a pupil needs to get comfort or reassurance e.g. following an accident or personal crisis.
- When a pupil needs encouragement to attempt a new challenge e.g. to climb on to a piece of apparatus or be shown how to use an instrument.
- When there is a need to take urgent action to avoid an accident or injury.

Staff should take extreme care when offering physical comfort to pupils, particularly as they approach puberty because physical contact can be misconstrued and this can cause distress to all concerned.

Staff should not be alone with individual pupils except in certain circumstances (e.g. music lessons, 1:1 teaching etc.) It is advisable that Classroom doors should be left open when one member of the staff is left supervising, talking with or teaching small groups or individual pupils.

Staff do not require parental consent to use force on a pupil.

Purpose

The use of reasonable* force to control or restrain pupils.

This policy should be read in conjunction with *DfE Use of Reasonable Force, July 2013* and takes into account the *Education Acts 1996 and 1997* which states reasonable force and restraint may be used to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property including the pupil's own property.
- Committing a criminal offence.
- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order at the School or among any of its pupils whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

**'reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.*

Guidelines

Guidelines on the use of force to control or positive handle pupils are part of the School's Behaviour Policy. Positive handling will not be used punitively. The School has a disciplinary approach based on positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviour.

All staff are familiar with the school's policy and have a clear understanding about when positive handling is appropriate and how it should be applied. They must also know when and how to get support from other staff.

Positive handling may be used by all supervisory staff. Staff have a right to defend themselves against physical attack and do everything possible to diffuse the situation before such an attack occurs. In the event that it is necessary to defend themselves against physical attack, minimum force for maximum effect should be used.

Risk Assessment

- All staff including teachers, teaching assistants and other colleagues in the school must be informed about pupils and families who are vulnerable or volatile.
- Vulnerable or volatile pupils and families will be identified on MyConcern
- A risk assessment based on knowledge and previous experience will be carried out and a plan of action for individuals written by a delegated member of staff.

Action

Situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate:

- When action is necessary in self-defence e.g. when the pupil attacks another pupil or adult.
- When there is an immediate or imminent risk of injury to another child or an adult, e.g., when pupils are fighting or there is rough play or misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- When there is immediate risk of significant damage to property.
- Where behaviour jeopardises good order and discipline.
- A pupil persistently refuses to leave an area e.g. the classroom or a playground etc.
- Behaviour which seriously disrupts a lesson.
- Can also use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to search for prohibited items e.g. knives, drugs.
- Force cannot be used to search for 'banned items' under the school rules. e.g. mobiles

Physical intervention may need to be used when:

- There is clearly no alternative approach which would work in the circumstances i.e. there is an immediate urgency to resolve.
- Defending or protecting.
- For children with special needs (EBD, Asperger's, Autism etc.) special procedures may be needed appropriate to their condition.

Procedure

- Staff must use minimum force for maximum effect over the shortest time and use only the agreed positive handling methods.
- Pupil safety is paramount. Staff must be aware of signs of distress such as vomiting, changes in colour, breathlessness.
- After an incident staff must complete the "Report of Incident Involving Positive Handling", Appendix A. This will be added as a file attachment to the pupils profile on MyConcern
- Parents must be informed on the same day as the incident of the circumstances which led up to the incident and the outcome. Parents must also be informed of any future action the school intends to take by the Headteacher.

- The Senior Management Team and Staff will evaluate any incident of positive handling to inform the future management pupils in similar situations.
- Staff involved will be debriefed following an incident and kept informed of any future action which relates to it.
- The Headteacher will make a report on the operation of the policy if an incident occurs.
- The Chair of Governors will be informed on the day of any incident.

Essential Points to Remember

Whenever possible staff are advised to seek the support of another adult when they need to use reasonable force to resolve a situation they cannot deal with in any other way. The other adult will be a witness to the incident and will complete a witness report for the record.

Complaints

In the event of complaints to the School or to Social Care in connection with the use of force by a member of staff or volunteer, the Headteacher will seek the advice and support of personnel on how to respond to the complaint and should refer to '*Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff*' DFE Oct 2012.

Application of Force

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve Staff in:

- Physically interposing between pupils.
- Holding.
- Pushing or pulling but only in extreme circumstances to avoid danger.
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm.
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- **In extreme circumstances** using more restrictive holds.

In exceptional circumstances where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of reasonable force. For example to prevent a young pupil from running onto a busy road or to prevent a pupil from hitting someone or throwing something.

Where a member of staff has acted within the law, that is they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder, this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.

In no circumstances should staff act in a way that could cause intentional injury for example by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck or by the collar or in a way that might restrict the ability to breathe.
- Slapping, punching or kicking
- Twisting or forcing limbs against the joint.
- Tripping up.
- Holding or pulling by the hair or ear.
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. Staff must always consider whether a risk is urgent and whether there is any alternative to physical intervention. Staff should always try to deal with the situation using other agreed strategies to calm a situation before using force.

This policy is to be used for staff guidance. The Positive Handling Pro Forma (See Appendix 1) is to be completed only in situations where staff feel it is necessary.

This policy must be read in conjunction with other related School policies:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Parental Complaints Policy**

Any reference to the word 'School' implicitly includes all its associated clubs/activities including Kids Club. This policy also applies to EYFS

| PREPARED BY | AUTHORISED BY | LAST REVIEWED | REVIEW DATE | NO. OF PAGES |
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| SMT | Theresa Wright | Summer 2024 | Summer 2025 | 4 |

Appendix 1

REPORT OF INCIDENT INVOLVING POSITIVE HANDLING

| | |
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| Description of situation requiring positive handling - | |
| Outcome of positive handling - | |
| Description of any injury(ies) sustained by injured pupil and any subsequent treatment | |
| Date & Time Parent informed: _____ By whom: _____ Outline of response: _____ | |
| Signature of staff completing report: | Date: |
| Signature of class teacher: | Date: |
| Signature of Headteacher: | Date: |
| Brief description of any subsequent injury/complaint action: | |