



Safe Handling Policy

Rationale

1. The School believes that behaviour can and should be managed in all but very exceptional cases without the use of force or physical contact.
2. The school recognises:-
 - It is unlawful to use force and/or physical contact to punish a child and
 - It is unlawful to use force/physical contact with the intention of causing injury, pain or humiliation.
 - Force/physical contact has no place in the school's policy on behaviour and is not listed as a sanction within the policy.
3. The school is aware, however, that there are exceptional circumstances when it may be necessary for staff to intervene physically. In these cases staff must clearly understand the options and strategies open to them.
4. This policy will set out guidelines to identify:-
 - The exceptional circumstances in which force may be used
 - Who will be authorized to use force
 - What is meant by force, how force may be applied
 - How use of force must be reported.

The Background

Teachers and others authorised by the Headteacher to have charge of pupils are allowed by Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 to use such force as it reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:-

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility)
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or amongst any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere when the teacher/other authorised person has lawful control and charge of a pupil.
- Everyone has the right to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use disproportionate degree of force to do it.
- In an emergency, if a pupil was at immediate risk of injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff would be entitled to intervene.

When may reasonable force be appropriate, or necessary to control or restrain a pupil

- a) Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is imminent risk of injury
*e.g. a pupil attacks another pupil or member of staff
a pupil is causing or at risk of causing injury or damage by rough play or misuse of materials.*

- b) When there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to the property.
e.g. a pupil is engaged in or on the verge of committing deliberate damage or vandalism
- c) A pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline
*e.g. a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom
a pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.*

Who is authorised to use force

- All teachers in charge of classes
- The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher
- Other people whom the Headteacher has authorised individually and whose names appear on the authorised persons list at the end of this policy

What is meant by force

Only reasonable force may be used. Reasonable force is the minimum needed to achieve the desired results. Any degree of force is unlawful if the circumstances do not warrant it.

Physical force could not be justified to prevent a trivial misdemeanour or if the situation could clearly be resolved without force. The age, understanding and sex of the pupil will affect the degree of force which could be employed.

What do we mean by applying 'reasonable force'?

- Physical intervention which may involve:-
- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Leading a pupil by the hand
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- Walking a child, using the recommended Team Teach technique, of standing behind a child and holding the child's elbows close to their body, whilst walking them forward.
- (in certain cases) using more restraining holds.
- If there is an immediate risk of injury e.g. a child running off a pavement into a busy road or a pupil is about to hit someone or throw something, staff may need to take other action which is 'reasonable'.
- Picking up
- Carrying
- Staff should NOT act in any way which might reasonably be expected to cause injury.
They should not:-

- Hold a pupil by the neck or collar
- Slap, pound or kick
- Twisting or force limbs against a joint
- Trip
- Hold or pull by the hair or ear
- Hold a pupil face down on the ground

Staff should always AVOID touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Before applying reasonable force:-

- Instruct the pupil to stop
- If possible wait for assistance
- Tell the pupil of your intentions and that restraint will stop as soon as it is no longer necessary.
- Continue to try to communicate throughout the incident
- Adapt a calm and measured approach
- Never give the impression that you have lost your temper.

Reporting use of Force

All use of force **MUST** be recorded in detail, immediately. The Headteacher or Deputy Head must be informed verbally, immediately.

A written report must be provided for the Headteacher no later than the end of the school day on which the incident occurred. This must include:-

- Name of pupil(s) involved and when the incident took place.
- Names of staff or pupils who witnessed the incident.
- Reason that force was necessary.
- How the incident began and progressed. Details of pupil's behaviour. What was said by all parties. Steps taken to calm or diffuse situation. Degree of force. How that was applied. How long.
- Pupil's response and the outcome of the incident.
- Details of any injury suffered by any party. Details of damage

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a senior colleague or a representative of their professional associates when compiling a report.

Staff should keep a copy of any report.

The Headteacher will decide how and when to inform the parents of the child.

Being prepared

- Positive behaviour management techniques
- Specific actions to be taken
- How additional support can be summoned
- Medical advice specifying how to hold pupils if necessary

Parents will be consulted and be made clear about the specific action the school intends to take.

Physical contact with pupils in other circumstances

Some physical contact may be proper and necessary in the following circumstances:-

- Demonstrate exercises or techniques in PE, sports coaching or CDT
- Member of staff giving First Aid

- Young children with SEN may need prompts or help
- When a pupil is in distress and needs comforting

Teachers will use their own professional judgment when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support. They should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Staff should be aware that:-

- For some pupils touching may be particularly unwelcome (e.g. children from certain cultural backgrounds)

Authorised Staff

All teaching staff

Contracted Classroom Support Staff

Dinnertime Supervisory Staff

Please note, the following members of staff are Team Teach trained and as such are available to other members of staff for support or advice. They could also be called upon for support in situations where handling or de-escalation is required.

Andrea Grist

Heidi Higgs

Kathy Howcroft

Bev Hughes

Amanda Heptonstall

Tracey Hanson