



Safe Handling Policy

Introduction

This policy has been prepared for the support of all staff who come in to contact with pupils who may need to be positively handled. This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils and specifically the school's behaviour policy.

The application of any form of positive handling places staff and children in a vulnerable situation. Staff, therefore have a responsibility to follow the policy and seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for positive handling. Positive handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

Definitions of contact

Physical contact: Situations in which proper physical contact takes place between staff and pupils, e.g. in games/PE or to comfort pupils

Physical intervention: This may be used to divert a pupil from destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force

Positive handling: This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to pupils, staff or property or if good order is being seriously prejudiced. All such incidents will be recorded and filed with the appropriate lead professional. The Head teacher will be informed of all incidences of Positive Handling.

Rationale

The School believes that behaviour can and should be managed in all but very exceptional cases without the use of force or physical contact.

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.

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.

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 misdemeanor 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 Head teacher 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 it was applied and for 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)

Training

Where individual pupil risk assessments have indicated a higher risk of using positive handling, staff will be trained following the Team Teach program.

H Higgs
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