

BRACKENSDALE INFANT SCHOOL

Positive Handling Policy

Date of Policy	Spring 2015
To be reviewed	Spring 2016
Member of Staff responsible for the Policy	Helen Bye

Guiding Principles

Staff at this school are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person including themselves
- Seriously disrupting good order in the school either during a teaching session or otherwise

The term '**Positive Handling**' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only when there is no realistic alternative. Included in this policy are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil.

The term '**physical restraint**' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. The term '**reasonable force**' covers a broad range of actions which involve a degree of physical contact with pupils. This physical contact may be passive, e.g. blocking a pupil's path or active such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom. 'Reasonable force' means using no more force than is needed in the circumstances.

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force, (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006). It is unlawful to use force as a punishment. It is **not** acceptable to use any kind of reasonable force to gain compliance from a pupil where there is no risk of danger to the child, others or property.

What does it mean to restrain a child?

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property. The proper use of positive handling requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining. The decision to use positive handling as restrictive physical intervention must take account of the circumstances and be based on an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention compared with the risks of **not** employing a restrictive intervention. The physical intervention must employ a reasonable amount of force- that is the minimum amount of force needed to avert injury or damage to property, or to prevent a breakdown in discipline- applied for the shortest period of time.

Why use restraint?

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him/herself or others. Positive handling skilfully applied may be eased by degrees as the pupil calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed where a pupil is unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour. It should only be carried out by staff trained in the correct procedures.

Aims

The staff at Brackensdale Infant & Nursery Enhanced Resource School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety and well-being and to maintain good order and discipline.

Our policy on positive handling must be placed in the context of and used in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding procedures. We aim to create a positive environment where the pupils feel safe and free from harm.

The school Behaviour Policy is intended to reward effort and application and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Where appropriate we will try to involve pupils in the development of their behaviour plans.

Risk Assessment

Most pupils will never require any form of positive handling, however staff may have to deal with some pupils who exhibit disturbed, distressed or distressing behaviour. We will make all efforts to reduce the risk of using positive handling by managing:

- The environment
- Body language
- The way we talk
- The way we act

Staff should pre-empt potential problems by conducting regular risk assessments of the environment. Keep classrooms and shared areas clutter free and pay heed to creating areas that pupils can use to self-regulate their behaviours, e.g. quiet areas and safe spaces.

All staff should consistently use positive language and should act as positive role models.

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to exhibit challenging behaviours that may require the use of positive handling it is our intention to plan how to respond if the situation arises.

This planning will address:

- Managing the pupil through a written behaviour plan which includes proactive and reactive strategies.
- Involving parents to ensure they are clear about any actions the school may need to take.

- Briefing staff to ensure that they know exactly what action they should be taking, this may highlight the need for training.

Procedures

When might it be acceptable to use reasonable force?

When a pupil may be:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person including themselves
- Seriously disrupting good order in the school either during a teaching session or otherwise

Examples of situations that fall into the first two categories:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- Pupils fighting
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects.
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on stairs in a manner that may cause injury him/herself or others.
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave the school, this would only apply if this would then put them at risk if they left the class or school building.

Examples of situations that fall into the third

- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom
- A pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a classroom

Action Steps

1. Tell the pupil who is behaving inappropriately to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so
2. If possible, summon another adult
3. Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident.
4. Make it clear that restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
5. Take appropriate follow-up action, which may include:
 - i. Providing medical support
 - ii. Providing respite for those involved

A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem.

De-escalation & Positive Handling Strategies.

All staff need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps which they can take to defuse and calm a situation.

- Move calmly and confidently
- Make simple, clear statements
- Intervene early
- Try to maintain eye contact, where appropriate to the child
- Summon help if needed before the situation escalates
- Remove audience from the immediate location

There are situations where staff should not intervene without help.

- The pupil is physically large
- There is more than one pupil
- If the member of staff feels that they are at risk of injury

In these circumstances:

- Remove other pupils who might be at risk
- Summon assistance from colleagues
- Inform the pupils that help will be arriving
- Telephone the police if necessary
- Continue de-escalation techniques and try to defuse the situation orally to prevent further escalation

If restraint is used it must be the minimum amount necessary and for the shortest possible time.

Restraint must **NOT**:

- Involve hitting the pupil
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- Restrict pupils breathing
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas

During any incident the member of staff who is restraining should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil, where appropriate to the child
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury

Physical Intervention can take a variety of forms but may include:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- In extreme circumstances, using restrictive holds.

Some Dos and Don'ts

DO

- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Summon help
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil

DON'T

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking even if the pupil does not reply, where appropriate to the child
- Straddle the pupil
- Push arms up the back
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints.

Post Incident Procedures

It is essential that after an incident support is given to all involved. A member of the Senior Management Team should check on the pupil and the member of staff. Both should be given time to reflect on the incident before returning to normal routine. Individual pupil behaviour plans will contain details relating to individual pupils' post incident procedures.

Recording

All incidents of positive handling should be recorded on the relevant pro-forma in accordance with this policy and these should be given to a member of the Senior Management Team. The Senior Management team will also use these records to inform practice and identify training needs.

Complaints

All complaints are dealt with according to the school's complaints procedures.

Training

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to ensure that all staff are fully informed of this policy. It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to arrange training or guidance to staff in positive handling techniques and practices.

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy

Written: November 2014

Policy Agreed by Staff and Governors: