



Positive Handling & Restraint Policy

Policy Creation & Review	
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ELLEN WILKINSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

1. Rationale

The aims of this policy are to:

- Assist staff to maintain a safe and secure environment in school so that learning can take place
- Protect all pupils in school against any form of physical restraint which is either unnecessary, or inappropriate, or excessive, or unlawful
- To protect staff and minimise the risk to staff of any accusation of improper conduct towards a pupil

The school has a Positive Behaviour Policy. Please refer to the policy for information.

2. Policy Statement

The school takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors to the school. The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care and the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Section 550 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Head Teacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Further guidance is also outlined in DFE "Use of reasonable force, Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies" (2013 reviewed 2015).

This policy details how we implement this and is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

Staff at EWPS recognise that the use of reasonable force is one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety / well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. This also meets their duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others.

Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others (section 93 Education & Inspections Act 2006), we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible. To support this a number of staff are trained in positive handling techniques and refresher training is also implemented to ensure this is kept up to date.

3. Definition of terms

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

Included in this framework 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. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' in national guidance. A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

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4. Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body

- Ensure that a strong safeguarding culture is embedded within the school, that our commitment to keep our children safe is explicit and understood by all in the school community and that our practice reflects the Governors' vision and values.
- That policy is in place for positive handling which works in conjunction with other related policies (see last section) and reflects statutory requirements

4.2 The Headteacher

- Update this and related policies in line with outcomes of reviews and changes in national guidance
- Liaise with the Inclusion Leader in relation to incidents of physical intervention.

4.3 Inclusion Leader

- In collaboration with the class teacher and other relevant staff, write risk assessments on children who are identified as extremely disruptive or violent in order to reduce the risk of positive handling having to be used.
- Seek additional support from partner agencies to support this where appropriate.
- **Discuss and** provide copies of the risk assessment to all staff who may work with the child. This will usually mean all the teachers, teacher assistants who work in the unit / key phase, and lunchtime supervisors.
- **Ensure sufficient numbers of staff are trained in positive handling and that this is refreshed at appropriate intervals.**
- **Ensure log is completed in any cases of 'serious incident' intervention.**
- **Review physical intervention log to ensure that use of positive handling is minimised as much as possible.**

4.4 Other staff

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- Inform the Inclusion Leader if there is a pupil in their class who is displaying extreme behaviour, and to work with the Inclusion Leader to draw up a risk assessment.
- **Follow direction in the risk assessment and bring to the Inclusion Leader's attention any concerns or amendments they feel need to be considered.**
- **Attend relevant training.**
- **Adhere to this policy including recording and seek support if required**

5. Pupils With Known Behavioural Difficulties

Children with special educational needs are identified through the procedures outlined in the Special Educational Needs Policy. If a pupil is identified as having special needs which include social and emotional difficulties then a risk assessment will be carried out on the pupil. If a pupil begins to show a tendency towards disruptive behaviour or violent behaviour, even if they are not on the Inclusion register, then a risk assessment will also be carried out on that pupil. The risk assessment will be carried out by the Inclusion Leader in collaboration with the class teacher, and other relevant staff, the learning mentor, and the Headteacher or deputy head teacher. If a class teacher feels that a pupil needs a risk assessment then they should inform the Inclusion Leader and agree a time to prepare the risk assessment. The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify the potential hazards which the pupil presents and detail the action which needs to be taken to deal with the behaviour. The aim is to keep the use of restrictive physical intervention with the pupil to a minimum.

5.1 Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit challenging behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by challenging behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this, the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

5.2 Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the **Statement** and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, gender, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in a Pastoral Support Plan or EP.

6. Alternatives to Physical Intervention

At this school we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in

which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced.

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own behaviour management programmes and positive handling plans by focusing on positive alternatives and good choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute. However; if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

Before any physical intervention is used other strategies must be used to try to defuse the situation first and positive handling used only when absolutely necessary. This should be in line with the Positive Behaviour policy of the school. The following strategies must be considered to help pre-empt any difficult and violent situations:

- Change the environment
- Alter routines
- Focus on diversion, reassurance and communication
- The use of parents/carers
- Rewarding progress
- Identifying the key behavioural difficulty
- Identifying the behaviour we want to see
- Our understanding of behaviour

The following strategies could be used to avoid an incident:

- Use a calm voice
- Use humour
- Expectation reminder
- Reassurance
- Listening to the child
- Withdrawal offered
- Staff member change
- Involvement of Senior Staff
- Removing others from the situation

Staff members must remain calm and under control and try to stabilise the situation to prevent it from getting worse. Steps must be taken to diffuse the situation to prevent the child from becoming distressed or aggressive. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases risk.

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear instructions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience to take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

7. Physical Restraint

Physical restraint must only be considered in one of the following situations

- The child is in immediate danger of harming him/herself or another person (this may include absconding)
- They are in danger of seriously damaging property.

It is essential that if physical restraint is used in any way:

- It should be an exceptional circumstance.
- A verbal warning should be given.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be used.
- It must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned as much as possible.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint.
- These staff can act as assistants or witnesses.

- It should be sensitive to the cultural expectations of pupils and their attitude towards physical contact.
- It should avoid any contact that might be misinterpreted as sexual.
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition).
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control as soon as possible.
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity.

7.1 Reasonable and Proportionate

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- Is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Is there a less intrusive intervention?
- Do we have to act now?
- Do I need assistance?
- What is the minimum degree of force needed to achieve the desired result?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

Examples of acceptable forms of physical intervention are:

- A safe holding tactic by which a pupil is restrained until he/she calms down.
- Physical removal of a pupil from one place to another.
- Removing a weapon or dangerous object from a pupil.

7.2 Unreasonable use of Force

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs).

Physical restraint should never be used to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property.

Examples of unreasonable force would include:

- Touch or hold the pupil in sexual areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

7.3 Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences. The key principles are that any physical intervention should be:

- In the best interest of the child;
- Reasonable and proportionate;
- Intended to reduce risk;
- The least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school. In general, if staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

7.4 Safer Handling

It is the policy of Ellen Wilkinson Primary School that all staff working closely with pupils that have Positive Handling Programs are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of the Safer Handling team, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy.

7.5 Parental Involvement

If a member of staff deems it necessary to use physical intervention with a pupil then the Headteacher or Deputy Head teacher must be informed immediately. The Head or Deputy will decide if the parents should be asked to come to school and take the pupil home. In all cases of physical intervention the parents must be contacted.

8. The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Following this, support should be provided for all involved.

Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems.

Events leading up to during the incident should be recorded (see below) and parents contacted.

This will then be reviewed by the Inclusion Leader to see if further action is required to ensure there is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to follow up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. Sanctions in relation to the behaviour policy may need to be implemented, and staff may also require further support, reassurance and or training.

8.1 Recording

Whenever force is used the incident must be reported to the Headteacher or Deputy as soon as possible (if they were not already involved) and subsequently recorded. This should be done via the staff portal on the google drive and clicking on the relevant button. Ideally this should be completed on the same day where possible and ideally no later than 24 hours (although this may be longer in exceptional cases).

Information recorded includes:

- The name of the pupil and the date of the incident
- The location and time of the incident
- The circumstances and significant factors leading up to the incident
- A description of the pupil's behaviour
- Strategies used to control the behaviour
- The reason for using physical intervention
- A description of the physical intervention used
- Whether the pupil, other pupils, or staff experienced any injury
- How and when the parent was informed and the response (they should also be provided with a copy of the log on request)

Additional accounts including witness statements and action planning may be added to this log as needed. These documents should be put in the Safeguarding Folder on the Google Drive in Positive Handling.

8.2 Complaints

Allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident should follow the school complaints procedure. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance. Please note that the whistleblowing policy also applies in this regard.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The SLT will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school positive handling log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, Behaviour Management Programme or this Positive Handling Policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures.

This policy will be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body every three years.

10. Other relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Break expectations
- Staff code of conduct
- Inclusion Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

