

Positive Handling Policy (to be read in addition to the Behaviour policy 2016/17)

**Introduction**

This policy has been developed in response to DfE guidance 'Use of Reasonable Force' July 2013 and 'Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for staff working with Children and Adults who display extreme behaviours.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils within the school to explain the school's arrangements for care and control. Its contents are available to stakeholders and applies to all pupils and adults irrespective of race, disability, sexual orientation, gender and religious beliefs.

**Aims of the policy**

The main aim of Positive Handling is to establish a school community with means of supporting children whose behaviour requires some form of physical intervention (in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy). Highfields Primary Academy acknowledges that physical techniques are only a very small part of a whole school approach to behaviour management.

**Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school**

- i. clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- ii. are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

Teaching and non-teaching staff should always operate with an appropriate 'Duty of Care' and in accordance their Team-Teach training.

**Definitions**

No legal definition of reasonable force exists however, for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in HPA:

- physical intervention will involve the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, placing themselves or other in danger or property;
- the scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.

***a) Physical Contact***

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, e.g. in the care of pupils with disabilities; in games/PE; to comfort pupils; to help model behaviour

### **b) *Physical Intervention***

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

### **c) *Physical Control/Restraint***

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a last resort.

The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint.

The school will ensure that pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in the school. All incidents of positive handling will be recorded in the bound and numbered book.

## **Training and Authorisation**

Most of Highfields Primary Academy staff have undertaken specific training in de-escalation techniques and the correct use of physical intervention and restraint when this is required. This training is intended to help staff to link meeting children's needs with positive behaviour management. The school will maintain a list of those who have been authorised and for which training has been undertaken. This list will be reviewed at least annually.

Authorisation is not given to volunteers or parents. Supply staff will not be authorised unless they are familiar with this school's policy and have undertaken training.

## **Principles behind Positive Handling techniques**

It is recognised that there may be occasions when an individual child's behaviour has deteriorated to the point where he/she is not only a danger to him/herself but also to others. Even though all aspects of the school's Behaviour Policy may have been strictly adhered to and carried out, there could be times when the situation has become untenable. On these infrequent occasions it may be necessary to use Positive Handling techniques to remove the child to a place of safety in order for the situation to be calmed and resolved.

## **Situations which may require positive handling techniques**

As part of their training, staff are taught how to recognise the early stages of a behavioural sequence that is likely to develop into violence or aggression and how to employ 'defusion' techniques to avert any further escalation. They are also taught how to intervene safely.

This includes:

- Strategies for preventing the occurrence of behaviours which precipitate the use of physical intervention;

- Strategies for 'de-escalation' or 'defusion' which can avert the need for a physical intervention;
- Procedures for post-incident support and de-briefing for staff, pupils and parents;
- The concept of 'reasonable force' where 'reasonableness' is determined with reference to all the circumstances, including:
  1. The seriousness of the incident
  2. The relative risks arising from using a physical intervention compared with using other strategies
  3. The age, cultural background, gender, stature and medical history of the pupil concerned
  4. The application of gradually increasing or decreasing levels of force in response to the pupil's behaviour;
  5. Risk assessment and risk management;

### **Types of Incident**

The incidents fall into three broad categories:

- a) Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- b) Where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property.
- c) Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations, which fall within one of the first two categories, are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations which fall into the third category are:

- a pupil persistently refuses to follow instructions
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.



## **Reporting and Recording use of Physical Intervention/Control**

Where physical control or restraint has been used, a record of the incident will be kept. This record should be made in the school Serious Incident Book (which is retained by the Headteacher) containing a description of the incident. In addition the addition is also logged onto Sims. The school will take action to ensure that parents are informed about these incidents as soon as possible.

The Serious Incident Book will be completed as soon as possible after the incident, normally prior to staff going home and be signed by all staff involved and the Headteacher. Details on the Restraint Form will include:

- how the incident developed
- attempts made to calm the situation
- names of any staff or pupils who witnessed the incident
- the outcome of the incident including any injuries sustained by any pupil or member of staff
- any damage to property
- when and how parents were informed
- a summary of actions taken after investigation

A Health and Safety Accident / Incident Form will be completed if necessary where injury has occurred to either members of staff or pupils. Where staff have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force they should have access to counselling and support. Within the school this will be made available through the Headteacher.

### **Action after an incident**

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as appropriate. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the relevant procedure.

### **Complaints**

The availability and application of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the School's Complaints Procedure.

The chair of the EAB (Education Advisory Board) will be informed of complaints but other governors will not be involved as a complaint may require further action on their part.

Written by: L.Carlisle

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