

Positive Handling Policy



Wheatley Hill Community Primary School

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Positive Handling Statement

This document should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy & Use of Safespaces Policy.

Positive Behaviour Management

The term “Positive Handling” includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The terms “control” or “physical restraint” is used when force is used to support a pupil displaying significant and challenging behaviour. (DfE, Use of Reasonable Force, July 2013).

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management using the TeamTeach approach. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. The school acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN).

Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Head Teacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. This school has adopted the Team Teach model of training. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors within rigorous guidelines. At Wheatley Hill Primary School, we have two Team Teach instructors and staff undertake a minimum of 12 hours training – most of the permanent staff team at WHPS hold the full 12hour accreditation.

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (authorised by the Head Teacher) and agreed through the school policies & procedures by the school GB. It can also apply to people the Head Teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils e.g. unpaid volunteers / Agency workers / specialist teachers & tutors (who have appropriate training & experience).

As described by the DfE (Use of Reasonable Force, 2013), reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. This decision is down to the professional judgement of the appropriately trained staff member concerned and will depend on the specific circumstances.

Recording, Monitoring & Evaluation

All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24hrs following the school recording processes. Please see relevant section below. The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school V&A incident log / CPOMS is open to external monitoring and evaluation if appropriate.

Follow Up

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

Positive Handling Guidelines

Introduction

The term “Positive Handling” includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. 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. Our clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Pupils with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. The Use of Reasonable Force, DfE, 2013, describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Head Teacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance at this school. It should be considered alongside the most recent LA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

Associated Resources

Link to government guidance includes DfES/DoH

http://www.teamteach-tutors.co.uk/guidance/guidance_gov.html

De-escalation before Physical Intervention

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 directions to the pupils to stop.
- Remind them about expectations and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place – Therapy Room, Ready to Learn Room, Safespace.
- 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.
- Circle of danger i.e. not enter a young person’s space.

Modifications to the Environment

Ideally staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils at this school may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour (V&A Risk Assessments & Behaviour Plans in place). In general, it is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. For example:

- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils, compasses and darts) controlled?
- What small items are available to a pupil in crisis who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Is the design and arrangements of furniture safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage pupils in crisis to take themselves to a safer place? (Safespace Policy)

Help Protocols

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support each other, following Team Teach protocols. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else’s group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication (this is achieved by following the Team Teach ‘Help Script’) is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. Colleagues agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available. Our ‘Help Script’ must include the word **‘more’**. In Team Teach, the use of the word ‘more’ is a code which means it is time for a change. With ‘more’ help it becomes the responsibility of the person offering help to make the decision, not the colleague already involved in the incident. So the question “can I give you more help?” is not really a question at all. It is a notification that the decision has been taken to change personnel.

Well-Chosen Words

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can actually further escalate a crisis. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with a pupil in crisis is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

The Last Resort Principle

At this school, we only use physical restraint when there is no other 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. National guidance is clear on this point.

“If necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen sometime in the predicted future.”

Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – “The Control Of Children In The Public Care: Interpretation Of The Children Act 1989” - London: H M S O

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the pupil’s Behaviour Support Plan. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk. See Use of Safespace Policy.

Reasonable and Proportionate

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Staff dealing with pupil’s presenting challenging & crisis behaviour 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:

- How is this in the best interests of the pupil?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

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

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).

Health and Safety

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety (A Scarr) in the school on the authority’s violence and aggression at work proforma. We all have a shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try to think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action seems to involve the least risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with Health and Safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school policy and guidance, and to co-operate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non-physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important too.

When considering a pupil's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we produced a written Behaviour Support Plan as a result (That has been signed and agreed by Parents)?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

Supportive Structures for Staff

- Young person's risk assessment.
- Family Conferencing / TAF / Behaviour Referral Meeting.
- Discussions between staff to update on current issues- use CPOMs / V&A Trackers
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning – Use of Ready to Learn Room / Therapy Room.

Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit challenging / crisis 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.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced with challenging / crisis 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 case the correct decision is to hold back from physical controls.

Behaviour Support Plans (Containing Positive Handling Guidance)

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 Behaviour Support Plan which includes a Positive Handling Section within individual pupils risk assessment forms. 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 not proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. These plans must be discussed, agreed, signed and regularly reviewed with parents.

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 principals 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.

The Post Incident Recording and Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Following a serious incident it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a crisis incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. 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 systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that children have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

Post incident all information should be recorded on an incident recording checklist. This should be an accurate account of the event. Information should be recorded on the classroom V&A Tracker as well as on the individual child's CPOM's records and any statements etc. uploaded as an attachment.

Support for Staff after Incident

Head Teacher and senior staff will give support to staff involved in the incident. Support will vary depending on the incident. Police, parents, carers and social worker may be called for further discussion.

Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of pupils and staff alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection (HT, DHT). Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety (A Scarr).

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log (V&A Tracking Sheets & CPOMS) is open to external monitoring and evaluation if required.

Follow Up

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

STAGE 3



Behaviour Support Plan

Name of child:	Child X	Year group: Class:	4
Date this plan started:	September 2021	Date this plan to be reviewed:	December 2021
SEND Needs:	<p>Child X has a diagnosis of ASD, for child X this means that they struggle to have positive interactions with their peers and find it difficult to see things from another person’s point of view. Child X displays some sensory seeking behaviours, this includes putting things in their mouths and enjoying deep pressure feedback from sensory resources.</p> <p>Child X has difficulty communicating their needs and is supported by Speech and Language Team. Due to the above needs, child X can become easily frustrated, which results in high levels of challenging behaviour both verbal and physical towards other children and adults</p> <p>Child X is supported with a TAF termly – (Joy Hodgkinson/ Paul Gingell / other staff member) attend this TAF</p>		
Red Radio	Yes / No		

Agreement of Behaviour Support Plan			
Child signature:		Date:	
Parent/carer signature:		Date:	
Teacher signature:		Date:	
SLT / Department Lead signature:		Date:	

Positive Reward & Choice System

On successful completion of classroom tasks / positive behaviour, students will receive positive praise. They are then able to work towards chosen rewards. They will use the ‘I am working towards’ visual cards to support them towards their rewards

Praise Motivators for Child X:

1. Choice box
2. Star of the day
3. Sticker chart
4. I-pad time
5. Soft play
6. Go Karts

Known situations / environment / triggers which contribute to any emotional distress of the student:

3 – Often 2 – Likely 1 – Occasionally 0 - Rare

<u>Boredom</u>	3
<u>Noise / Shock</u>	1
<u>Conclusion of activity</u>	3
<u>Change of Face</u>	0

<u>Under Stimulation</u>	1
<u>Start of Lesson</u>	2
<u>Over Stimulation</u>	3
<u>Transition</u>	2

<u>Lack of Attention</u>	1
<u>Environment</u>	2
<u>Change in Routine</u>	3
<u>Other</u>	

Further Details...

Child X is extremely likely to find it difficult at transition times if no warning is given. They love being outside and find it difficult to transition back indoors so their now and next card is needed when outdoors as well as ear defenders for the walk back to the classroom.

Child X has a particular issue with Child B at the moment so it is important not to have these children sat together at the big table or in the line.

Child X can find it difficult to settle at the beginning of the day, as they are on transport for 35 minutes before school so may need a sensory activity before their handwriting job.

Sometimes child X can find it difficult to accept that another child has done something well or is being praised.

Profile Specific Behaviours

Level of Risk

High Medium Low

<u>Self Harm</u>	<u>L</u>
<u>Screaming / Crying/Shout</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Removing Clothes</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>Spitting (Staff/pupils/both)</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Refusing to work</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>Throwing Furniture / Equipment</u>	<u>M</u>

<u>Punching</u>	<u>L</u>
<u>Biting others (Staff)</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Pulling at clothes</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>Kicking others</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Verbal Aggression</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>Holding / Grabbing</u>	<u>M</u>

<u>Verbal Threats of Self Harm</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Sexualised Behaviour to others</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Nipping Others</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>Sexualised behaviour</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Destruction</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Climbing furniture</u>	<u>M</u>

<u>Head banging</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>Absconding</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Pulling Hair</u>	<u>M</u>
<u>Urinating / Defecating</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Kicking Furniture / Equipment</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>Other</u>	

Behaviour Support Plan at each stage:

Stage One	Key Staff	Triggers	Likely behaviours	Actions
	Staff X Staff XX Staff XXX	Being told no or to stop / pause Handwriting sessions Transition from one area to another Other children's reactions Losing a game . another child winning or receiving praise		<p>Child X can begin to display challenging behaviour any time of the day. He may start to talk louder, shout and begin to fling his arms around and flap his hands. Child X may then start to target a child and begin to call them things like 'stupid', 'fat' or 'thick' would be his usual vocabulary. He may also use more inappropriate language throughout.</p> <p>Adults are to give him two choices using the visual red and green behaviour card. Green choice – workstation with choice box for 5 minutes / mat on gym ball Red choice - C1 (5 minutes missing from break)</p> <p>He needs his sensory box, at his work station, complete with the items uses to regulate - playdough, bluetac, fidet spinner and a range of brushes which he likes on his arms And offer his choice box which has sonic colouring pages, colouring pencils, word searches and lego.</p>
Stage Two	Staff X Staff XX Staff XXX	Adult giving him a choice he does not like Other pupils shouting back at him responding to his negative behaviour		<p>Child X may become verbally aggressive towards staff and children. He is more likely to accept the five minutes at his work station, if he is shown the red and green visual cards. However, If he continues to make the wrong choices, a C2 card would be given displayed on the red and green visual choice board, following this a C3 card, as of the WHP Behaviour Policy. Child X should continue to be reminded of the choices given in stage 1 and offered his sensory box at his workstation or gym ball on the mat. At this point a change of face may help – but with the same approach using the same visuals and choices.</p> <p>If child X continues to escalate, we may need to move to a calm room or the bench in the corridor which is outside of the classroom doors. Child X should be given this choice on their green and red visual choice board.</p>
Stage Three	Staff X Staff XX Staff XXX	Adult giving him choice he does not like Other pupils shouting back at him responding to his negative behaviour		<p>At this stage child X has been known to begin to spit, kick, bite and may try to throw things. If this happens, adults to remove him from class using Two person elbow into the nearest safe space. Sometimes at this point, child X will ask to be alone. If he does the adult should stand in a position so that they can observe the child for safely until they are calm. If child X continues to escalate, and continues to hurt themselves or others, staff should use a comfort cuddle. If child X bangs his head on the floor or walls, staff should use a cushion or hand to avoid the child hurting themselves.</p> <p>Child x is known to bite and nip, therefore adults should wear armguards and comfort hug under the child's arms. Staff should be appropriately dressed and have their hair tied back to avoid it being pulled.</p> <p>When the adult is leaving the comfort hug, they should count down from 5 to allow child X know that the adult is moving away.</p> <p>If child X continues to escalate, the adult may need a change of face and repeat the above steps with the new adult.</p> <p>If the staff feel that they need further support and the situation is becoming dangerous, they should use the red radio to call for help.</p>
Stage Four	Staff X Staff XX Staff XXX			<p>Child X will usually begin to cry and most of the time and will wet himself at this point. Child X will need wipes and his change of clothes bag. Staff will help child X if he needs help with changing. Usually child X does not like to talk about the incident and will ask for a drink of juice (orange - not black current). Child x should remain in the safe place with the lights off and some calming music quietly playing.</p>
Stage Five	Staff X Staff XX Staff XXX			<p>Child X may cry at this point and ask for a cuddle. He may stay like this for several minutes and adults will monitor him closely. Child X sometimes falls asleep for 10 minutes and likes a soft blanket for comfort.</p>
Stage Six	Staff X Staff XX			<p>When child X is ready, they will draw a picture of how they were feeling. They sometimes struggle to identify the triggers so it is important for the adults to identify them to child x at this</p>

	Staff XXX	point. Child X will usually want to say sorry to the adults, but may still be cross with a child / or the trigger so a using puppets or lego figures may be useful to help them to understand how others were feeling at the time of the incident and see things from their point of view. After 10 / 15 minutes, Child X may be ready to return to class but may need 5 minutes with their sensory box or time on the mat with the gym ball.
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De – escalation Techniques and justification to use physical control

Stage One	De – escalation Techniques: (No physical control needed at Stage 1)
Reminder of the task Reminder of rewards Praise for good behaviour Reminder of the choices Distraction Move to another area of the classroom / environment Offer of sensory box Take to do a little 'job' Show Child a piece of good work they have previously done Offer 5 minutes on own / with a trusted adult	

Stage Two	De – Escalation Techniques and any physical control		
Verbal / Advice support	\	Choices Limits Consequences	\
Reassurance	\	Change of face	\
Time on Own Directed (as part of the Strategy)	\	Success Reminder	\
Time on Own Offered	\	Guide to work station / mat / calm space	
Distraction (Please detail): Offer job, opportunity for a physical sensory break (body boards/ climbing / throwing large ball) Talk interest with visual reinforcements Use humour		Planned Ignoring / non verbal	\
		Other- Use of timers to count down to end of activity.	\

Stage Three	De – Escalation Techniques and any physical control techniques used in order to prevent injury to self / other pupils / staff, prevent absconding, prevent damage to property, disruptive behaviour impacting upon others safe and secure learning environment.		
Staff / adults are none verbal	\	Leg Support	X
Two person single elbow escort	\	Comfort hug	\
Head support	\	Two person single elbow seated	\
Guide using caring C's	\	Double Elbow Escort	\
Any physical control which cannot be used: Leg support cannot be used with this child as they wear leg splints			

Stage Four**Stage Five****Stage Six****Debrief Repair and Review Resources needed as identified above in behaviour support plan.**

Spare bag of clothes needed and wipes
Soft blanket needed
Water bottle - child X almost always has a drink
Puppets / lego to support debrief (see stage 6 above)
Calming music from ipad

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Use of Safespaces Policy
- Staff / Pupil Disciplinary Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- KCSIE – Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy
- Low Level Concerns Policy

Definitions of Terms

The Use of Reasonable Force

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as guiding a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more crisis circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited items”³: 3 Section 550ZB(5) of the Education Act 1996

- Knives and weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force **cannot** be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

Separate guidance is available on the power to search without consent – see the ‘Further sources of information’ section for a link to this document.

Communicating the school’s approach to the use of force

- Every school is required to have a Behaviour Policy and to make this policy known to staff, parents and pupils. The governing body should notify the headteacher that it expects the school Behaviour Policy to include the power to use reasonable force. Please see Behaviour Policy for more details.
- There is no requirement to have a policy on the use of force but it is good practice to set out, in the behaviour policy, the circumstances in which force might be used. For example, it could say that teachers will physically separate pupils found fighting or that if a pupil refuses to leave a room when instructed to do so, they will be physically removed.
- Any policy on the use of reasonable force should acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN).
- We do not require parental consent to use force on a pupil in an emergency situation, a Behaviour Support Plan would then be actioned with parental involvement.
- We do not have a ‘no contact’ policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil, or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil causing harm.
- By taking steps to ensure that staff, pupils and parents are clear about when force might be used, school will reduce the likelihood of complaints being made when force has been used properly.

Using force

A panel of experts identified that certain restraint techniques presented an unacceptable risk when used on children and young people. The techniques in question are:

- the ‘seated double embrace’ which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing;
- the ‘double basket-hold’ which involves holding a person’s arms across their chest; and
- the ‘nose distraction technique’ which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose.

Physical Control in Care Medical Panel - 2008 - **These restraints are not used in school**

Telling parents when force has been used on their child

All parents of children in school are involved in the process of the creation of their child's Behaviour Support Plan, including the Positive Handling RPI section of the plan. The plans are reviewed regularly, signed and agreed by parents before they are shared with the staff team.

In school, we operate a tiered approach to parental communication, in regards to the use of Positive Handling / RPI, where parents can decide which best fits their personal wishes – some parents express that being regularly informed of their child's challenging behaviour (due to underlying SEND needs) often leads to further crisis behaviour at home and a significant detrimental effect on parental mental health. Therefore, we have introduced our tiered approach.

Option 1 – Parents will be fully informed of all instances where an adult has had to use any form of guide, escort, physical intervention or RPI. It is our practice to speak to parents about all incidents involving the use of guides, escorts & force and ensure parents are fully aware of all crisis / challenging behaviour involving their child.

Option 2 - Parents will be fully informed of all instances where an adult has had to use any form of physical intervention or RPI in order to support / withdraw their child to a designated Safespace in order to support their child to self-regulate. It is our practice to speak to parents about all incidents involving the use of force and ensure parents are fully aware of all crisis / challenging behaviour involving their child.

Option 3 - Parents will be fully informed of all instances where an adult has had to use any form of physical intervention or RPI that is outside of the scope of that pupil's patterns of regular behaviour, where their child was supported / withdraw to a designated Safespace in order to support their child to self-regulate. It is our practice to speak to parents about all incidents involving significant / crisis behaviour, that is unusual compared to the pupil's regular behaviour patterns / interactions and the associated use of force and ensure parents are fully aware of all circumstances surrounding the crisis / challenging behaviour.

In deciding what is a serious incident, teachers should use their professional judgement and consider the:

- pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident;
- degree of force used;
- effect on the pupil or member of staff; and
- the child's age.

What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?

- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. We will refer to the "Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff" guidance (see the 'Further sources of information' section below) where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.
- We will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.
- If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, we will ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.
- The Governing body will consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the teacher.
- As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that schools provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

What about other physical contact with pupils?

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;

- When comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
- To give first aid.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I'm worried that if I use force a pupil or parent could make a complaint against me. Am I protected?

A: Yes, if you have acted lawfully. If the force used is reasonable all staff will have a robust defence against any accusations.

Q: How do I know whether using a physical intervention is 'reasonable'?

A: The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the teacher concerned. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result. School staff should expect the full backing of their senior leadership team when they have used force.

Q: What about school trips?

A: The power may be used where the member of staff is lawfully in charge of the pupils, and this includes while on school trips.

Q: Can force be used on pupils with SEN or disabilities? **A:** Yes, but the judgement on whether to use force should not only depend on the circumstances of the case but also on information and understanding of the needs of the pupil concerned.

Q: Are there any circumstances in which a teacher can use physical force to punish a pupil?

A: No. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. This is because it would fall within the definition of corporal punishment, which is illegal.

Responsibilities

Pupils are responsible, insofar as they are able, for:

- Behaving in a manner which does not instigate the use of RPI;
- Resolving conflicts amicably and responding to adults' efforts to de-escalate different situations; and
- Ensuring that they contribute to the creation of a safe working environment for all, and individual's rights to such.

Parents and Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they support the creation of a safe, effective working environment in schools;
- Supporting the school and LA policies
- Working with school in a supportive role to resolve difficult incidents;
- Acting as good positive role model; and
- Encouraging attitudes in their children which avoid the use of RPI

Schools and their staff (teaching and non-teaching) are responsible for:

- Developing their policies and guidance on behaviour management which reflect the principles and contents of the LA policy;
- Ensuring that staff are aware of the policy contents and that they have the appropriate skills;
- Implementing, communicating, publishing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the school policy;
- Monitoring incidents of RPI including:
 - The frequency of their use;
 - The justification for their use;
 - Their nature;
 - Their users; and
 - The views of students concerning them.
- Ensuring they need to use RPI is minimised and only used in appropriate circumstances;
- Ensuring that every opportunity is made to resolve situations, avoiding the use of RPI;
- Reporting physical control incidents to the LA;
- Reporting, where appropriate, incidents through the child protection procedures;
- Acting as good role models for other partners; and
- Ensuring that they contribute to the creation of a safe working environment for all.

Governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they support the creation of a safe working environment for all;
- Ensuring that the school has a policy which reflects the principles and practices of the LA policy, and that the policy is implemented, communicated, published, monitored, evaluated and reviewed;
- Ensuring that the climate of the school encourages a peaceful, calm and non-physically threatening atmosphere/ethos;
- Making appropriate resources available for the policy to be fully implemented.

The **LA** is responsible for

- Contributing to the creation of a safe working environment for all;
- Providing support, guidance, advice and information to schools;
- Developing, communicating, publishing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing of policy;
- Facilitating opportunities for training;

- Monitoring information received from schools;
- Liaising with Social Services to address related Child Protection Issues; and
- Listening to the views of pupils, parent or carers, schools, governors and others.

Appendix 5 – Entitlements

Pupils are entitled to:

- A safe, secure and inclusive working environment;
- Be aware of the policy and how it relates to them according to their ability to understand;
- Be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of race, religion, gender, age, special educational needs, etc;
- Know that the LA and school policy will be properly be implemented and supported by the staff, governors and LA; and
- Have their feelings, views and needs considered by schools, Governors and the LA

Parents and Carers are entitled to:

- Know the school's policy and arrangements on RPI;
- Be informed about incidents which have involved their child and be involved (where appropriate) in resolution of related problems; and
- Know that their child will experience a safe and secure inclusive working environment

Schools and their staff (teaching and non-teaching) are entitled to:

- Support from pupils, governors, parents or carer and the LA in implementing their policies;
- Safe and secure working environments;
- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Have their awareness of RPI issues raised;
- Be aware of school policies on RPI issues and of the schools' arrangements and to be involved in their development;
- Be trained (where school policies permit) in RPI;
- Be informed about pupils for whom RPI may need to be totally avoided except in exceptional circumstances;
- Be supported by senior staff where incidents occur; and
- Policy and guidance from the LA to advise them.

Governors are entitled to:

- Policy and guidance from the LA to advise them;
 - Be informed about the use of RPI strategies in schools whilst protecting the confidentiality of individuals, pupils and staff;
- and
- Support from the LA, parents or carers and staff in implementing their policies

The **LA** is entitled to:

- Know that all schools will have clear RPI policies which reflect the LA policy and guidance;
- Information from schools about RPI incidents; and
- Support from staff, governors, and parents or carers in implementing its RPI policy.

Requirements

The LA expects all its schools, in consultation with the Governing Bodies or management groups, staff, pupils and parents or carers, to produce a policy statement for the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions which reflects this LA's policy statement. The LA will issue further advice and guidance to schools on the use of RPI to enable them to meet this requirement.