

Alexandra Primary School

Positive handling Policy – Feb 2012



Legal Framework

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 "enables school staff to use force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- (a) committing any offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
- (b) causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself), or
- (c) prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise."

The definition of 'school staff' applies to (as defined in section 95 of the Act):

- "1. any teacher who works at the school, and
- 2. any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This includes;
 - a. support staff whose job normally includes supervising pupils such as teaching assistants, learning support assistants, learning mentors and lunchtime supervisors
 - b. can also include people to whom the head has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as paid members of staff whose job does not normally involve supervising pupils (for example catering or premises-related staff) and unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits)

Examples of possible situations are given in the DENI document Pastoral Care in Schools: CHILD PROTECTION (p.82 sections 11 and 12). See Appendix 1.

What does it mean to restrain a child?

Physical restraint 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 physical restraint requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining.

Why use restraint

Physical restraint 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. Physical restraint skillfully applied may be eased by degrees as the child calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

Positive handling

Alexandra Primary has adopted the term 'Positive Handling' to describe interventions described above. This follows an approach taken by an organisation named Team-Teach.

The objectives of Team-Teach have been adopted by Alexandra, namely:

- to promote the least intrusive positive handling strategy and a continuum of gradual and graded techniques, with an emphasis and preference for the use of verbal, non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before positive handling strategies are utilised;
- to enable staff to develop acceptable and authorised responses to disruptive, disturbing, angry and aggressive behaviours in a manner that maintains positive relationships and provides safety for all, by training in Team-Teach;
- to emphasise the importance of exhausting behaviour management strategies in the first instance;
- to increase the awareness of staff concerning the importance of recording and reporting, monitoring and evaluating, all incidents involving positive handling;
- to provide a process of repair and reflection for both staff and children.

The staff in Alexandra Primary recognise that the use of Positive Handling is only one of the strategies, and the last strategy, available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline (see behaviour policy).

The aims.

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.
- To give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from pupils or others.

Risk Assessment

Although most young people in Alexandra Primary will never require any form of Positive handling, staff may have to deal with some young people who exhibit disturbed, distressed and distressing behaviour. It is therefore necessary to carry out a risk assessment in each individual incident;

Before Positive handling is considered we will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

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

Individual Risk Assessment - pupils identified as needing a plan.

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a way that may require the use of reasonable force, it is our intention to plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning needs to address:

- Calming/ de-escalation strategies for that child
- Triggers for that child
- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary, as taught through Team Teach);
- Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take;
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for refresher training or guidance);
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate.

More detailed examples of risk assessment and preventative steps can be found in Appendix 2.

Procedures

In the event of Positive Handling having to be used to restrain, it is important to only consider the strategies, which are deemed acceptable and they should only be conducted by staff trained in Team Teach methods. The recording procedures must be followed

Action Steps:

- Tell the pupil who is angry/distressed/not co-operating to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
- If possible summon another adult;
- Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident;
- Make it clear that any restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary;

Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:

- Providing medical support
- Providing respite for those involved
- Providing a time for reflection with the child on what happened and the consequences

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.

Recording

Staff should record (Appendix 3) all incidents of Positive Handling in accordance with School Policy and report these to the Deputy or Headteacher

Details should include:

Name of pupil(s)

Staff member(s) involved

Factors necessitating physical intervention

The strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention

How physical intervention was effected

Outcome of restraint

Any other action taken in the management of the incident

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded.

The report of incident must be transferred to Restraint Log - bound book.

Complaints

We all have a duty of care to the young people in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by the staff, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It will not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and social services department under child protection procedures.

Staff, subjected to physical violence or assault, have the right to be supported in making a formal complaint to the police and, if necessary, taking private action against an assailant.

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

We will review this policy on a yearly basis.

Remember that adhering to the principles and procedures referred to in this policy statement, is part of effective practice and should minimise risk to young people in our care and enhance our own self-protection.

Statement for Parents

In keeping with our home/school agreement, we will inform all parents/carers of our policy on Positive Handling via the MLE.

The statement will highlight:

- Our emphasis on care and protection for everyone within our school community
- Our belief that restraint will be needed on very rare occasions.
- Our endeavour to handle situations with care and responsibility.

- Our intent to apply follow-up and repair strategies.

The statement will outline:

- When staff are authorised to use reasonable physical intervention.
- What steps will be taken after an incident has been dealt with.
- The responsibilities of staff, pupils and parents/carers in resolving situations.

Appendix 1

When might it be appropriate to use Positive Handling?

- 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 a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself 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).

Appendix 2

Risk Assessment / Preventative Steps

All teachers 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 before Positive Handling is required.

Move calmly and confidently.

Make simple, clear statements.

Intervene early.

If necessary summon help before the problem escalates.

Remove audience from the immediate location.

Assistance should be sought when dealing with:

an older pupil,

a physically large pupil,

more than one pupil, or

when the teacher believes that s/he may be at risk of injury.

In those circumstances where the member of staff has decided that it is not appropriate to restrain the pupil without help they should:

remove other pupils who might be at risk,

summon assistance from colleagues,

where necessary, telephone the police,

inform the pupil(s) that help will be arriving,

until assistance arrives, the member of staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating

Appendix 3

RECORD OF RESTRAINT

Date of incident: Time of incident:

Pupil Name: D.o.B:

Member(s) of staff involved:

Adult witnesses to restraint:

Pupil witnesses to restraint:

Outline of event leading to restraint:

Outline of incident of restraint (including restraint method used):

Outcome of restraint:

Description of any injury(ies) sustained by injured pupil and any subsequent treatment:

Date parent/carers informed of incident: Time:

By whom informed:

Outline of parent/carers response:

Signature of staff completing report: Date:

Signature of Teacher-in-charge: Date:

Signature of Head : Date:

Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action: