

Fun Five Positive Handling Policy

Positive Handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 and DFEE Circular 10/98 allow members of staff at a school who are authorised by the Headteacher, to use such handling as is reasonable in circumstances where the pupil may need to be prevented from engaging in behaviours which are likely to cause injury to themselves, others or damage to property. The guidance extends this to maintaining good order and discipline, for both on-site and off- site activities.

Positive Handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ handling have been tried and found unsuccessful **or in an emergency situation.**

There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (e.g. physical assault) being committed. Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement. All staff have a professional 'duty of care' within their job description. Together with the legislative framework this enables staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher to use such handling as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a child from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the child himself)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and behaviour at the club or among its users, whether during a session or otherwise.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO RESTRAIN A CHILD?

Positive Handling is the positive application of handling 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 also only employ a reasonable amount of force – that is the minimum 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 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.

AIMS

Our staff recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure a child's safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. The aims of this policy are:

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all children against any form of physical intervention that 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 use the minimum degree of handling necessary to accomplish positive handling.
- To give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from pupils or others.
- To maintain accurate records of incidents where Positive Handling has been employed.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Although most children in our Club will never require any form of Positive Handling, staff may have to deal with some who exhibit disturbed, distressed and distressing behaviour. It is therefore necessary to carry out risk assessment. We will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

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

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ASSESSMENT

We will complete a risk analysis within the school and put in place strategies to minimise these risks in identified locations.

INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

The school's respect for the rights of the individual takes into consideration the context of The Human Rights Act (1998) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991). The school's ethos and the guidance in this policy is based on the presumption that every adult and child is entitled to:

- Respect for his/her private life
- The right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment
- The right to liberty and security: and
- The right not to be discriminated against in his/her enjoyment of those rights.

If we become aware that a child is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable handling, it is our intention to plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning needs to address: Managing the child (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary); 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 training or guidance);

Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate.

If Positive Handling is likely to be necessary, this should be included in the child's additional information on the club contract together with information on: de-escalation strategies; the manner in which the child will be held; how support can be summoned if needed; any medical factors to be considered.

PROCEDURES

In the event of Positive Handling having been used it is important to consider the strategies, which are deemed acceptable, and the recording procedures that should be in place.

ACTION STEPS

Whenever possible the decision to use positive handling should be taken by at least two staff members.

- Tell the child who is misbehaving to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
- If possible, summon another adult;
- Continue to communicate with the child throughout the incident;
- Make it clear that 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
- 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.

POSITIVE HANDLING STAFF MEMBERS

All staff members who have undergone 'team teach' training, and are therefore trained in positive handling.

RECORDING

Staff should record all incidents of restraint in accordance with School Policy and report these to the Headteacher.

Details should include:

- Name of child/ren
- 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 positive handling

- Any other action taken in the management of the incident

Parent/Carer(s) should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded.

COMPLAINTS

We all have a duty of care to the young people in our Club 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, and should help to avoid complaints from parent/carer(s). It will not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of handling 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, children, parent/carer(s) and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

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 PARENT/CARER(S)

We will inform all Parent/Carer(s) of our policy on Positive Handling.

WHEN MIGHT IT BE APPROPRIATE TO USE REASONABLE HANDLING?

To prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order at the club or amongst its users.

Examples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are

- A child attacks a member of staff, or another child
- Children fighting
- A child 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 child is running around in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others
- A child absconds from the club or tries to leave the club (NB this will only apply if a child could be at risk if not kept in the club).

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- A child persistently refuses to obey an order
- A child is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting the session

STRATEGIES

All staff need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult children 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.
- If necessary, summon help before the problem escalates.
- Remove audience from the immediate location.

There are situations where staff should not intervene without help.

Assistance should be sought when dealing with:

- A physically large child.
- More than one child.
- When the Play Worker 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 child without help they should:

- Remove other children who might be at risk,
- Summon assistance from colleagues,
- Where necessary, telephone the police,
- Inform the child/ren 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.

The method of restraint employed must use the **minimum handling** for the **minimum time** and must observe the following requirements:

Restraint must NOT:

- Involve hitting the child;
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the child;
- Restrict the child's breathing;
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas.

During any incident the 'restrainer' should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the child;
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement;
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury.

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff;

- Blocking a child's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a child by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a child away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or
- (In extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

This Policy was reviewed 2026

Some Dos and Don'ts

DO

- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Summon help
- Continue to talk the child in a calm way
- Provide a soft surface if possible
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the child
- Hold the child's arms by his/her sides

DON'T

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

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REPORTING AND RECORDING PROFORMA

RECORD OF RESTRAINT

Date of incident: Time of incident:

Child's Name: D.o.B:

Member(s) of staff involved:

Adult witnesses to restraint:

Child witnesses to restraint:

Outline of event leading to restraint – including other strategies tried and reasons for using Positive Handling rather than another strategy:

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

Outcome of restraint: