



Positive Handling Strategies

BACKGROUND

- This document adopts the guidance contained within DfE Use of reasonable force advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2013)
- The Education Act (1977) clarified the use of physical force by teachers and others authorised by the Head Teacher of a school, to control or restrain pupils. The clarification was achieved through the addition of Section 550A to the Education Act 1996. This section became operational on 1st September 1998 and applies to all schools.
- The Children Act Guidance clearly states that the use of physical restraint should be limited to situations preventing the child causing injury to itself or others or damaging property. Force should not be used for any other purpose or to ensure compliance with staff instructions.
- This document sets out to define the circumstances in which staff may judge it necessary and appropriate to use force or restrictive physical intervention to manage a child's behaviour.

Principles

At Parklea Primary School we believe that:

- Every child has the right to be educated in a safe and secure environment where each child's moral, intellectual, personal, social and emotional development is promoted;
- Parents/carers are informed and reassured that their children are being educated in a safe, caring and respectful atmosphere;
- All staff have the right to work in a safe and secure environment.

Purposes

- To create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe;
- Protect every person in the school community from harm
- Protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention, which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- Develop and implement guidance for staff so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such force might be applied.

Definition of Reasonable Force

Points 1-6 taken from DfE July 2013.

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 intervention with pupils.

2. Force is usually used either to control or restrict a child from harming self or others.. 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 leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Restrict means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme 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.

The working definition of “reasonable force” is the minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

PRACTICES

Preventative Strategies

The school actively promotes positive behaviour management strategies thus reducing the need for the use of any form of physical intervention except in emergency situations.

Risk assessment

Where the school is aware that a child or young person is likely to behave in a way that may require physical control or intervention, it will be essential to plan how to respond if and when the need arises. In these cases it will be essential to plan:

- Managing the pupil (strategies to de-escalate the conflict, what holds to be used and what forms of words are most likely to lead to calm);
- The involvement of the child or young person and their parents/carers in developing the plan thus ensuring all parties are clear about what action will be take and why;
- Staff awareness, including teaching assistants and supply staff, of the plan and their part in it. This may include specific training for staff most likely to be involved with the particular behaviour;
- Planning where appropriate how additional support can be summoned in the event of the plan being used;
- Ensuring that the individual needs of the child or your person are taken into account. In some instances it will be necessary to consider the physical/health needs of the young person in order to ensure that holds are safe.

Planning for incidents

There are a wide variety of incidents in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrict a child or young person from harm or not following instructions. Generally there will be three main categories:

- (a) Where action is necessary in self defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury for example:

- A pupil is self harming;
 - A pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil;
 - Pupils are fighting;
- (b) Where there is an assessment that there is a risk of injury, or significant damage to property for example:
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing deliberate damage to property;
 - A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident by rough play, out of control behaviour or the misuse of objects;
 - A pupil tries to leave the school without permission and such an action is judged to put them at risk within the community;
- (c) Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline:
- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an instruction to leave the classroom;
 - A pupil behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson ie that learning is becoming impossible for other members of the class.
- (This list is not exhaustive)

Procedures – Support Structures

The following procedure has been agreed by the staff and adopted by the Governing Body:

- Each classroom has a Blue Card which is used to summon assistance in an emergency.
- Breakfast Club and After School Clubs also use the Blue Card.

Roles and Responsibilities

Reasonable force/safe handling can be used by any member of staff who is authorised by the Head Teacher to have lawful control or charge of pupils, eg teachers, teaching assistants, midday supervisors.

Reasonable force/safe handling can be used by a teacher or other authorised person(s) on the school premises or when authorised elsewhere eg supervision on an educational trip. Reasonable force should be limited to emergency situations and used **only as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have been exhausted.**

Forms of Reasonable Force

When other behaviour management strategies have failed – it should be the minimum intervention or force that should reasonably be employed depending on the age, sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical condition and any special needs of the pupil and used in a way that preserved the dignity and respect of all concerned.

The use of reasonable force/safe handling should involve a calm and measured approach at all times appropriate to the particular pupil and be in accordance with the school's agreed strategies and the following procedures:

- Tell the pupil to stop the inappropriate behaviour;
- Ask the pupil to behave appropriate, clearly stating the desired behaviour;
- Tell the pupil that physical intervention will take place if behaviour continues;

- During the incident repeatedly reassure the pupil and tell him/her that physical contact will stop as soon as he/she is ready to behave appropriately;
- If the teacher, teaching assistant or midday supervisor feels at risk eg from a large or older group of pupils, send for the nearest staff support

The forms of reasonable force the school will use will depend on the individual circumstances and include:

- Physically interposing between pupils;
- Blocking a pupil's path;
- Holding;
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back;
- In extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds

Staff should not act in a way that might be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe;
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil;
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- Tripping up a pupil;
- Holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear;
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Health and Safety

- When using reasonable force/physical intervention/safe handling, the pupil's health and safety must always be considered and monitored.
- Physical interventions should involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the situation and calm the pupil.
- The use of reasonable force is only to be employed in exceptional circumstances or an emergency when a pupil appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and whose behaviour is presenting a threat to himself/herself or others. A member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help if there is a risk that he/she may be injured or may endanger his/her life.
- Due to the additional risks associated with Covid 19 and social distancing rules, the parents of any child exhibiting challenging or dangerous behaviour, including breaking the Health and Safety rules, will be contacted immediately to avoid the need for restrictive physical intervention. Parents may be asked to assist in with the de-escalation of their child, or to remove their child from school until a risk assessment can be undertaken.

Training for School Staff

- All school staff will have access to these strategies on the school network and website. Regular training for school staff includes full information on the school's procedures and strategies for dealing with potentially violent and actual violent behaviour;
- Sharing of strategies amongst staff helps to maintain awareness. Debriefing after an incident involving aggressive or violent behaviour is vital for the staff involved and all staff can gain from discussion of the causes and of the action taken.
- Where school staff are involved on a daily basis with pupils who are potentially violent, it is recommended that staff have regular sessions to update their training.
- Training will be provided by accredited trainers, the school is currently using Sherwood Trainers. The Head Teacher holds an up to date list of staff who have passed the accredited training course.

Recording, Reporting and Repair

- All incidents involving the use of reasonable force must be recorded on CPOMS and the Bound and Numbered Book found on either school site. The school will keep an up to date record of all such incidents.
- Immediately following any incident the member(s) of staff concerned must inform the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teachers and provide a written report in the Bound and Numbered Book.
- The record should be used to assist all concerned with planning to avoid repetition of the incident that caused the use of force. Similarly the record should be used to analyse what worked well and how it might be replicated as part of a planned response to out of control behaviour in the future.
- Staff involved in an incident should be provided with support, for instance discussion with a senior member of staff for the school and the professional associates or trade unions. They may need time to reflect upon their involvement in the incident and allowed time to rest and recover before continuing with their duties.
- Pupils who have received physical restrictive intervention are entitled to record their views and to discuss the matter with the Head Teacher. It is only when pupils are provided with the opportunity to consider alternatives to the behaviour that caused the incident that any learning will take place.
- Parents/carers should be promptly informed and given an opportunity to discuss the incident. The Head Teacher is responsible for deciding how and when parents/carers are notified.
- Where parents/carers have ongoing concerns after the incident they should discuss the situation with the Head Teacher and be made aware of the school's complaint procedure.

Complaints

- Any complaint from a pupil/parent/carer will be dealt with within the school's complaints policy/procedures.
- In the event of a subsequent complaint made against a member of staff either by or on behalf of the child, this will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy.

- Staff who themselves are subject to physical violence or assault should be supported. Refer to the school's Violence and Aggression Policy. Staff to complete Violence and Aggression Form where appropriate.

The vast majority of behaviour in our school that does not meet our expectations, is responded to with management strategies that do not rely on any form of physical intervention.

Reviewed: September 2022

Next review: September 2023