




Imagine...with all your mind, Believe ...with all your heart, Achieve ...with all your might



# SCOTTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

	Name of School	Scotts Primary School
	Policy review Date	September 2024
	Date of next Review	September 2026
	Who reviewed this policy?	Jenny Taylor
	Date approved by Governing body	September 2024
	Inclusion Governor	Lindsey Griffin
	Headteacher	Ryan Kinnear
	Chair of Governors	Jackie Boardman

## Positive handling policy

Situations involving decisions about whether to use force can occur in any school. Both using force and deciding not to can entail significant risks for pupils and staff. Establishing a clear school policy on the use of force by staff is an important part of minimising these risks.

### OBJECTIVES

- To maintain the safety of pupils, staff and volunteers.
- To prevent serious breaches of school discipline.
- To prevent serious damage to property.

### When can reasonable force be used?

Whilst Positive Handling will only ever be used as a last resort, all school staff members have a legal power to use reasonable force. This legal power can also apply to unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying pupils on a school organised visit. Common Law states that any person has a right to use force in order to protect themselves, protect others from harm, prevent damage to their property, to save life and limb, and to prevent a breach of the peace. The Use of Reasonable Force DfE 2013 confirms that school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene rests with the individual's own professional judgement and should always depend on circumstances. Staff have a responsibility to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk. Schools do not need parental consent to use positive handling on a child.

### Definitions

#### (a) Physical Contact

It is not illegal for staff to touch a pupil. There are situations in which proper physical contact takes place between staff and pupils, e.g. in games/PE or to comfort pupils/to give first aid.

#### (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) Positive Handling

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to pupils, staff or property or if good order is being seriously prejudiced. Where possible, a restrictive physical intervention should be carried out by a member of staff trained in appropriate techniques. All such incidents will be recorded on CPOMS.

#### (d) Techniques

Following DfE advice from the 'Use of reasonable force' 2013 publication, we do not permit restraint techniques which may present an unacceptable risk to a child, the techniques in question are: the 'seated double embrace', the 'double basket-hold' and the 'nose distraction technique'. We do not allow holds that

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increase the risk of positional asphyxia. Designated staff are trained in safe restraint techniques and will always work with a second adult. Reasonable adjustments for children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) will be made as necessary.

## **POSITIVE HANDLING**

Although preventative measures will not always work, there are a number of steps which the school will take to reduce the likelihood of situations arising where the power to use force may need to be exercised. The school will therefore aim to minimise the risk by:

- Creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk of threat and violence of any kind.
- Developing effective relationships between pupils and staff that are central to good order.
- Using PSHE, including work on emotional and mental health and wellbeing, to teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings
- Have an adapted curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils, including sensory input.
- Taking a structured approach to staff development that helps staff to develop the skills of positive behaviour management, managing conflict and also to support each other during and after an incident
- Having a clear behaviour and discipline policy that includes giving the children clear boundaries and expectations, which is consistently followed
- Recognising that challenging behaviours are often foreseeable

The types of force used could include:

- a) Passive physical contact resulting from standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path;
- b) Active physical contact such as:
  - I. Leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
  - II. Ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back;
  - III. In more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive holds, which may require specific expertise or training.

When there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury, any member of staff would be justified in taking any necessary action (consistent with the principle of seeking to use minimum force required to achieve the desired result). Such situations could include preventing a pupil running into a busy road or preventing a pupil hitting someone with a dangerous object.

Staff should make every effort to avoid acting in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. However, in the most extreme circumstances it may not always be possible to avoid injuring a pupil.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

The school will regularly undertake to train staff on behaviour management techniques including ways of avoiding or defusing situations in which physical intervention might become necessary.

Whole staff training in positive handling is carried out every three years and additionally when appropriate to the needs of our pupils.

## **RECORDING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS**

The school will record on CPOMS every significant incident in which force has been used, as well as all other behaviour incidents.

These will include any incident in which:

- a) Injury or distress was caused to a pupil or member of staff.
- b) A restrictive hold was used.
- c) A written record may be needed to justify the use of force (this is particularly relevant where the judgement was very finely balanced).
- d) A record is needed to help identify and analyse patterns of pupil behaviour or staff training needs
- e) Other agencies were involved, such as the police.

**After any recordable incident, parents should always be informed.** Wherever possible the parents/guardians will be telephoned as soon as possible after the incident and then details should be confirmed in writing. Parents will also be given a copy of this policy and any relevant information on post-incident support.

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Should an individual be in school that is deemed as at a greater risk of needing restrictive physical interventions, a Positive Handling Plan (PHP) will be written for that child in consultation with their parents. An individual risk assessment may also be created. The PHP will include:

- I. Details of situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and de-escalation techniques are most likely to work;
- II. What is most likely to trigger a violent reaction, including relevant information relating to any previous incident requiring positive handling;
- III. If physical intervention is likely to be needed, any specific strategies and techniques that have been agreed by staff, parents and the pupil (where old enough) concerned.

## **POST-INCIDENT SUPPORT**

The school will ensure that staff and pupils affected by an incident have continuing support for as long as necessary in respect of:

- a) Physical consequences.
- b) Support to deal with any emotional stress or loss of confidence.
- c) The opportunity to analyse, reflect and learn from the incident.
- d) Emotional and mental health and wellbeing support, through our school counsellor, ELSA or Employee Assistance Programme.

## **CONCERNS**

Parents and pupils have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff. This might include the use of positive handling. If a specific allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, then the school will follow the guidance set out in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education. Other complaints will be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure, which is available on the school website.