



BROOK FIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Positive Handling Policy Statement

Introduction

The school recognises that there is a need to physically intervene when there is an obvious risk to the safety of its children, staff, or property. Such intervention or restraint is termed 'Positive Handling'.

Good professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure a safe and positive environment. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in school respond positively to the discipline practiced by the staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all the children and staff. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of positive handling may be required.

Positive Handling will only ever be used as a last resort when all the other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils or staff are at immediate and significant risk. Consideration must be given to wearing appropriate PPE if necessary, i.e. spitting.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils specifically the school's behaviour policy. Also read in conjunction with the DfE advice on the use of reasonable force.

Principles

- The school has a duty of care to maintain an acceptable standard of safety for all pupils and staff.
- The use of positive handling is part of the whole school policy for behaviour management.
- The use of positive handling is an exceptional measure – 'a last resort'.
- Positive handling will not be used for disciplinary purposes.
- Incidents involving positive handling will be recorded and parents informed.
- Staff should be alert to risks at all times and develop an ability to predict and then actively work to avoid incidents.
- Law does not prohibit the taking of immediate action to prevent injury to any person or serious damage to property.
- Staff must be aware of the risk to themselves and others when they assess any situation requiring physical intervention.
- The use of positive handling techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent 'side-effect' of ensuring that the service user remains safe. (George Matthews – Director of Team-Teach)
- Support structures are available to staff and pupils following any incident requiring the use of positive handling.

Training

Positive handling training will be made available to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the Head Teacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

Guidance: before an incident

Any physical intervention involves a degree of risk; an assessment of the level of risk must be undertaken before deciding to intervene.

The positive handling of a pupil should lead to the calming of the situation and not lead to greater injury or an escalation of violence.

All efforts must have been taken to de-escalate a situation in order to avoid physical intervention.

Such methods should include:

- Show that you are calm and self-assured
- Maintain a neutral facial expression
- Allow space (unless immediate danger to the child is present)
- Control your breathing
- Lower your voice and keep your tone even
- Employ a range of methods of distraction or diversion
- Use words or phrases that de-escalate, such as: I wonder if... let's try... maybe we can... I want you to... give the child take-up time
- Don't use threats, sarcasm, humour (unless you already have that relationship with a child) or take the situation personally.

Please ensure you have read guidance saved in All Staff, Behaviour.

Positive handling is a form of control, which should only be used when the situation does not allow for any other method to be employed and when a situation is about to exist where:

- the actions of pupil would place him/herself, other pupils or staff at the risk of serious injury.
- there could be serious damage to property.

The following considerations should form part of the risk assessment:

- the location of the incident and the potential for the restraint to be carried out safely
- the restrainer's capacity to act calmly
- the age, gender, physique and any known medical conditions of the pupil and the restrainer
- the scope to involve a second adult to assist or supervise
- the clothing being worn by the pupil and the restrainer, together with any jewellery or spectacles/hearing aid
- the presence of any weapon.

Guidance: during an incident

In any application of positive handling, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down a situation.

Help should be summoned from colleagues; other pupils should never be involved with restraint.

The pupil should be approached calmly but firmly. Where possible, explain the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour.

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time.

The restrainer should:

- offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- cause the minimal level of restriction of movement
- reduce the danger of any accidental injury

Guidance: after an incident

Following an incident involving positive handling, parents/carers will be informed of the incident. A record will be made by the restrainer and any other adult who was present. The pupil should also be requested to provide an account, where appropriate

This record will be kept in the school's concerns file.

All records will be signed and dated and will include that of the Head teacher or senior member of staff on duty at the time.

The record will include:

- details of where and when the incident took place
- circumstances and significant factors that led to the incident
- the nature and duration of the positive handling used
- the names of all staff and pupils who witnessed the incident
- a description of any injuries sustained by the pupil or member of staff and any subsequent medical attention
- a description of any action taken after the incident.

The report must be completed as soon as possible and not later than the end of the working day in which the incident took place.