

Positive Handling Policy



Bishop Road Primary School

Adopted by: Senior Leadership but shared with the FBH&S Committee

Adopted on: February 2022

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This policy has been written with consideration of the following school policies:

- School Equalities Plan, Anti- Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Inimate Care and staff guidance & SEND

Positive Handling Policy



Policy Statement:

Staff at Bishop Road Primary School are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will use reasonable force and follow the school Positive Handling Policy. This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It should be considered alongside the most recent national guidance ((DfE Use of reasonable force 2013). It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

Introduction:

- School staff have a power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.
- Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
- Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power.

School Expectations:

The Leadership Team and governors take seriously their duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management. This policy has a clear focus:

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Who can use reasonable force?

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

Alternatives to Physical Controls:

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

Potential Modifications to Environment:

- Some pupils may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. It is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. **For example:**
- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils, compasses and darts) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry pupil who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Is there a design arrangement for furniture appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage angry pupils to take themselves to a safer place?

Help Protocols

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offers help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just

staying around in case you are needed. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions but might sometime means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

Well Chosen Words

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can actually increase anger. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation. Staff have a range of strategies to use when deescalating challenging behaviour.

The Last Resort Principal:

At Bishop Road we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced.

Proactive Physical Interventions:

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling Plan. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces risk.

Reasonable, Proportionate and Best Interest:

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported. If staff can answer the following questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

- Reasonable – Would another teacher respond in a similar way?
- Proportionate – Is the level of intervention equal to the risk posed?
- Best Interest – Are your actions in the best interest of the child?

Health and Safety:

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal health and safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the Deputy Head. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to

reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing.

Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which seems to involve the least risk.

As a minimum requirement each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with the school and policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that staff participate in training if directed to do so.

When considering a pupil's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a health and safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

Risk Assessment:

Informal risk assessments are important when working with pupils who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this instance the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

Getting Help:

At this school the following support structures are in place:

- Positive Handling Plans kept on file in each classroom to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Weekly team meetings to update staff on current issues and share information.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Refresher courses in the Team Teach and Safer Handling strategies and techniques for staff where appropriate

Positive Handling Plans:

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any

particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, gender, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans may also result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in a Pastoral Support Plan or School Support Plan.

The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff:

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

Complaints:

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal complaints procedure. Pupils should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the Head Teacher. Any safety concerns should be reported to the Systems and Services Manager.

Training:

All employees of Bishop Road School have a legal power to use force where they deem it reasonable, proportionate and in the best interest of the child. This school has adopted the Team Teach Model alongside the Safer Handling Scheme of training for key staff. All training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with DfES and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our clients. We are committed to a minimum of two full time staff undertaking regular refresher training.

Recording:

Whenever force is used the incident must be recorded using the appropriate forms. The incident book and forms are kept in the office. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours. The forms should be given to the Deputy Head, who will copy records and file in appropriate and necessary files. The Head Teacher should be informed of any force used. Reports will include details of what happened, the intervention, and why the intervention was reasonable, proportional and in the best interest of the child. When an incident is recorded, the child's Positive Handling Plan will be reviewed.

All records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for 75 years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Serious incident reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed. A record is written into the incident book. This refers to supporting sheets and other relevant information.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Deputy Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required.

The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

Follow Up:

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, behaviour management policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures.