



Whole School Positive Handling Policy

October 2015

To be reviewed October 2016

Grindon Infant School

Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with our whole school behaviour policy. All staff use a range of de-escalation strategies as a preventative measure to physical intervention. Physical intervention will be used as a **last resort**. Force is used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. Reasonable adjustments will be made for children with disabilities and children with SEN.

Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

Six members of staff have been trained in de-escalation and Team Teach techniques which have been risk assessed and are subject to ongoing review and approved by the BILD code of practice. Whilst some physical injury potential can be reduced, there always remains some risk that injury may occur when two or more people engage and force is used to protect, release or restrain. 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 pupil remains safe.

Colleagues should be aware that the use of force cannot be used as a punishment. 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.

The Headteacher authorises all school staff to use reasonable force provided staff have made the judgement that they are acting in the pupil's best interests and it is reasonable and proportionate. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

Reasonable force can be used in the following circumstances:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight.
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves.
- any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school or among any of its pupils.

Other forms of appropriate physical contact:

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. For example:

- Holding the hand of a child where appropriate.
- Comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- To demonstrate a technique e.g. how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To administer first aid.

A detailed account of all incidents during which restraint is used must be recorded as soon as possible on the incident record form in the Team Teach File and/or in the Bound and Numbered Book (for serious incidents).

When deciding what amounts to a serious incident, staff should use their professional judgement and also consider the following:

- the pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- the degree of force used
- the effect on the pupil or member of staff
- the child's age

The following information (as a minimum) should be detailed on an incident sheet or book together with written statements of witnesses:

- name of pupils involved;

- the time of the incident;
- the place where the incident occurred and all of the de-escalation techniques applied by the adults involved prior to any physical intervention

Where the incident has been prolonged or where considerable force has been used the following details should also be recorded:

- names of all witnesses, pupils and adults;
- signed witness statements;
- a description of the way in which the incident developed; including de-escalation techniques
- the pupil's response;
- the reason for force being used;
- Details of the outcomes of the incident including injuries and damage.

Pupils should be given the opportunity to debrief after each and **every** incident at an appropriate time. This time consideration will vary from individual to individual. The aim of this over time will be to increase the pupil's emotional awareness and lead to them being more able to identify causes of anxiety **before** there is an incident, therefore enabling them to choose a calming strategy or enabling staff to remove the anxiety for them.

Staff involved in the main part of the incident should be given time to reflect on the incident in a calm atmosphere. They may also like to discuss the incident with a senior member of staff or team teach colleague/tutor. All staff should have the opportunity to suggest alternative strategies that may be considered in future incidents and consideration should also be given to a bespoke positive handling plan for that student.

All incidents of physical intervention will be reported to parents/carer via letter or/and telephone call home. In the event that the school feel that passing the information onto parents might lead to more harm to the pupil concerned the school will follow local/school safeguarding procedures.

Good practice

Recommended review and monitoring practice

Following the detailed recording of a serious incident, good practice dictates that the Headteacher, deputy Head teacher or senior member of staff should:

- read all accounts of the incident;
- interview all staff (both teaching and support) and pupils who witnessed the incident;
- Discuss the incident with the pupil or pupils who were directly involved. It is important that pupils be provided with the opportunity of giving their own version of events, particularly in cases of divergent opinion or fact, and they should be encouraged, if necessary helped, to prepare a written statement;
- ensure that parents/carers or other persons with parental responsibility (such as social workers) have been informed of all relevant facts;
- ensure that the LEA and the Chair of the Management Committee have had the incident drawn to their attention;
- ensure that all concerned are aware of their rights of complaint;
- Review school policies and consider if they sense the best interest of all parties and whether alternative policies or change to the existing policy need to be considered.

Allegations against staff

Allegations will always be taken seriously, and we will ensure that allegations are dealt with quickly in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. However, sanctions may be taken against students who are found to have made malicious accusations against school staff. When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably. Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school should ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.

Complaints procedures

After an incident in a school, there is always the possibility of formal complaint. A number of persons might feel aggrieved by the incident, whether they be pupils, parents/carers, teachers, other employees, or even visitors to the school and members of the public. Any of these persons can lodge a complaint and expect it to be investigated diligently and fairly. Please refer to the Link School complaints policy for further information/details.

References

Education Act 1996

Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Behaviour and Discipline inclusive of use of reasonable force in schools - Sept 2012

Use of Reasonable Force - Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013