

STANNINGTON INFANT SCHOOL

Policy for Use of Positive Handling with Pupils

Agreed by Governors November 2023

Next Review November 2024



STANNINGTON INFANT SCHOOL POLICY FOR USE OF POSITIVE HANDLING¹ WITH PUPILS

At Stannington Infant School we believe that it is important to establish a safe, secure and inclusive environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use physical intervention and in some cases reasonable force, in order to handle pupils' emotions or aggressive behaviour when other measures have failed to do wherever possible. The school understands that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupil is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, the school takes a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm.

Team Teach is the school's chosen strategy if a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically, they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy to ensure that physical intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010

This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force in schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- HM Government (2019) 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Roles and responsibilities

Governing Board

- There will be a named governor responsible for behaviour.
- To monitor, review and amend the policy, at least annually.
- To monitor and evaluate incident forms

The Leadership Team

- Oversee the implementation of behaviour and discipline procedures across the school
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the behaviour policy
- Support staff in dealing with behavioural issues
- Co-ordinate staff training and Team Teach reaccréditation
- Ensure that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes the [Physical Intervention Report Form](#).
- Oversee the planning and implementation and review of behaviour programmes
- Maintain a central record of training, evaluations and incidents

Class Teachers and support staff

- Contribute to the writing of behaviour plans
- Report incidents within 24 hours of the event
- Complete ABC sheets when necessary and upload to CPOMS
- Complete the log book in the head teacher's office
- Refer serious concerns to the Leadership Team

Definitions of Positive Handling

Physical intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a disruptive or destructive action, or example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder, with little or no force.

Positive handling is the term used to include a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Our clear and consistent positive handling policy supports all pupils, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Physical control/restraint

This involves the use of reasonable force to control or restrain a pupil to prevent that pupil from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. The DfE non-statutory guidance document 'Use of reasonable Force' (dated July 2013 reviewed 2015) also states that in addition to the general power to use reasonable force, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for "prohibited items." Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules. Further guidance and advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>.

Positive handling

The principle of positive handling means that Stannington Infant School expects staff to assess whether the incident requiring a response can be resolved without physical intervention. In our school, wherever possible, only staff trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategy techniques of Team Teach will use physical intervention techniques with children, and only when necessary. (see appendix 1 for Team Teach accredited staff)

Before using physical interventions we take effective actions to reduce risk by:

- Showing care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reasoning.
- Giving clear directions for pupils to stop (using both using visual support and language).
- Reminding the pupil about rules and likely outcomes.
- Removing an audience and taking vulnerable pupils to a safe place.
- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and objects that may be used as weapons.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.
- Whilst or before intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of nurturing and reassuring a child e.g “we are doing this to keep you safe.

Positive Handling Plans (PHP)

Where pupils exhibit challenging behaviours, risk assessments will be put into place. Staff will think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. Parents will be involved with the writing of the risk assessment. When considering a pupil's behaviour, staff and parents will think about the following questions?

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

Team Teach at Stannington Infant School

At Stannington Infant School we have adopted Team Teach as our chosen strategy on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Team Teach is a structured, non-violent staff development programme that promotes Techniques (that are) Effective (with) Anger, aggression Management (utilizing) Therapeutic Educational Awareness Communication Handling (strategies).

The approach is holistic and promotes positive and protective handling strategies. A huge emphasis is placed on preventing and de-escalating situations and behaviours before physical intervention becomes necessary. Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the pupil, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional techniques, but as a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the pupil remains safe. However, Team Teach does recognise that there will be times when staff are left with no other option than to hold a pupil, and it teaches safe, effective ways to do this. Stannington Infant School is committed to Team Teach and ensures that all staff members have been trained in its use.

Use of Restraint

At Stannington Infant School we only use restraint when there is no realistic alternative and for the shortest time possible. The school understands that, in some cases, action may be required very quickly, e.g. in the event that a pupil attempts to run out into a busy road, or where pupils begin a violent fight with one another and staff are forced to separate the pupils. Staff will not be penalised for resorting to the use of physical intervention or reasonable force in such situations where it is justified and perceived necessary to prevent harm to others or property in the circumstances.

Positive handling will be applied with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Reasonable force is not used as a method of behaviour management or discipline – only as a last resort in situations that require de-escalation to prevent harm.

Reasonable force

Staff members will use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances. Physical restraint will never be used routinely. Where reasonable force is required, the degree and type of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. their age or SEND. The following list is not exhaustive, but provides examples of situations where the school may decide to use reasonable force where other methods of defusing a situation have been exhausted or are not appropriate:

- Members of staff need to control pupils risking the safety of themselves or others outside of school premises where the same range of support options are not available, e.g. on school trips.
- Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving an area, e.g. the classroom or school grounds, where doing so would risk their safety or the safety of others.
- A pupil is attacking a member of staff or another pupil.
- A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff must intervene to prevent this.
- Disruptive children must be removed from the classroom and are refusing instructions to leave.
- The headteacher or authorised staff are conducting a search for items prohibited under the Education Act 1996, e.g. knives and weapons, alcohol, and illegal drugs.

DfE Guidance and the Act make it clear that all members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force, and that the power can also apply to people whom the head teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils, such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised educational visit. All members of staff will be permitted to use reasonable force where they believe it to be appropriate in line with their training, as long as all necessary precautions are taken. The decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances and the pupil's individual needs.

Reasonable force techniques that involve restraint will only be used where the staff member in charge feels it is necessary to prevent serious harm. In general, restraint will only be used briefly and prolonged restraint will not be used, i.e. restraint beyond that which is necessary to remove the immediate threat a pupil is posing to themselves or others.

Where staff determine physical intervention is necessary, they will calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it is necessary in a non-threatening manner. In most cases, staff will communicate this to pupils before making physical contact

to minimise distress and/or further aggressive behaviour from the pupil; however, the school recognises that this is not possible in some emergency situations.

Responding to unforeseen emergencies (Dynamic Risk Assessment)

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and Stannington Infant School recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. Any unforeseen event may require an emergency response with a dynamic risk assessment. Following the event, staff have a duty to plan ahead and prepare a risk assessment in the form of a Positive Handling Plan (PHP)

Safe touch

For the purposes of this policy, '**safe touch**' is defined as physical contact which, if avoided, would be inhumane, unkind or cause distress to a pupil, e.g. where a pupil is significantly distressed and in need of physical comfort.

The school understands that the following examples are instances of safe touch which may occur between staff and pupils:

- Comforting an upset or distressed pupil
- Congratulating or praising a pupil
- Holding the hand of a pupil to guide them, such as when crossing a road or walking to assembly
- Giving first aid to a pupil
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons
- Administering medicine

Pupils with SEND

The school will have due consideration to the risks posed by the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND in terms of physical intervention and reasonable force.

The SENCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that staff that come into regular contact with pupils with SEND are aware of the ways in which their needs can be met without reasonable force.

The school is aware that pupils with SEND may sometimes experience meltdowns, which can sometimes manifest in behaviour which may be aggressive or seem uncontrollable. Where it is known that a pupil is prone to meltdowns, the SENCO and headteacher will put into place a risk assessment to determine planned strategies for managing the pupil's meltdowns that are tailored to the pupil's specific needs, to avoid the use of reasonable force. These risk assessments will be conducted in collaboration with the pupil and their parents, where appropriate. Some pupils with SEND may require physical intervention when they feel overwhelmed or stressed, e.g. a tight hug; however, this will be discussed as part of relevant risk assessments and agreed with their parents.

Post-incident support and debrief

Following an incident of reasonable force, all pupils and staff members involved will be given any necessary first aid to treat injuries as soon as possible, and emotional support. Any injury to staff or children will be reported on Southalls Information System under the accident reporting module.

Wherever reasonable force is used, staff members and pupils involved in incidents will be given separate opportunities to reflect on what happened.

It will be explained to the pupil involved the reason that such intervention was used, and reassured that the use of the intervention was not a punishment for their behaviour, but rather a method of defusing the situation and preventing them from harming themselves or others.

Staff will be encouraged to reflect on their actions and how they handled the situation, and will be reassured, where appropriate, that they have done nothing wrong and acted in what they perceived to be the best interests of pupils.

Reporting

Good practice requires that:

- All incidents where friendly guides and escorts are used to be recorded on CPOMS
- All other incidents involving restraints will be recorded on the proforma and uploaded to CPOMS.

A detailed written report will be kept of **all** incidents where reasonable force is used, distinguishing between planned interventions, i.e. those in line with approved strategies for the behaviour of specific pupils, and unplanned or emergency interventions. Immediately following an incident, the member(s) of staff involved will verbally report the incident to the headteacher and provide a comprehensive written record of the situation as soon as possible, using the Physical Intervention report Form within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

Records will be retained and analysed by the headteacher, and SENCO where physical intervention was used on a pupil with SEND, on a [termly](#) basis to ensure that such interventions are being used appropriately, and to identify patterns of behaviour and responses to that behaviour that may require changes to school practice, e.g. increased staff training or further behavioural or emotional support. Records should also be sent to the governing board [annually](#) for evaluation. All records must be held for 75 years after the date of birth of the child, and will therefore be passed onto their next school.

Staff members who do not record an instance of reasonable force where it has occurred may be disciplined in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Where reasonable force or physical restraint has been used, the pupil's parents will be informed as long as this would not place the pupil at greater risk. If the decision is made that the parents cannot be informed as this would place the child at greater risk, a safeguarding referral will be made in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The headteacher will make the final decision as to whether it is appropriate to inform the pupil's parents of the details of an incident. If it is appropriate, the following will be adhered to:

- Parents will be informed in writing and a copy of this report will be given to the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.
- The report will inform parents of their right to complain about the use of positive handling and reasonable force, in line with the Complaints Procedures Policy.

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects the use of reasonable force, where another member of staff is actively involved in physical intervention, they will report this to the headteacher immediately.

Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school's Management of Allegations of Abuse Policy.

The headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement for parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the School's Complaints Policy. If necessary the complaint will be dealt with by the Staff Disciplinary Procedure and/ or Child Protection Procedure.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Leadership Team and governing board to ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated and any further actions required.

Paragraph F2 of the Human Rights framework for restraint states "to know whether discrimination is occurring, public bodies should collect and analyse data on their use of restraint to identify if restraint is being used disproportionately against people with particular protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, or who share identifiable group characteristics, for example women, ethnic minorities, or people with particular impairments e.g learning disabilities.

The next scheduled review for this policy is November 2024



Appendix 1

STANNINGTON INFANT SCHOOL

Name of Pupil				Class	
Location					
Date of Incident	Start Time		End Time		
Hrs		Mins	Hrs	Min	
Other People Present					

Reason for Intervention		✓	✓
Danger to self (student)			Danger to Others
Severe damage to property			Severe disruption to good order/discipline
Committing (or intending to commit) a criminal offence			
Description of Incident			

De-escalation techniques used		✓	✓
Advice and support			Time out offered
Reassurance			Incentive to calm down
Calm talking			Remove from situation
Remove others			Distraction
Planned ignoring			Step away
Humour			Modify activity
Option offered			Other

Record of positive handling technique	
Type of hold	
Duration	
Name of adult(s) involved	
Description of how incident was resolved	
Any other information or comments	
Evaluation of this incident	

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Injuries and damage sustained	Medical check	Offered	Accepted
To student			
To adult			
To other party			
Damage to property			

Please complete accident form if appropriate

Informing Appropriate Others

Parents/Carers: Yes ☐ No ☐ Date: _____ Time: _____

By (name of staff) Liz Harris

Phone call ☐ Home/School Diary ☐ Letter ☐ Other ☐

Behaviour Support Team informed? Yes / No Date: _____ Time: _____

Report completed by:

Name _____ Position: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Signed _____

Appendix 2

Positive Handling Plan

Child's Name:

Date of Plan:

Review Date of plan:

When does the child do well? What does a good day look like for this child?

Proactive Strategies to be implemented into daily routines to support in the classroom/school

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What does the behaviour look like?

Stage 1 Anxiety Behaviours	Stage 2 Defensive Behaviours	Stage 3 Crisis Behaviours
Response	Response	Response

What are common triggers?

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Diversions and distractions / Praise points (what is a success for the individual)

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De-escalation skills

Notes

Verbal advice and support

Giving space

Reassurance

Choices

O: Policies

Humour

Consequences

Planned ignoring

Take up time

Time-out

Supportive touch

Transfer adult

Success reminded

Simple listening

Acknowledgement

Apologising

Agreeing

Removing audience

Are there any factors to consider when debriefing? E.g. Communication Aids, staff etc.

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Repair and Reflect (Talk to the Child)

Hear	What happened?
Explain	How did it make you feel ?
Link	Because you felt ... you
Plan	What could you do if it happens again?

How should we record incidents and who should we inform?

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Headteacher:
Parents/Guardian:

Name:
Name:

O: Policies