

# **John Blandy Primary School**










## **Positive Handling Policy January 2023**

## Introduction

At John Blandy Primary School, the safety and welfare of our pupils, employees and visitors to the school is of the utmost importance. In our school, we create a calm environment to minimise incidents that may require any physical intervention. This policy has been created to ensure that, should the situation arise, staff and parents are aware of the correct procedures in the use of force to restrain or physically direct a child, which is regarded as a last resort when there is no realistic alternative.

It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

This policy should be considered alongside the most recent national guidance in positive handling as well as alongside the following relevant policies:

-  Positive Relationships Policy
-  Suspension & Exclusion Policy
-  Health and Safety Policy
-  Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
-  Anti-Bullying Policy
-  Equalities Policies
-  Staff Induction

## Aim

This policy aims to give all members of the school community clear guidance so that any physical intervention that they undertake is carried out in a way that supports the school's values. In particular, the policy aims to describe the circumstances in which restrictive physical intervention is an appropriate response and how staff at the school will fulfil their responsibilities in those circumstances. The school will ensure that pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in the school.

## Principles

Our Positive Relationships policy secures an orderly and purposeful atmosphere in which activities and learning can take place. There may, however, be rare occasions when staff will need to use 'reasonable force' and the use of restraint or physical interventions in order to prevent injury, damage to property, the breakdown of discipline, or control children or young people for safety reasons.

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour.

Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil.

The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. At John Blandy Primary, restraint is used as a safety-measure, not a sanction. The purpose of any physical contact, including restraint, is to *safeguard* and promote the welfare of the person being held, along with anybody else whose welfare is being threatened.

## Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at John Blandy are conducted within a framework of Positive Behaviour Management. Staff minimise the likelihood of any incidents by:

- ✓ creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk of violence of any kind
- ✓ providing an active approach to teaching children how to manage strong emotions
- ✓ effective management of individual incidents

The school's Positive Relationships Policy is intended to build positive relationships between the pupils and with the staff and wider school community. It rewards effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour through restorative conversations.

Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence poor behaviour choices and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk.

All staff work in partnership with those who know the child to help those concerned:

- Find out why this child behaves as he or she does
- Understand the factors that influence this child's behaviour
- Identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing

This approach helps to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It reduces the incidence of extreme behaviours and makes sure that the use of physical intervention is rare. Risk Assessments and Behaviour Support Plans written with key members of staff that are shared with the child and parents/carers is a positive approach to support improving behaviour and reducing risk.

## Minimising the need to use Positive Handling: De-escalation Strategies

All teachers need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps, which they can take to defuse and calm a situation.

Before using physical intervention always consider the following:

- ✓ Have you exhausted non-physical methods of intervention?
- ✓ Have you had regard for the pupil's level of understanding and age?
- ✓ As far as possible, have you made your intentions clear to the child?
- ✓ Have you discussed and agreed with parents the range of acceptable responses to their son/daughter's challenging behaviour?
- ✓ How important is the outcome? Does the benefit of achievement involving physical intervention outweigh not achieving without physical intervention occurring?
- ✓ Is there another adult present?
- ✓ Have you had appropriate Team Teach training?

The use of the following may exclude the need for physical intervention.

- ✓ Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation, reason and distraction.
- ✓ Give clear directions for pupils to stop using simple, clear statements.
- ✓ Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- ✓ Speak and move calmly and confidently.
- ✓ Well-chosen language is used to de-escalate situations.
- ✓ Remove an audience from the immediate location 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 before the problem escalates.
- ✓ Planned ignoring - sizing up which behaviour needs intervention and which to ignore
- ✓ Giving a signal - 'the look', catching the child's eye or pointing to him/her when aware that misbehaviour is contemplated or beginning
- ✓ Coming closer and touching - having the pupil near an adult or giving a pat on the shoulder while making a limiting demand - proximity
- ✓ Showing interest - a student may be diverted from misbehaviour if an adult shows interest in the task
- ✓ Humour – the use of playfulness may distract the child's attention
- ✓ Offering help when the pupil is about to become frustrated
- ✓ Regrouping
- ✓ Changing activities - when tension mounts or interest flags
- ✓ Friendly appeal - a) Appeal to a personal relationship; b) Warning of consequences 'that's dangerous' c) Peer group reaction "what will the others think?"
- ✓ Time out. Pupils are made to face away from the group, or sit distant from the group alone
- ✓ Distraction – refocusing attention to a new task or situation

### Circumstances in which Positive Handling may be used

Physical intervention should be avoided and only used as a last resort wherever possible and where it is needed, for example where pupils with severe behavioural difficulties present a risk to themselves and others, it must be in the best interest of the child/vulnerable adult and should be only the minimum required.

There are times when physical intervention is appropriate but it must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned as far as this is possible.

Section 550A of The Education Act 2006 under the heading *Power to Restrain Pupils* allows teachers and other authorised staff of a school to use reasonable force in accordance with the following:

- ✓ If the young person is in immediate danger of harming themselves or others
- ✓ If the young person is in danger of seriously causing damage or vandalism to property
- ✓ Physical Intervention can be used when a pupil is engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at school or amongst any of its pupils whether in a teaching session or otherwise
- ✓ Committing any criminal offence (or for a child under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be classed as an offence for an older pupil).

Examples of situations that fall within these categories might include the following, if:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- Pupils are fighting;
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate significant damage or vandalism to property;
- Misuse of equipment or dangerous materials;
- Carrying and/or using weapons;
- A pupil is running in such a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- A pupil absconds from class or tries to leave school (N.B. this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

- A disruptive pupil persistently refuses to obey the request to leave a classroom;
- A pupil is behaving a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.
- A pupil demonstrated behaviour which causes significant concern for the health and safety of a group or class.

Staff have a duty of care to themselves and to others; the duty of care includes taking reasonable measures to prevent harm. When it appears necessary to restrain a pupil, physical restraint is a form of control that is legally defensible once other alternatives have been employed or considered or when the urgency of the situation does not allow for other methods to be employed.

Staff should be aware that they might need to justify their actions if they have used physical intervention.

The use of physical intervention will take into account the characteristics of the pupil, including their age, gender, SEN, physical needs or disability, developmental level or cultural issues.

### Who can use Positive Handling?

It is the policy of John Blandy Primary School that as many staff as is possible are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the school's Behaviour Policy. Once trained, staff can use their certificate details to register and log into the Team Teach website [http://www.team-teach.co.uk/Lets\\_Share.html](http://www.team-teach.co.uk/Lets_Share.html).

Only members of staff in receipt of this training are authorised by the Headteacher to use reasonable force, as a last resort, to control or restrain pupils.

Authorisation is not given to volunteers, students on placement, agency teachers and visitors.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that staff are fully informed of the school's policy and understand what authorisation entails. The Headteacher will arrange training and guidance to staff as appropriate.

This school has adopted elements of the Team Teach Method for Restrictive Physical Interventions. All training courses have been led by trainers fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with the DfE and Department for Health guidance, and within rigorous guidelines.

### Unreasonable use of force/Prohibited forms of Restraint or Holding

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs.)

Reasonable force DOES NOT include the following actions, or any others that may reasonably be expected to cause injury or be considered indecent. For example:

- ❖ Holding around the neck or collar
- ❖ Restricting a young person's ability to breathe
- ❖ Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- ❖ Holding or pulling by hair or ear
- ❖ Locking a young person in a room

- ❖ Corporal punishment (or the threat of it)
- ❖ Any act or threat of an act, such as hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, prodding, poking, throwing an object, rough handling etc... which causes or threatens harm or the expectation of harm to a pupil
- ❖ Holding a child face down (supine holds should only be used for specific identified children, if it is the only safe way to hold the child. A dynamic risk assessment will need to be made).

The above actions are forbidden and could lead to disciplinary action against staff.

### Seclusion

Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should not be used to keep a pupil secluded (locked in a room on their own). Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and will not be part of a planned strategy at this school.

Whenever a child needs time away from class, they will always be supervised by adults in the same room. However, if unsafe to do so, a pupil may be in a room on their own (unlocked) with two adults outside the room so long as the child is visible to the adults on the outside at all times. They will enter if they feel that a child is in danger.

### 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 only 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. Any injuries should be reported on the Digital Accident Reporting book and CPOMs. 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 staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong.

Time needs to be taken to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships, a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage.

Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that children have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned.

Both adults and children may need time to recover and rest or regain composure before returning to class.

### Recording

Whenever restraint is used the incident must be recorded on a Restraint Incident book (kept in the Head's office) and also on CPOMs.

All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours. These records will be retained and cannot be altered.

Staff Should:

- ✓ Read through the school recording Incident book 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.

The report should contain the following:

- ✓ The name(s) and personal details (gender, ethnicity, age etc) of young person(s) involved.
- ✓ The time and location.
- ✓ Names of witnesses.
- ✓ Details of how the incident was triggered and progresses with details of observed behaviour.
- ✓ Details and outcomes of the steps taken to diffuse the situation.
- ✓ A description of the degree of the force used, how applied and for how long.

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.






Parents/carers must always be notified by phone call, if their child has been physically restrained. If a member of staff feels that a child's welfare will be compromised they should seek advice from the Head teacher.

### Monitoring and evaluation of incidents

The school incident log on CPOMs and Digital Accident reporting system is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The records of any incidents will be scrutinised on a regular basis, at least half-termly.

The monitoring process will consider:

-  The level of incidents across the school
-  Patterns of incidents: are they occurring disproportionately with particular pupils, particular teachers, in particular year groups
-  The accuracy of recording
-  The extent to which approved interventions are being used
-  The extent to which all aspects of this policy have been followed.

All the information on restraint will be collated, providing clear data on the amount of restraints for each child and any trends. This data may be used to decide on whole school issues, to provide an indication of individual improvement or deterioration in behaviour and to provide evidence when involving outside agencies.

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, Positive Relationship 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 (see staff and pupil disciplinary policy).

The Headteacher or another senior leader will liaise with the relevant governor responsible for SEN/pastoral care, provide him/her with results of the regular monitoring and make an annual report to the governing body on the success of this Positive Handling policy when it arises.

## What to do after the use of a restrictive physical intervention

After the use of an unplanned restrictive physical intervention, the following steps will be taken.

- ❖ Details of the incident will be recorded by all adults involved on the Accident and Incident Report Book which is kept in the main office.
- ❖ Recording will be completed on the same day whenever possible. Staff will be offered the opportunity to seek advice from a senior colleague or professional representative when compiling their report.
- ❖ Any injuries suffered by those involved will be recorded following normal school procedures.
- ❖ The Headteacher will check that there is no cause for concern regarding the actions of adults involved. If it is felt that an action has 'caused or put a child at risk of significant harm' the Headteacher will follow the school's child protection procedures and also inform parents/carers.
- ❖ Parents/carers will be informed by the Headteacher on the day of the incident. Parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have regarding an incident.
- ❖ Support/debriefing will be available for adults and pupils who have been involved in any incident involving restrictive physical interventions.

The Senior Leadership Team will use the records kept to analyse patterns of behaviour and so decide whether responses are being effective. The Headteacher will report this information to the SEN Governor at their termly meetings.

## Complaints procedure

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. Any such allegations should be noted in the de-brief. Any complaint will first be considered in the light of the school's child protection procedures. If child protection procedures are not appropriate, the school's complaint procedures will be followed.

If there is a concern about a staff member using restraint unnecessarily, and there is an allegation against the member of staff, the Management of Allegations against Staff Procedures will be followed. The designated officer within the Local Authority (LADO) will be notified of any allegation against a member of staff and s/he will decide if a Strategy Meeting needs to be held.

## Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every 3 years or as necessary to reflect changes in Statutory Guidance published by the DFE.

