



Positive Handling Policy

Signed: _____ *L.M. Spencer* _____

Date: **May 2023**

Next Review: **May 2024**

This policy should be read alongside the following documents:

Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy and Local Offer, Behaviour Policy, Accessibility Plan, Intimate Care Policy, Sex and Relationships Policy, Complaints Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy and GDPR Policies.

Policy overview

This policy relates to the elements of physical handling within the school. In this context the term 'physical handling' is a term that may be found within other documentation being referred to as: restraint, physical intervention, positive physical handling, and positive handling. For the purposes of clarity these terms are deemed as being interchangeable.

Documentation that supports this policy is detailed at the end of the policy.

Rationale

The use of physical handling and application of reasonable force will always be a last resort. This means that the use of physical handling to intervene with pupils in school should be clearly demonstrated to have been the final element of a continuum outlined in the school's behaviour management framework.

The use of physical handling can be an integral component in promoting successful inclusion, but only as one of a range of strategies in place for working with children displaying challenging and unsafe behaviour.

The term 'reasonable force' has no definitively prescribed definition and will be dependent upon the individual circumstances of each case. 'Reasonable force' is evaluated on a retrospective basis which means that only a court may determine whether the amount of force, the duration of its application and its proportionate nature constitute the epithet 'reasonable'.

Implementing physical handling

The school act *in loco parentis* while the child is on site. This means that adults working alongside children are required by law to demonstrate a 'duty of care'. This places upon members of staff a responsibility to intervene, either by implementing a physical intervention or by informing an individual who has been designated the responsibility of intervening.

Members of staff have a responsibility to intervene (not necessarily physically intervene) when:

1. A child is prejudicing the good order and discipline of the school environment
2. A child is about to or in the process of causing significant damage to property
3. A child is at significant risk of causing injury to themselves or others

It is unlikely that physical handling would be necessary in the case outlined in point 1 as alternative means of managing this behaviour can often be planned for in advance.

In situations that mirror the elements of points two and three, the decision to use physical handling should be made as a last resort. When physical handling is used those involved in its implementation should use skill, good judgement and should be aware of methods of control that are approved. Schools should ensure that untrained members of staff are not encouraged to engage in physical handling with challenging pupils. Adults who work alongside pupils who regularly display challenging behaviour will ideally have been trained in physical handling techniques by a company that are accredited by the British Institute of Learning Difficulties (BILD). The training is provided by an accredited provider'. Only staff who have been trained should restrain as an absolute last resort to keep the child, other children or staff safe. Records of those adults who are trained, the nature of their training, date of their accreditation and date of re-certification are held on file by the school.

The level of force applied in any given situation should be proportionate to the seriousness of the incident. In the majority of situations, before implementing a physical handling procedure, the adult should calmly inform the child that they intend to intervene in order to give the child an opportunity to alter their behaviour. Where practical, other adults and children in the immediate vicinity will also be informed. To maintain the dignity of a child during physical handling and reduce the likelihood of conflict escalation, other children will be ushered away from the scene. It is paramount that another adult is present to witness the physical handling in order that they can verify that procedures were followed appropriately.

During an intervention the staff should consider and adhere to the following:

1. The intervention should be for the minimum time period.
2. Communication should be maintained with the pupil at all times to enable them to make appropriate choices.
3. Maintain composure and model behaviours that they wish the child to display.
4. Be aware of gender issues relating to physical handling

The following would be deemed as unacceptable practice and may constitute unlawful attack:

- Holding a child in a manner which restricts their breathing.
- Striking a child with any part of the body or with an object
- Forcing or twisting limbs against joints
- Using any form of restraint that results in a child being face down on the floor.
- Using methods of physical intimidation

Different types of physical contact with pupils:

1. Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupil. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when together around the school.
- When comforting a distressed pupil.
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised.
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument.
- To demonstrate exercise or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
- To give first aid.

2. Physical Intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the arm or shoulder where the pupil is compliant but may potentially still pose a risk to themselves and others.

3. Physical Control/Restraint

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of “reasonable force” should be seen as a last resort. All such incidents must be recorded and be stored using the schools safeguarding system CPOMs. More than one member of staff should be present if physical restraint is necessitated. The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint.

Authorised staff

Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 permits adults who have lawful charge or control of children to use reasonable force to control or restrain them. These include:

- teachers
- pastoral team
- teaching/learning support assistants
- representatives from outside agencies

Wherever possible Physical Restraint should only be used by those with appropriate training. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible and physical restraint may be used as an emergency measure by someone without appropriate training to ensure the safety of children in their care.

Recording

School keeps a record of all incidents where physical intervention involving the use of force against resistance from a child has been necessary using the school reporting system known as CPOMs. The record should be completed by **the end of the working day** on which the Incident took place. A member of the Leadership Team will be told at the earliest possible time after an incident.

A member of the Leadership Team will discuss the incident with any children or staff who were present and, where appropriate, collect a written account from them. In line with our commitment to working with parents, we aim to maintain an open discussion during any relevant procedure which may follow an incident.

School will regularly review the number and type of incidents in which physical intervention and/or restraint has been necessary. This will be used to ensure that there is adherence to this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the school.

Recording Pupil Views

Each time a pupil is involved in such an incident, they must be given an opportunity to debrief and have their views recorded about the event. Of course, it might not be the right time immediately after the event. This might be the next day or even the day after, but there must be a process in place by which young people can have their voice heard around physical intervention as a protection from it being used inappropriately, incorrectly, or even illegally. The pupil voice form will be attached to the incident as an action on CPOMs. The Headteacher will regularly review these intervention records, look for trends and implement changes to reduce interventions or improve systems.

Risk Assessment

Any child that is deemed to be at risk of requiring physical handling should have a risk assessment that is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. It should include:

- Include any assessment of medical need that would be taken into account in a situation requiring positive handling,
- Provide written details of all considerations relating to possible support and provision, not only the support which is implemented,
- Consider implications around staff risk assessments,
- Ensure that all staff working with the named pupil are aware of the details of the risk assessment and have access to it,
- Demonstrate that they have solicited the opinions and assistance of the parents/carers in formulating the risk assessment and allowed the parents/carers to access the final assessment.

The following support plans should be mentioned within the risk assessment:

- One Plan targets
- Home School communication book
- Pastoral Support Plan

Reporting incidents

Following any incident in which physical handling has been used to intervene while a pupil has demonstrated challenging behaviour staff should:

- Immediately report the incident to the Headteacher,
- Complete a written incident report detailing the series of events leading to the need for physical handling, the nature and duration of the handling, the details of witnesses and the outcome of the situation (see attached)

The Headteacher should:

- Ensure that parents/carers are informed of the incident, preferably by meeting with them as soon after the incident as possible,
- Provide direction in order to allow staff to produce incident reports or witness support statements within 24 hours and provide copies of these for the relevant staff and parents,

- Meet with members of staff and children to discuss the incident,
- Facilitate the review of the risk assessment and make amendments as necessary.

Positive Handling Plan

When the One Plan and risk assessment indicate the likely need for school staff to hold or restrain a child to prevent an injury, the school should record this in a Positive Handling Plan. The information in the risk assessments will help to inform this plan which will outline:

- Who has been consulted about the plan.
- The type of physical intervention to be used.
- Which adults are authorised to use this intervention.
- Parental consent for the plan.
- Head teacher authorisation for the plan.

The recommended format for a Positive Handling Plan is included in Appendix 5.

Sharing of information

All members of the school community should know of the existence of this policy. In principle, as few people as possible should know of any specific incident and staff should maintain confidentiality to the greatest possible extent. This is to enable governors and staff involved in any consequence or complaint to do so without having acquired hearsay knowledge.

Monitoring Incidents Where Physical Restraint Is Used

The Headteacher will monitor records of any incidents in order to:

- Identify any patterns of behaviour resulting in the use of physical intervention.
- Review the levels of staff awareness of and compliance with the school policy.
- Inform staff training needs.
- Explore the relationship between the use of physical intervention and behaviour in school.
- Governor's may monitor incidents where physical restraint is used.

Action after an Incident

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed, investigated and recorded as stated above. If further action is required, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedures which may include:

- Child Protection Policy
- Dealing with Allegations against Staff Policy
- Behaviour and Attitudes Policy
- Local Authority Exclusion Procedure

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Complaints following a dispute about the use of physical intervention by an adult should be pursued in accordance with the Complaints Policy.

Advice for staff

At Bonnygate Primary School, we believe that physical intervention and/or restraint should be the last resort. In the majority of cases de-escalation and diffusion are the appropriate methods of dealing with situations that might result in a threat to the health and safety of any individuals.

On extremely rare occasions it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically with or between pupils. These include:

- Injury, or risk of injury, to another pupil
- Injury, or risk of injury, to a member of staff
- Serious damage to property

Any intervention should be a last resort and be **proportionate, reasonable and appropriate**, and be done with the aim to **reduce** not **provoke**.

All staff owe a **duty of care** to pupils. To take no action, where the outcome is that a pupil injures him/herself, or another, including staff, could be seen as negligence.

Members of staff facing confrontational situations with pupils are reminded that the following behaviours can either reduce or inflame incidents, and that a brief moment of risk assessment may allow the time to decide on the appropriate action necessary.

Staff are strongly advised not to physically stop pupils from leaving their room. They should give a clear choice and spell out consequences, but unless there is a risk of injury should never block a pupil's exit.

Remaining calm – the ability to try and remain calm and appear relaxed is less likely to provoke. A relaxed posture and a non-threatening (CALM) stance, i.e. not toe-to-toe, are recommended.

Awareness of Space – try to be aware of the space around you and avoid stepping into another individual's personal/intimate space. Try to take a step back outside the circle of danger.

Pacing and Chasing – angry people often pace around in tense situations and staff should try to avoid the temptation to follow as they attempt to help them calm down. This can be counter-productive as it may trigger an animal chase response and drive the other person away. Where possible it is preferable for the staff member to stand still, speaking calmly, clearly and confidently – or even sit down.

Intonation - when people are anxious or angry they tend to talk faster, higher and more loudly. In a potential crisis situation staff need to deliberately speak slower, lower and more quietly

Help Script

- Connect by using pupil's name
- Recognise the feelings
- Tell the pupil you're there to help

- You talk and I will listen
- Give direction

Diffusing body language responses

- Social distance
- Sideways stance, step back
- Intermittent eye contact
- Relaxed body posture
- Palms open

Calm Stance

Think of the values of stepping back from a situation, both physically and emotionally:

- Allows a more considered response
- Time to make a 'dynamic' risk assessment and seek assistance
- Allows other person 'take up' time to make their own choices

Application of Force ([DfE advice to schools](#))

Staff should NOT act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. This includes:

- Slapping, punching, kicking or tripping a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against joints
- Indecently touching, holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- Other than in circumstances that are exceptional, using reasonable force to hold a pupil face down on the ground

In the event of a serious incident e.g. a fight, staff should:

- Make their presence felt – “stop fighting, stop fighting”
- Send for assistance
- Spell out sanctions
- Remove the 'fuel' by clearing the 'audience' away
- Be a witness
- Intervene physically if confident and having assessed the degree of risk **But** should not ignore or walk away.



SOME NON- PHYSICAL CRISES INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES

Do	Don't
appear calm and relaxed	appear afraid and unsure of yourself; appear bossy, arrogant; assume an "I don't give a damn about you" attitude
keep the pitch and volume of your voice down.	raise your voice
feel comfortable with the fact that you are in control (if you control yourself, you control the situation); project a calm assured feeling that you will see the situation through to peaceful end no matter what happens	appear to expect an attack (or you will have one)
talk <u>with</u> the pupil not at. Less is more in these situations.	give commands; make demands
be very matter of fact if the pupil becomes agitated; be sensitive and flexible; be flexible yet consistent; be aware of body language; monitor breathing (chest movements) which can telegraph aggressive responses	make threats (Especially any that you are not absolutely sure that you can carry through!); maintain continuous eye contact; gesticulate (this may provoke confrontation)
Stay close to the pupil but not in their personal space and attend to him/her	turn your back or leave; invade the pupil's personal space
be patient; if a pupil's agitation increases to the verge of attack: * Acknowledge his/her feelings; * Continue with a matter of fact attitude; * Always leave the pupil an avenue of escape	display emotion; argue; corner the pupil physically or psychologically
where possible, remain seated as long as the pupil does; avoid crowding	get up and move towards the pupil
stay near him/her, about one arm's length away; stand to one side; give the pupil more space if appropriate	give up
seek to relax your muscles and keep them under control.	tense your muscles



Risk Assessment: Physical Intervention and Positive Handling

Risk Assessment Completed by:	
Name of Child:	
Child's Date of Birth:	Class:
Ethnicity:	Gender:

Identification of Risk

Describe the foreseeable risks:

Is the risk: potential occurring

Assessment of risk

In which situations does the risk usually occur?

How likely is it that the risk will occur? (unlikely, possible, probable, likely)

If the risk arises, who is likely to be injured or hurt?

What kinds of injuries or harm are likely to occur?

How serious are the adverse outcomes? (severe, substantial, minor, minimal)

Risk Reduction Options

What actions are being taken to minimise the level of risk?

(Consider changes to environment, awareness of triggers, de-escalation strategies, varying staff deployment, varying teaching group/size, access to quiet area)

Any immediate actions to be taken, by whom and by when?

Signed:

Role:

Date:

Copy to:



Positive Handling Plan

Insert picture here	Name of child:	Date of Birth:
	Triggers	Medical Information: (that needs taking into account before physically intervening)

Stage of Crisis:	Topography of behaviour (Describe what the behaviour looks/sounds like)	Preferred supportive/intervention (Describe strategies that should be attempted at each stage, including critical friends)
(Describe common behaviours/situations which are known to have led to positive handling being required)		
Anxiety		
Defensive/Escalation		
Crisis		
Recovery		
Depression		
Follow Up		

Additional information/Preferred handling: (Describe preferred holds, standing, sitting stating numbers and names of preferred staff and useful 'get outs' that can be used when holding)

Plan agreed by	
Name (child) _____	Signed _____ If appropriate
Name (parent/carer) _____	Signed _____
Name (staff) _____	Signed _____



Bonnygate Primary School & Nursery
Pupil Record of Positive Handling Incident

Date of incident:	
Name:	
Member(s) of staff involved:	
Describe what happened before the incident:	
What instructions were you given by the member of staff?	
Did you follow this instruction?	YES / NO
If you didn't follow the instruction, what did you do?	



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What happened next?

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What could you have done to stop the incident occurring?

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Signed _____

Class _____