



Harborne Primary School

Positive Handling Policy

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1. Aims

At Harborne Primary School, we are committed to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of students and staff.

We create a calm environment to minimise incidents that may require any physical intervention. We de-escalate incidents when they do arise. We only use physical interventions when the risks involved of doing so are outweighed by the risks of not doing so.

The Positive Handling Policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

2. Legislation and statutory responsibilities

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

- [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2024](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils
- Sections 88 to 94 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), which requires schools to regulate pupils' behaviour and publish a behaviour policy and written statement of behaviour principles, and gives schools the authority to confiscate pupils' property

3. What is reasonable force?

Reasonable force may include:

- Bodily contact- where the physical presence of one or more people is used to control a pupil, e.g physically interposing between pupils; blocking a pupil's path; holding or 'shepherding' a pupil; using agreed, approved restricted holds
- Environmental – where a change is applied within the environment for example shutting a door or the use of locks to prevent access to a particular area.

4. In what circumstances can reasonable force be used?

[DfE guidance on the use of reasonable force](#) makes it clear that all members of staff can use reasonable force to:

- 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 in the playground
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

The decision to use physical intervention will be taken in the context of the level of risk presented by the behaviour, the seriousness of the incident and the relative risks of the use of physical intervention compared with any available alternative. 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.

5. De-escalation and positive behaviour management

All staff and volunteers adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to build self-esteem, and promote a safe environment for students and staff.

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.

We expect staff to think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

6. Use of reasonable force

There might be some situations in which the need for reasonable force is immediate and where there are no equal effective alternatives (a child is about to run in the road).

However, in many circumstances there are alternatives such as the use of assertiveness skills:

- Withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- Other techniques designed to defuse a situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour, in which case the incident could be dealt with later when emotions are running less high
- The employment of other sanctions consistent with Harborne Primary School's Behaviour Policy

Where physical interventions are needed to prevent injury to the student, other students or staff, or to prevent serious damage, these should be for the minimum length of time possible and using the least possible force. All staff must consider whether they are using reasonable force.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate and effective positive handling should be a last resort. When positive handling becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible

- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Attempt to reason with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in sexual areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck, lying face down or pulling arms across the child's chest
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

For further information on positive handling techniques, see [Appendix A](#).

6.1 Post-Incident Support

Incidents that require use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and could result in injuries to the child or staff. After incidents have subsided, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries.

Immediate action should be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require other than basic first aid.

All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures. The school should take action to report any serious injuries to staff or students in accordance with Local Authority guidelines.

We need to consider:

- thoughts, feeling, emotions,
- emotional 'first aid'

Stage 1 – Immediate 'Are you ok?': this should occur before people leave to go home.

Stage 2 – De-briefing: checking people have adjusted to an emotionally difficult event. This should occur within 48 hours.

Stage 3 – Counselling: formal support. Support is available when requested by a member of staff through the Employee Assistance Progress; however, it is not imposed.

6.2 Post Incident Review

Focus on actions and behaviours:

- Who did what, when, why, how?
- What was the outcome?
- What does it tell us about what we already know about the young person?
- What have we learnt and what or how does this inform our practice?

6.3 General Advice for Staff

- Be sure that you are aware of and complying with the school policy for behaviour and discipline and positive handling procedures.
- It is better to defuse situations wherever possible, as this prevents them from escalating to a level where force is necessary
- Send for the assistance of another member of staff as soon as possible, using the agreed call-out protocol (Red cards)
- All those involved should be de-briefed after incidents to explore more positive/effective responses to future difficult situations

7. 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 (see appendix C).

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 should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in a Pastoral Support Plan or SEND support form.

7.1 Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. The key principles are that any physical intervention should be:

- In the best interest of the child
- Reasonable and proportionate
- Intended to reduce risk
- The least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school.

8. Staff Training

It is the policy of this school that all staff working closely with pupils are trained in the pro-active and responsive positive handling strategies and, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy.

In cases where a Positive Handling Plan is in operation, selected staff will be trained in any physical interventions to be used. These staff will be trained by the accredited provider and will be the only staff authorised to use the intervention.

9. Recording

Whenever force is used the incident **must** be recorded on CPOMS and recorded under the 'Use of Reasonable Force' category. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours. The details recorded on the forms are kept confidentially. Parents/carers must also be notified and this is to be recorded on the form.

Staff should:

- Inform a member of SLT as soon as possible
- Complete the school recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly
- Complete all names in full

9.1 Monitoring use of Reasonable Force interventions

Use of physical intervention in school is monitored in order to help staff learn from experience, promote the well being of children in their care, and provide a basis for appropriate support. Monitoring can help the school to determine what specialist help is needed for children and to assess the appropriateness of the child's placement at the school. The use of physical intervention is monitored and evaluated regularly at Senior Leadership Team meetings. Individual student risk assessments are reviewed annually.

10. Complaints

The use of restrictive physical intervention can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive use. Complaints about the use of reasonable force can be made through the school's Complaints Policy, which is available on the school website.

In the event of a complaint being received by a school in relation to use of force by staff, the matter should be dealt with in accordance with Local Authority guidelines and agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy has been developed in liaison with school staff and governors. It will be reviewed annually, or when relevant national or local guidance indicates additional need.

12. Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Volunteer Policy

Appendix A - Positive Handling Examples

YES



NO



Appendix B – Positive Handling Plan

Young Person's Name			
	Lower risk	Significant	Certain
Risk that pupil will require "hands on" physical intervention			

Known triggers
Describe common behaviours/situations which may lead to positive handling being required. When is such behaviour likely to occur?

Topography of Behaviour
Describe what the behaviour looks / sounds like (please highlight)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving classroom / premises without permission • Property damage • Threats or verbal aggression to peers / adults • Physical aggression to peers / adults • Verbal / physical bullying of peers • Defiance, refusal to follow instructions • Sexually inappropriate behaviour • Abusive language- Racist / Homophobic / Faith / Extremist • Irrational / unpredictable behaviour • Other

Preferred Supportive and Intervention Strategies - Describe strategies that, where and when possible, should be attempted before handling techniques are used.			
Verbal advice and support		Distraction (Key words / objects / likes)	
Reassurance		Contingent touch	
Calm talking and stance		Planned ignoring	
Time out		Success reminder	
Humour		Change of face	
Negotiation		Guided choices	
Issue clear instruction to stop		Instruct movement to agreed time out area	
Use non-contact prompt and guide		Sensory support	

Others:

Young Person's Name

Praise Points / Strengths: Areas of strength and interest that can be developed and built upon. Please state at least 3 bridge builders

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Medical conditions that should be taken into account before physically intervening
i.e: Asthma, Brittle Bones

Preferred Handling Strategies: Describe the preferred holds: standing, sitting, stating numbers of staff, what "get outs" that can be used when holding etc)

Help Hug		Two person Single Elbow	
Single Person Double Elbow		Two Person Single Elbow (Seated)	
Small person escort		Figure of four	

Comments and reasons for use, stating numbers of staff to be involved where possible, options out of the intervention.

*Please state below in **RED** anything that you know has a detrimental effect on the pupil's attitude/behaviour. (eg. Shouting at, leaning over, sarcasm).

Young Person's Name

Debriefing process following the incident:

Recording and notifications required:

- Record on CPOMS
- Notify senior staff and parents/carers
- Record of follow up actions

Name	Signature	Date
HOC:		
Parent / Carer:		
Pupil:		

- Other factors to consider:
- Key behaviour difficulties
 - Our understanding of the behaviour
 - What we want to see instead
 - Environmental changes that may help
 - How the individual can help
 - How parents or carers can help
 - Rewarding progress
 - Monitoring progress

- Please also take into consideration:
- Behaviour Policy