



Donington on Bain Primary School

Policy:	Positive Handling
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Governor committee responsible:	<i>Full Governing Body</i>
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Introduction

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and only used as last resort. Under the Children Order 1995, it is only permissible as described under the heading "Physical Control". Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies power that already exists in common law. It enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, and where it is necessary to intervene physically to prevent:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including his / herself)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teacher led session or otherwise.

Positive handling is the positive application of reasonable force with the intention of protecting the child from harming themselves or others, or seriously damaging property. Schools do not need parental consent to use force on a pupil.

What is reasonable force?

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

Who can use reasonable force?

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

When might it be applicable to use reasonable force?

- 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 fighting the playground.
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

- Use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Powers to search pupils without consent

In addition to general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers and authorised staff can use force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited items”

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force **cannot** be used to search for items banned under the school rules

General Policy Aims

Staff at Donington on Bain Primary School are trained to use positive handling techniques when the use of reasonable force might be applicable. Staff recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupils’ safety / well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. This policy should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Child Protection Policies.

Specific Aims of the Positive Handling Policy

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff concerned and has to be judged on a case-by-case basis, depending on the circumstances. However, incidents of physical restraint must:

- Always be used as a last resort
- Be applied using the minimum amount of force and for the minimum amount of time possible
- Be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned
- Never be used as a form of punishment
- Be recorded and reported to parents

Why Use Positive handling?

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him/herself or others. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgment in situations which arise.

Staff should always act within the school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in *loco parentis* and should therefore take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and wellbeing.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another child, in certain circumstances could lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

Alternative Strategies

At Donington on Bain Primary School we are firmly committed to creating a calm and safe environment which minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force. We use the PSHE curriculum and the RE curriculum to explore and strengthen emotional responses to situations. We will only use force as a last resort and strongly believe in de-escalating any incidents as they arise to prevent them from reaching crisis point. Staff are skilled in promoting and rewarding positive behaviour and will utilise various appropriate techniques in the management of a class environment. Staff will only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so outweighed by the risks involved by not using force.

Prevention and use of de-escalation strategies

It is recognised that extreme behaviours such as those requiring physical intervention can indicate communication of an unmet need from the child. We recognise that there may also be safeguarding, trauma, medical or special educational needs which may lead to children behaving in manners which might require physical interventions.

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupils (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents to ensure they are clear about the specific action the school might have to take.
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance).
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate.
- Guidance outlined in this plan will be followed along with liaison with external agencies to ensure that the best support for the child is implemented.

Deciding Whether to use Reasonable Force

Under English law, members of staff are empowered to use reasonable force to prevent pupil from or stop them continuing to:

- Committing an offence.
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him / herself)
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

All members of staff will make decisions about when, how and why to use reasonable force. To help staff in making decisions about using reasonable force the following considerations may be useful:

- Whether the consequences of not intervening would have seriously endangered the wellbeing of a person.
- Whether the consequences of not intervening would have caused serious and significant damage to property.
- Whether the chance of achieving the desirable outcome in a non-physical way was low.
- The age, size, gender, developmental maturity of the persons involved.

Staff are also expected to remember that physical intervention is only one option and for behaviours involving extreme levels of risk it may be more appropriate to gain support from other agencies including the police.

Staff will be kept informed and have a duty to inform others about plans around specific pupils who can present risks to themselves and others. This may include information about SEN, personal circumstances and temporary upset.

Actions to take if children run away from school

- If a child runs away from school and is in the eye line of an adult, the adult should inform another member of staff wherever possible. The adult should call after the child and try to encourage them to return. Care should be taken to not alarm the child and cause them to run further away.
- A child must not be physically restrained or grabbed, unless they are in immediate danger of hurting themselves or putting themselves in a dangerous situation e.g. running into the road.

- If the pupil cannot be located the Police must be informed.
- A child identified at risk of running away from school must have a risk assessment in place. This should be reviewed as required and as a minimum termly.

Use of Positive Handling

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible, and at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment. A calm approach is needed, and the teacher / adult should never give the impression they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration or to punish the pupil.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective positive handling should be a last resort.

Before intervening physically, the teacher or member of authorised staff should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil to stop and what will happen if he / she does not. The teacher or adult should continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

Using Reasonable Force

When using force members of staff should only use the minimum amount of force required in achieving the required outcome.

Staff should, where possible, avoid any type of intervention that is likely to injure a pupil, unless in the most extreme of circumstances where there was no viable alternative and children or staff are in danger without this. Staff should also usually avoid using force unless or until another member of staff is present to support, observe or call for assistance, unless there is an emergency situation.

Ideally prior to intervening physically, all staff will have been trained in positive handling techniques and follow the guidance issued. Only in emergency situations should staff who have not been trained intervene physically.

Actions after an incident

Positive handling often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. The Headteacher or Senior Teacher should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural PSP, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SENCO.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately (See Appendix 1). All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is visible. The report should be uploaded to CPOMS.

The Head teacher or Senior Teacher will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

It is recognised that the need to intervene physically is distressing for both the pupil concerned and staff involved. Following the use of physical intervention staff and pupils will be supported and the immediate physical and well-being needs of all parties will be met. Staff will ensure that positive relationships are maintained.

Risk Assessments

If we become aware that there is a significant chance that we may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupils (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school may have to take.
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate.

Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and social services department under child protection procedures. It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

Appendix 1: Record of restraint

To be completed as soon as possible after the incident and uploaded to CPOMS

RECORD OF RESTRAINT			
Name of child:		DOB:	
Date of Incident:			
Member(s) of staff involved:			
Adult witnesses to restraint:			
Outline of event leading to restraint			
Outline of de-escalation strategies implemented prior to physical intervention			
Outline of incident of restraint (including restraint method used)			
Outcome of restraint			
Description of any incident sustained and any subsequent treatment			
Date/Time parent/carer informed of the incident			
Outline of parent/carer response:			
Signatures of staff completing report:			
Name..... Signed.....			
Name..... Signed.....			
Name..... Signed.....			
Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action			