

## **POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY**

**Link governors:** Caroline Comer

**Policy written by:** Lisa Wood

**Date ratified by governors:** December 2021

**Next review:** December 2023

### **Introduction**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our School Behaviour Policy. At Hylton Castle Primary School we constantly strive to create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of force. However the following points should be noted.

As part of the admissions/induction visit to Hylton Castle Primary School parents/carers and pupils are made aware of the occasions where physical intervention may be necessary, so everyone is aware of their responsibilities and Hylton Castle Primary School retains the right to use force without parental consent. All staff use a range of de-escalation strategies as a preventative measure to physical intervention. Physical intervention will be used as a **last resort**. For the full range of de-escalation/rewards/consequences see School Behaviour Policy.

Force is used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. Reasonable adjustments will be made for children with disabilities and children with SEN.

Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

Hylton Castle Primary School staff have access to training in de-escalation and Team Teach techniques which have been risk assessed and are subject to ongoing review. Whilst some physical injury potential can be reduced, there always remains some risk that injury may occur when two or more people engage and force is used to protect, release or restrain.

It is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the pupil remains safe.

Colleagues should be aware that the use of force cannot be used as a punishment. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The Headteacher authorises all school staff to use reasonable force provided staff have made the judgement that they are acting in the pupil's best interests and it is reasonable and proportionate. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

**Reasonable force can be used in the following circumstances:**

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.
- Prevent a learner behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.
- Prevent a learner 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.
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves.
- Any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school or among any of its pupils.

**Other forms of appropriate physical contact:**

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. For example:

- Holding the hand of a child where appropriate.
- Comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- To demonstrate a technique e.g. how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To administer first aid.

In addition, reasonable force can be used to conduct searches 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.

These circumstances are likely to cause resistance and a more appropriate action may be to contact the police.

All incidents of positive handling should be recorded on the CPOMs and linked to 'positive handling' category.

When deciding what amounts to a serious incident, staff should use their professional judgement and also consider:

- The pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- The degree of force used
- The effect on the pupil or member of staff
- The child's age.

**Debrief and Follow up:**

Pupils should be given the opportunity to debrief after each and **every** incident at an appropriate time. This time consideration will vary from individual to individual. The aim of this over time will be to increase the pupil's emotional awareness and lead to them being

more able to identify causes of anxiety **before** there is an incident, therefore enabling them to choose a calming strategy or enabling staff to remove the anxiety for them.

Staff involved in the main part of the incident should be given time to reflect on the incident in a calm atmosphere. They may also like to discuss the incident with a senior member of staff. All staff should have the opportunity to suggest alternative strategies that may be considered in future incidents and consideration should also be given to a bespoke positive handling plan for that student.

All incidents of physical intervention will be reported to parents/carers. In the event that the school feel that passing the information onto parents might lead to more harm to the pupil concerned the school will follow local/school safeguarding procedures.

### **Good practice**

#### **Recommended review and monitoring practice**

Following the detailed recording of a serious incident, good practice dictates that the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or senior member of staff should:

- read all accounts of the incident;
- Discuss the incident with the pupil or pupils who were directly involved. It is important that pupils be provided with the opportunity of giving their own version of events, particularly in cases of divergent opinion or fact, and they should be encouraged, if necessary helped, to prepare a written statement;
- ensure that parents/carers or other persons with parental responsibility (such as social workers) have been informed of all relevant facts;
- ensure that the LA and the Chair of the Management Committee have had the incident drawn to their attention;
- Review school policies and consider if they sense the best interest of all parties and whether alternative policies or change to the existing policy need to be considered.

### **Allegations against staff**

Allegations will always be taken seriously, and we will ensure that allegations are dealt with quickly in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. However, sanctions may be taken against students who are found to have made malicious accusations against school staff. When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably. Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school should ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.

### **Complaints procedures**

After an incident in a school, there is always the possibility of formal complaint. A number of persons might feel aggrieved by the incident, whether they be pupils, parents/carers, teachers, other employees, or even visitors to the school and members of the public. Any of these persons can lodge a complaint and expect it to be investigated diligently and fairly. Please refer to Hylton Castle Primary School complaints policy for further information/details.

### **Points all staff should know from this policy:**

- We acknowledge that there are times when appropriate physical contact is required.
- The best way of managing learners' behaviour is through skilled de-escalation interventions.

- In managing learners' behaviour, physical intervention should be a last resort.
- Reasonable force may be used if acting in the learners' best interest.
- Whilst searches are permissible, in most circumstances detailed searches are best carried out by the Police.

#### **Training:**

Hylton Castle Primary School staff have access to training in de-escalation and Team Teach techniques which have been risk assessed and are subject to ongoing review. A log is kept of all staff trained and date of training. Staff also have access to routine behaviour management training as part of wider whole-school CPD to maintain high standards of behaviour management practice.

#### **References**

**Education Act 1996**

**Guidance for Restrictive Physical Interventions: How to provide safe services for people with Learning Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder** (2002, DfES and DH)

**Education and Inspections Act 2006.**

**Behaviour and Discipline inclusive of use of reasonable force in schools** - Sept 2012

**Use of Reasonable Force** - Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013

**Positive Environments where Children can Flourish** - Ofsted, March 2018

|   |                              |  |                                  |
|---|------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>POSITIVE HANDLING REPORT FORM</b>  |                              | <b>NUMBER:</b>   |                                  |
| <b>Name of Young Person:</b>  |                              | <b>Date:</b>   |                                  |
|   |                              |  |                                  |
| <b>Full names of staff involved:</b>  |                              | <b>Names of staff witnesses:</b>   |                                  |
|   |                              | <b>Names of pupil witnesses:</b>   |                                  |
| <b>Details of whether any of the pupils involved (directly or as witnesses) were vulnerable, SEN, disability, medical or social considerations</b>  |                              |  |                                  |
| <b>Start time of incident:</b>  | <b>Location of Incident:</b> | <b>Nature of risk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injury to person</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Criminal offence</li> <li>• Serious disruption</li> <li>• absconding</li> </ul> | <b>Duration of any restraint</b> |
| <b>Describe what was happening and what led up to the incident:</b><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><b>Circle the level of potential risk:</b><br>Low <input type="checkbox"/> medium <input type="checkbox"/> high <input type="checkbox"/> |                              |  |                                  |
| <b>Who was at risk?</b>   |                              |  |                                  |
| <b>Description of the incident by member of staff most directly involved:</b>   |                              |  |                                  |
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>  |                              |  |                                  |
| <b>Why do you think the action taken was in the best interests of the child?</b>  |                              |  |                                  |
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>  |                              |  |                                  |

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Controlling Risk</b><br>Describe any changes you made to routines, personnel or to the environment in an attempt to reduce the risk  |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Reasons for using force and description of force used:</b>   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Diversion, distractions and de-escalation attempts (please tick)</b><br><table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;">           verbal advice and support<br/>           firm, clear directions,<br/>           negotiation<br/>           limited choices<br/>           distraction         </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;">           diversion<br/>           reassurance<br/>           planned ignoring<br/>           stance<br/>           withdrawal directed         </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;">           reminders about<br/>           consequences<br/>           humour<br/>           success reminder<br/>           transfer adult         </td> </tr> </table> |   | verbal advice and support<br>firm, clear directions,<br>negotiation<br>limited choices<br>distraction | diversion<br>reassurance<br>planned ignoring<br>stance<br>withdrawal directed   | reminders about<br>consequences<br>humour<br>success reminder<br>transfer adult |
| verbal advice and support<br>firm, clear directions,<br>negotiation<br>limited choices<br>distraction   | diversion<br>reassurance<br>planned ignoring<br>stance<br>withdrawal directed   | reminders about<br>consequences<br>humour<br>success reminder<br>transfer adult                       |   |   |
| <b>Physical Intervention Strategies attempted (by staff members trained in team teach only) - tick</b><br><table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">           Help hug<br/>           Cradle hug<br/>           Wrap<br/>           Sitting wrap<br/>           Double elbow<br/>           Other:         </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">           Sitting double elbow (single person)<br/>           Single elbow (two person)<br/>           Figure of four (two person)<br/>           Sitting single elbow (two person)         </td> </tr> </table>   |   | Help hug<br>Cradle hug<br>Wrap<br>Sitting wrap<br>Double elbow<br>Other:                              | Sitting double elbow (single person)<br>Single elbow (two person)<br>Figure of four (two person)<br>Sitting single elbow (two person) |   |
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| <b>Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and or medical attention required:</b>  |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Medical check carried out by:</b>  |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Any information shared with staff not involved in the incident:</b>  |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Details of review with child:</b>  |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Follow-up, including postincident support and any disciplinary action against pupil(s)</b>   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Any information shared with external agencies:</b>   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>When and how information was shared with parents / carers (refer to log of conversation)</b>   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Has any complaint been logged (details should not be recorded here)    yes <input type="checkbox"/>    no <input type="checkbox"/></b>   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Report complied by:</b><br><br><b>Name and Role:</b><br><br><b>Signature:</b><br><br><b>Date:</b>  | <b>Report countersigned by:</b><br><br><b>Name and Role:</b><br><br><b>Signature:</b><br><br><b>Date:</b>                             |   |   |   |

