

# North Park Primary School Positive Handling Guidance

(Including information on physical control and Restrictive Physical Intervention,- RPI)



September 2022

## Positive Handling Policy

### Introduction

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils who may need to be positively handled. This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils, including the school's Behaviour Policy, LA Suspension Procedures, Safeguarding Policy and the Low Level Concerns Policy. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

### Rationale

Good professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in school respond positively to the rules and routines of the school. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of positive handling may be required. Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff at North Park Primary School:

- i. clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where positive handling is necessary
- ii. are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur.

The application of any form of positive handling places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for positive handling.

Positive Handling will only be used as a **last resort** when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

### Definitions

(a) Physical Contact Situations: in which proper physical contact takes place between staff and pupils, e.g. in sports/PE or to comfort pupils.

(b) 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 hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

(c) Positive Handling: This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to pupils, staff or property or if good order is being seriously prejudiced. All such incidents will be recorded and parents/carers will be informed.

Underpinning Values everyone attending or working at North Park Primary School has the right to:

- a recognition of their unique identity
- be treated with respect and dignity
- learn and work in a safe environment
- be protected from harm

Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupils needs by staff that has responsibility for their care and protection
- expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in the school
- be informed about the school's complaint procedure.

The school will ensure that all pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits which govern behaviour in the school.

Parents should have committed themselves through the Home-School Agreement to ensure the good behaviour of their child and that the child understands and follows the School's Behaviour Policy.

Positive Handling training will be made available to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the Head teacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

## Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour

Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively. (see Behaviour Policy). The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. The school acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN).

A member of staff who does not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions to the pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could cause risk/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.

On occasions, however, situations may still escalate.

DFE guidance (Use of Reasonable Force, 2013) states '*There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'.*

- *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.*
- *As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. 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.*
- *All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This power applies to any member of staff at the school.*

At North Park, where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline or is a safeguarding concern, and therefore provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches will be taken according to the circumstances of the incident.

- Verbal acknowledgment of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain; this includes negotiation, care and concern.
- Further verbal reprimand stating:
  - this is the second request for compliance
  - an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable
  - an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- Warning of potential need to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies.
- Summon assistance.
- Physical intervention. Reasonable physical intervention using the minimum degree of contact to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.

Where a situation arises that gives further cause for concern, physical intervention may be used. This could be to (not an exhaustive list):

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so, and where their learning and that of others is disrupted
- intervene where a pupil may disrupt a school event or a school trip or visit, endangering safety;
- 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
- prevent damage to property, or another pupil by doing so
- engaging in behaviour that is prejudicial to good order or discipline
- committing a criminal offence
- where a pupil absconds for school which may be a risk to safety of themselves or others

Positive handling can only be deemed reasonable if:

- it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident
- it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent
- it is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result
- the age, understanding and the gender of the pupil are considered
- it is likely to achieve the desired result

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervention. The expectation is that staff will support each other; staff offer and accept help from colleagues. Where a staff member does use physical intervention, this may involve doing the following:

- physically interposing themselves between pupils
- blocking a pupil's path
- escorting a pupil
- shepherding a pupil away

Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used. Whenever positive handling is used, staff will keep talking to the pupil in order to reassure them; where pupils are heightened staff will avoid discussing incidents until they are calmer.

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited items"<sup>3</sup>: 3 Section 550ZB(5) of the Education Act 1996

- 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. Separate guidance is available on the power to search without consent – see the 'Further sources of information' section for a link to this document.

### **Recording incidents**

Where positive handling has been used a record of the incident always needs to be recorded on CPOMS. All recording needs to be completed on the day of incident and needs to include the following:

- date, time and place of incident
- a brief description of the incident and actions taken
- attempts made to calm the situation

- names of people who witnessed the situation or others involved
- any damage/harm to persons or property
- name of person informing parents
- after any investigation a summary of action taken

A body map should accompany the CPOMs entry a necessary. Staff recording the incident should keep a copy of their recording for themselves for future reference.

### **Monitoring and follow up**

After the incident, the Headteacher will ensure that records and events are reviewed and investigated further as required. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using positive handling. This process will address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging. Where necessary risk assessments will be developed for pupils and behaviour or pastoral support plans will be developed, in conjunction with senior staff. Parents will be involved in this and where appropriate additional support may be requested from

- LA BIT/Crisis Team
- Early Help (where support may also be required at home)
- SEND support services
- CAMHS

If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Suspension/Exclusion Procedure
- Child Protection Procedure
- Staff Facing Allegations Procedure
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
- School Behaviour Policy

Members of staff will be kept informed of any action taken. In case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

### **Other physical contact with pupils**

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. 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 walking 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 exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching;
- To give first aid.
- When changing a child who has had a toileting accident (as agreed with parents – see Toileting and Intimate Care Policy)

### **Complaints**

The availability of a clear policy regarding Positive Handling and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's Complaints Policy. The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints but other governors will not be involved as a complaint may require further action on their part.

## **Further Guidance**

School Behaviour Policy

Behaviour in Schools – DFE

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1101597/Behaviour\\_in\\_schools\\_guidance\\_sept\\_22.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101597/Behaviour_in_schools_guidance_sept_22.pdf)

Use of Reasonable Force – DFE -

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