



## Whitehall Nursery and Infant School

### Positive Handling In School Policy

*This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, PHSE policy, Teaching and Learning policy and Health and Safety Policy*

#### **1. Introduction**

At Whitehall Nursery and Infant School we believe that everyone has the right to feel safe all of the time. Staff need to know what they are expected to do when faced with an individual in crisis. They need to know which de-escalation skills to use and what to do when these fail to bring a situation under control. Staff need techniques and methods to enable them to intervene safely when an individual is a danger to themselves, others, seriously damaging property or behaving in a way that is seriously prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and a safe environment for all concerned.

#### **2. Purpose of the policy**

This policy has been prepared for all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils to explain the school's arrangements for positive handling.

Our school encourages pupils to make positive behaviour choices and we recognise that the majority of our pupils respond positively to the school behaviour systems and happily follow instructions.

However pupils sometimes do make the wrong choices. On rare occasions this may result in a situation that requires some form of physical or non-physical intervention by staff.

Our Restraint Policy is based upon the following principles:

- Physical intervention is used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Any physical contact is only the minimum required.
- Physical intervention is used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents are recorded and reported to the Headteacher and SENCo.
- Parents are informed of each incident.

#### **3. The legal framework**

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 allows 'teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Headteacher who have control or charge of pupils to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- causing injury to his/herself or others
- committing an offence
- damaging property
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order & discipline

This policy has been written with DFE 'Use of reasonable force' advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013.

#### **4. Definition of reasonable force and restraint**

The DFE guidance (2013) on the 'Use of Reasonable Force' defines and explains these terms in the following way:

- 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 pupil 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.

All members of staff who can use reasonable force have a legal power to use it. 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 pupils on a school organised visit.

The DFE Guidance 2013 on 'Use of reasonable force' states that schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow and instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, trip or a 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; and 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.**

## 5. Our approach

We aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort to be used in the minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our Behaviour Policy.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate. Staff exercise their own professional judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff act within our school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Once again it is stressed that physical intervention is only used when all other strategies have failed to have the desired effect on a pupil's behaviour.

***NB 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.

Staff are 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 have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are

in charge of. They therefore take reasonable action to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. This being said staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

## **6. Use of reasonable force or intervention**

Physical restraint is 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 never takes a form which could be seen as punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint i.e. only applying force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. In all circumstances, alternative methods are used as appropriate with physical intervention or restraint a last resort.

Only staff that have been trained in appropriate physical intervention should practice the techniques and there should always be a minimum of two members of staff involved when serious situations develop.

Training should where possible be updated every 3 years for staff who will undertake physical intervention.

### ***Our preferred method is the Positive Handling approach***

In the exceptional circumstances when physical restraint or intervention becomes necessary, an adult is to go and find two trained members of staff so that they can be sent to the pupil in need of intervention. These staff members then use their training to support the pupil to regain control, with a 'contact and cover'/one voice approach

#### **Contact and Cover (One Voice)**

The concept of contact and cover is a tactic that is used by staff when encountering a pupil whose behaviour is proving to be challenging. The contact member of staff talks to the child and takes any necessary notes. This member of staff handles the entire procedure. The other 'cover' staff member stands in a position of advantage. They ensure the scene is safe for the contact member of staff. This member of staff only gets involved when a threat appears.

The Contact member of staff tends to be the first member of staff on the scene or at least the first member of staff who first comes into contact with the pupil. They establish the communication with the pupil whilst analysing the situation.

Depending upon the child's behaviour and who they are directing their attention to will dictate who is making the communication with them. For example, if the child moves towards the Contact Member of staff with aggression it may well be the Cover Member of staff who commences the restraint by moving in to take hold of them. This would allow the Contact Member of staff time to defend themselves if necessary should there be any need. These actions are reversed should the child turn their attention towards the Cover Member of staff.

Local Authority support services will have their own policies for care and control of pupils. When working within school it is the Headteacher's responsibility to make sure that support services staff are aware of the school policy and practice.

## **7. Actions after an incident**

Physical restraint 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. Staff are aware of our school 'incident reporting form' for when challenging behaviour has occurred. The Headteacher and SENCo are informed of any incident as soon as possible and take joint responsibility for making

arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised, using the completed incident reporting form. An appropriate member of the teaching staff debriefs the pupil concerned: the debrief includes consideration of the circumstances that precipitated the incident and exploring ways in which future incidents can be avoided. Any other individuals involved in the incident are offered support.

If the behaviour is part of an on-going pattern it will probably be necessary to address the situation through the development or review of an individual behaviour plan, which may include a risk assessment, an anger management programme and possible involvement of external agencies.

All incidents where restraint is used are also recorded immediately in the **'bound book'**. This is available to all staff in the inclusion room.

A member of the teaching staff contacts parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally 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.

## **8. Risk assessments**

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 (recorded on an individual behaviour plan) addresses:

- Strategies to be used prior to intervention.
- Ways of avoiding 'triggers' if these are known.
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need 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.
- The school's duty of care to all pupils and staff.

## **9. Complaints and allegations**

This clear physical intervention and restraint policy, ratified by Governors, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation under our Compliment's and Complaints Procedure, Whistle Blowing Policy. If following preliminary investigations it is deemed necessary, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will contact the LADO in line with our Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

We will review this policy annually.

Original policy written: September 2020

Review done: October 2023

Update due: October 2024