



At Lobley Hill Primary School we aim to 'Be the best that we can be' through being curious, adventurous and respectful in order to achieve personal excellence.



Lobley Hill Primary School

Positive Handling & Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: March 2023
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Last reviewed on:	March 2023
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Next review due by:	March 2024
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MODEL POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with associated school policies:

- Relationships & Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1.1 Legal Framework

The DfE Use of Reasonable Force Guidance; Advice for Head teachers, staff and Governing bodies (July 2013) allows all staff at a school to use reasonable force to keep children safe. It also allows other adults in the school to use physical interventions where reasonable, proportionate and necessary to ensure the safety of children. Those might include:

- Teaching assistants
- Midday supervisors
- Specialist support assistants
- Escorts
- Site Manager
- Voluntary helpers, including people accompanying pupils on visits, exchanges or holidays organised by the school

The right for school staff to use reasonable force is further set out in the DfE document Behaviour and Discipline in Schools; Advice for Head teachers and School Staff (September 2022) which states that members of staff have the power to use reasonable force to:

- prevent pupils committing an offence
- injuring themselves or others
- damaging property
- maintain good order and discipline in the classroom

Positive Handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful or in an emergency situation. There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (e.g. physical assault) being committed.

Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement. All teachers have a professional 'duty of care' within their job description which is underwritten Part 7 & Annex 1 of School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document September 2021. Together with the legislative framework this enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Head teacher to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from: committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, damaging property and to maintain good order and discipline in the classroom.

What is reasonable force?

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most staff 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**. 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.

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/carers accompanying students on a school organised visit.

When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- 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 following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Schools 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
- move a pupil to an area where they are safe and can have time to regulate

Schools cannot:

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

Power to search pupils without consent

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"

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco, cigarette papers and vapes
- 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.

The power to search without consent may also apply to prevent a pupil from:

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

What does it mean to restrain a child?

Positive Handling is:

‘The positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property’.

The proper use of Positive Handling requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining.

The decision to use Positive Handling as restrictive physical intervention must take account of the circumstances and be based on an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention compared with the risks of not employing a restrictive intervention. The physical intervention must also only employ a reasonable amount of force – that is the minimum force needed to avert injury or damage to property, or to prevent a breakdown in discipline – applied for the shortest period of time.

Why use restraint

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.

Positive Handling skillfully applied may be eased by degrees as the child calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

GENERAL AIMS

All staff in Lobley Hill Primary School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.

Our policy on the use of reasonable force is part of our overall pastoral care procedures and closely related to our policies on managing pupil behaviour in the Relationships and Behaviour Policy and also the Safeguarding Policy.

The Aims

- 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.
- To use the minimum degree of force necessary to accomplish positive handling.
- To give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from pupils or others.
- To maintain accurate records of incidents where Positive Handling has been employed.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Although most young people will never require any form of Positive Handling, staff may have to deal with some young people who exhibit disturbed, distressed and distressing behaviour. It is therefore necessary to carry out individual risk assessments (Appendix 3). We will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

- The environment
- Body language
- The way we talk
- The way we act

Environmental Risk Assessment

We will complete a risk analysis within the school and put in place strategies to minimise these risks in identified locations.

Individual Risk Assessments

Lobley Hill Primary School respect for the rights of the individual takes into consideration the context of The Human Rights Act (1998) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). The school's ethos and the guidance in this policy are based on the presumption that every adult and child is entitled to:

- Respect for his/her private life
- The right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment
- The right to liberty and security: and
- The right not to be discriminated against in his/her enjoyment of those rights

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

- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involving the parents/carers to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate
- If Positive Handling is likely to be necessary, this should be included in the pupil's risk assessment together with information on: de-escalation strategies; the manner in which the pupil will be held; how support can be summoned if needed; any medical factors to be considered.

More detailed examples of risk assessment and preventative steps can be found in Appendix 2.

PROCEDURES

In the event of Positive Handling having been used it is important to consider the strategies, which are deemed acceptable, and the recording procedures that should be in place. **Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort once all other avenues of de-escalation and non-physical strategies have been explored.**

Action Steps:

1. Use 'one voice' at all times – even when there is more than one adult present
2. Remind pupil of CARE rules and which one they are disregarding
3. Give pupil 2 choices – 'You can or I will help you to do.....'
4. Use a timer if appropriate (this will depend on the behaviour/situation)
5. Tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so
6. If possible, summon another adult
7. Continue to communicate calmly with the pupil throughout the incident - a calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem)
8. Make it clear that restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary

Recording

Staff should record all incidents of positive handling on Behaviour Watch using the 'High' tab and completing the Positive Handling section which outline the information detailed in Appendix 4 and inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the incident leads to an exclusion (temporary or permanent, the log will need to be printed and sent to the local authority with a copy of the exclusion form)

Details should include:

- Name of pupil(s)
- Staff member(s) involved
- Factors necessitating physical intervention
- The strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention
- How physical intervention was carried out
- Length of time child in hold
- Outcome of restraint
- Any other action taken in the management of the incident parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded. A debrief involving all members of staff involved must take place following all incidences of positive handling to ensure accurate recording of the incident and a review of procedures and practice.

COMPLAINTS

We all have a duty of care to the young people in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving parents/carers when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by the staff, and should help to avoid complaints from parents/carers. It will not prevent all complaints, however, and 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.

Staff, subjected to physical violence or assault, have the right to be supported in making a formal complaint to the Police and, if necessary, taking private action against an assailant.

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

We will review this policy on an annual basis.

Remember that adhering to the principles and procedures referred to in this policy statement is part of effective practice and should minimise risk to young people in our care and enhance our own self-protection.

Communicating the school's approach to the use of force

- Every school is required to have a Behaviour Policy and to make this policy known to staff, parents/carers and pupils. The Governing Body should notify the Headteacher that it expects the school Behaviour Policy to include the power to use reasonable force.
- There is no requirement to have a policy on the use of force but it is good practice to set out, in the Behaviour Policy, the circumstances in which force might be used. For example, it could say that teachers will physically separate pupils found fighting or that if a pupil refuses to leave a room when instructed to do so, they will be physically removed.
- Any policy on the use of reasonable force should acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs & disabilities (SEND).
- Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a student.
- Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil, or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil causing harm.
- By taking steps to ensure that staff, pupils and parents/carers are clear about when force might be used, the school will reduce the likelihood of complaints being made when force has been used properly.

Appendix 1

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force? Examples include where a pupil is:

1. Committing an offence
2. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself)
3. Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or amongst its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Examples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- Pupils fighting
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom.
- A pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Appendix 2 Strategies

All staff need to be aware of de-escalation strategies, resources and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps, which they can take to defuse and calm a situation.

- Move calmly and confidently
- Make simple, clear statements
- Intervene early
- Try to maintain eye contact
- If necessary, summon help before the problem escalates
- Remove audience from the immediate location
- Humour
- Success Reminders
- Planned Ignoring
- Negotiation
- Distraction
- Persuasion
- Discussion
- Verbal support/advice
- Directed time out
- Offered time out
- Moving to a safe space
- Non-threatening body language
- Change of adult
- De-escalation resources

There are situations where staff should not intervene without help

Assistance should be sought when dealing with:

- A physically large pupil,
- More than one pupil, or
- When the member of staff believes that s/he may be at risk of injury

In those circumstances where the member of staff has decided that it is not appropriate to restrain the pupil without help they should:

- Remove other pupils who might be at risk
- Summon assistance from colleagues
- Where necessary, telephone the police
- Inform the pupil(s) that help will be arriving
- Until assistance arrives, the member of staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following requirements:

Restraint must NOT:

- Involve hitting the pupil
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- Restrict the pupil's breathing; or involve contact with sexually sensitive areas

During any incident the restrainer should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- (In extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

Some Dos and Don'ts

DO

- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Summon help
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Provide a soft surface if possible
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil
- Hold the pupil's arms by his/her sides

DON'T

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking even if the pupil does not reply
- Straddle the pupil
- Push arms up the back
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints

Appendix 3: Individual Risk Assessment



Individual Pupil Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Plan

Name:	Year Group:	Date:
Trigger situations, know individual risks and situations:	▪	
What the behaviour looks like:	▪	
Medical and emotional factors:	▪	
Non-physical support strategies:	▪	
De-escalation Techniques:	▪	
Preferred Handling Strategies:	▪	
De-brief Structure:	▪	
Other factors to be considered:	▪	
Additional information:	▪	

Appendix 4: Positive Handling Report



Positive Handling Incident Report – this is the information that is logged on Behaviour Watch

Name of Pupil:		DOB:	Year Group:
Member of Staff:		Lead Person:	
Other staff present (assisting):			
Date:	Time:	Time Span:	
Incident reported to:		Reports completed by:	
Appropriate Response: Yes / No	Signed:	Headteacher:	Date:
Outcome:			
Reason for intervention: (Please highlight)			
A Bullying pupil (s)		G Other (please state):	
B To prevent absconding			
C Immediate danger of personal injury to self			
D To minimise disruption to other pupils			
E To avoid damage to property			
F To prevent danger of injury to adults			
Circumstances (A description of events leading up to the incident/behaviour):			

De-escalation techniques used (Please highlight)	
1. Humour	11. Distraction
2. Step Away	12. Persuasion
3. Calm Talking	13. Discussion
4. Help Protocol	14. Verbal Advice/Support
5. Removal of Audience	15. Time Out Directed
6. Success Reminder	16. Non-threatening Body Language
7. Planned Ignoring	17. Staff Change
8. Negotiation	18. Other (please state): De-escalation box of resources
9. Time Out Offered	
10. Reassured	

Behaviour: (A description of what actually happened, staff intervention, pupil response, control and de-escalation techniques employed)

Highlight Pupil Behaviour in Numerical Order:

Kicking	Disruptive	Actual or Perceived Threat
Spitting	Head-butting	Absconding
Biting	Self- Mutilation	Abusive Language
Hitting	Persistent Refusal to follow instructions	Other (please state):
Throwing/Destructive	Pushing	
Property Damage	Pinching	

Response and View of the Child:

Governor's Comments

Parent/Carer's Comments

Any further action to be taken: