



# Positive Handling Policy

**Approval Date: March 2018**

**Review Date: July 2027**

**Headteacher:** *TEmberson* .....

### **Power to use reasonable force**

Members of staff have the power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline in the classroom. Staff should receive training on managing challenging behaviour (restraint, de-escalation) and on the school's procedures for intervention.

Headteachers and authorised school staff may also use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances when conducting a search without consent for knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images or articles that have been or could be used to commit an offence or cause harm.

In some cases, individual care plans drawn up in consultation with parents/carers and - where appropriate - the child, may be required. This should set out the strategies and techniques to be used and those which should be avoided.

### **Risk assessment**

When it is likely that a child's behaviour may necessitate the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) as one of the reactive strategies a risk assessment **MUST** be carried out using the school's Risk Assessment and Recording an Incident book (located on both the Upper and Lower Sites).

### **Positive Handling Plan**

When the Individual Education Plan and risk assessment indicate the likely need for school staff to hold or restrain a child to prevent an injury, the school should record this in a Positive Handling Plan.

The information in the risk assessments will help to inform this plan which will outline:

- Who has been consulted about the plan
- The type of physical intervention to be used
- Which adults are authorised to use this intervention
- Parental consent for the plan
- Headteacher authorisation for the plan

The recommended format for a Positive Handling Plan is included in Appendix 2.

### **Recording the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention**

When restrictive physical intervention has been used, whether in a planned or unplanned way, schools should record this within 24 hours on the child's Risk Assessment/Recording Incident form within the school's recording books.

### **What is reasonable force?**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.<sup>2</sup>
- 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.

<sup>2</sup>Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006

### **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 judgment 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; 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.

Staff should be appropriately trained to deal with pupils with additional needs - this may include restraint techniques and moving and handling. Three Bridges Primary School uses Team Teach to train members of staff.

Staff who have attended training by Team Teach are qualified at a level 1. The physical touch techniques and holds that these staff are trained to use are:

- Show and go;
- Caring C guide;
- Two caring C guide;
- Help hugs;
- Turn, gather and guide;
- Moving in hold (+ sitting version);
- Use of bean bags;
- Response to dead weight;
- Single person double elbow;
- Small child escort;
- Foot wedge and calm stance (response to kicking).

Physical interventions are a last resort and only used in emergency situations. They must only be used by the trained staff members. All physical touch techniques and holds used by staff are recorded in the 'Bound and Number' book in the SLT office. If these have been used, there must be a de-brief that day with a member of SLT to reflect and review the plan in place for that child.

### **Steps to be taken by staff before using physical touch:**

- Show care and concern by acknowledging dysregulated and dangerous behaviours of the pupil and then requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning.
- Give clear directions and purpose for the pupil to stop.
- Remind the pupil of school rules and consequences.
- Remove an audience or take the vulnerable pupil to a safe place if they will move voluntarily.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could cause harm.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

### **What about 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; and
- To give first aid.

### **How do we use ‘touch’ at Three Bridges Primary School?**

‘Touch’ or ‘physical contact’ is only used when absolutely necessary. We may use a physical intervention with children for a variety of reasons, but in general terms we would normally only do so for either comfort or guidance. The child’s individual and special needs will be taken into consideration to ensure it is appropriate for that specific child. All touch or physical contact needs to be guided by the individual child.

**Hugging-** if absolutely necessary, a side-on hug may be used if instigated by the child. A side- on, arm around the shoulders if needed for comfort, is more appropriate if this is absolutely necessary.

**Hand holding-** if absolutely necessary, a hand or arm to hold may be offered to a child if they are compliant with this and willing. Hand or arm holding must never be used as a method of control.

**Lap sitting-** this is actively discouraged. If a child attempts to sit on an adult’s lap, ask them to sit next to you or offer them an alternative space.

**Carrying and lifting a child-** this is actively discouraged. An adult must not carry or lift a child. If a child asks or instigates this, encourage them to use an alternative way of moving and explain why this is necessary. Offer them a different space to go to or wait where they are, until they are ready to move appropriately.

### **Appendix 2 – Positive Handling Plan**

**GUIDANCE TO SCHOOLS ON THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION** (see attached document).

Previous Use of Physical Intervention, Children in Distress and Intimate Care Policy approved September 2016.

## Appendix 2

### Positive Handling Plan

Pupil Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

People involved in developing this plan (must include parents/carers):

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Why does the child or young person require a PHP?

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Details of the strategies that:

Create the most appropriate environment for this pupil making it less likely that physical intervention would be required.
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May de-escalate a situation.
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Detail the hold or holds that would be used (if there were a need to hold the pupil firmly to prevent harm to themselves or others).

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