



# Positive Handling

This policy is an operational policy, approved by the Headteacher of Stoke Park Primary School.

**First adopted: October 2019**

## Review history:

Review Date	Details	Owned by/linked to
September 2021	Update to staff list	School

**\*This version: Tabled for information at the meeting of LGB 14/10/21**

To be reviewed every year or before if required

**Next review due: September 2023**



# Stoke Park Primary School Policy For Positive Handling

## Guiding Principles

### **1:1 Legal Framework**

Positive Handling should be limited to emergency situations and **used only in the last resort**. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 and DFEE Circular 10/98 allow teachers, and other members of staff at a school who are authorised (see Appendix 5) by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in circumstances where the pupil may need to be prevented from engaging in behaviours which are likely to cause injury to themselves, others or damage to property. The guidance extends this to maintaining good order and discipline, for both on-site and off- site activities.

**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 by paragraph 58.7 of School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2002. Together with the legislative framework this enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury
- Causing injury to another person
- Causing significant damage to property
- 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.

### **1.2 Authorised Staff**

Behaviour within the school is good and there have been very few pupils who have engaged in behaviour which may have warranted positive handling and restraint.

Currently, the following members of staff are authorised to use positive handling and restraint in the circumstances set out above:

- Amy Higgitt
- Natasha Williams
- Olivia Hay
- Rachel Dicks
- Annette Daly
- Carly Winkworth
- Louise Butt
- Kath Donlan

If a child is behaving in a way that is likely to cause significant injury to his/herself and/or others, all staff are authorised to use positive handling as outlined in this policy to exercise their duty of care.

If a pupil is admitted to the school who may or does require positive handling/restraint for the reasons stated in this policy, a risk assessment will be completed for that pupil prior to the pupil being admitted. The Headteacher will then secure appropriate training for staff named in the risk assessment.

The following staff are responsible for ensuring the risk assessments are completed:

- Reception - Assistant Headteacher / SENCO
- KS1 and 2 – Assistant Headteacher / SENCO

### **1:2 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.

### **1:3 Why use positive handling?**

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 skilfully 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.

## **Aims**

### **2:1 Context**

The staff in Stoke Park Primary School recognise that the use of positive handling is likely to be the last resort and only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being/maintain good order and discipline.

### **2:2 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 when it is necessary.
- To maintain accurate records of incidents where Positive Handling has been employed.

## **Risk Assessment**

### **3:1 Risk Assessment**

Although most young people in Stoke Park Primary School will never require any form of positive handling, staff, on rare occasions, may have to deal with some young people who exhibit behaviour that puts themselves or others at risk of harm. For pupils who may exhibit this type of behaviour, it is necessary to carry out a risk assessment. We will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

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

### **3:2 Individual 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, it is our intention to plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning needs to address:

- A positive behaviour plan (e.g. IEP, PSP) to promote appropriate behaviour from the child;
- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary);
- Involving the parents 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.

### 3:3 Dynamic risk assessment

In a situation which occurs rapidly in front of a member of staff, a series of checks can be made to dynamically assess the situation using ABC.

**ACT:** Stop and think. Adapt a calm non-threatening stance and posture

Slow control of voice

Clear verbal directions

Pause and allow time for delayed compliance and help to arrive

**Balance:** likely outcomes if force is used against likely outcomes of force is not used.

Short-term risks against longer term risks.

The best interests of the child against the best interests of other children and the rights and powers of staff.

**Choose:** Persons who are most likely to succeed.

Best place available.

Best time available.

Minimum use of force necessary to achieve the desired result.

### Procedures

#### **4:1 Procedures**

In the event of positive handling being needed, it is important to consider the strategies, which are deemed acceptable, and the procedures that should be followed.

#### **4:2 Action Steps:**

1. Tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
2. If possible summon another adult;
3. Warn the pupil that he/she is about to be restrained (unless immediate action is required to prevent harm to an individual and there is no time to give a warning)
4. If the pupil continues to behave in a way that requires physical intervention, restrain the pupil using the most appropriate technique and the minimum force.
5. Continue to communicate calmly with the pupil throughout the incident informing them of the desired behaviours so that the restraint is not necessary;
6. Make it clear that restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary;
7. If a second adult is present, may support with or takeover the restraint particularly if the first adult is finding the situation unduly stressful;

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;
- 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; or
- (In extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

### **4.3 Assistance should be sought when dealing with:**

- A physically large pupil,
- More than one pupil, or
- When the teacher 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,
- If 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.

### **4:4 Recording**

Staff should record all incidents of restraint in the bound and numbered book which is kept securely in the Designated Safeguarding Lead's office, and in accordance with data protection legislation. Access and the location of the book is also held with the on call deputy safeguarding lead for that day.

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 effected

- Outcome of restraint
- Any other action taken in the management of the incident

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded.

## **Complaints**

### **5:1 Complaints**

Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by the staff, should help to avoid complaints from parents.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint, they should be given a copy of the school's complaints procedure.

If an allegation is made that is deemed to be a matter of child protection, the school's child protection policy should be followed. This will include notifying the Local Authority and passing details of the allegation to the Duty Social Worker.

## **Appendix 1 When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?**

- 1) Committing an offence
- 2) Causing personal injury
- 3) Causing injury to another person
- 4) Causing significant damage to property
- 5) 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.

Examples of situations that fall into one of the first four 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 fifth category are:

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

## **Appendix 2 - Some Dos and Don'ts of Positive Handling**

### **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 if more restrictive restraints are employed
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil

### **DON'T**

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking even if the pupil does not reply
- Straddle the pupil
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints
- Holding a student around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the student's ability to breathe
- Slapping, punching or kicking a student;
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- Tripping up a student;
- Holding or pulling a student by the hair or ear;
- Holding a student face down on the ground.



### **Appendix 3: Training**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that staff are fully informed of the school policy and understand what authorisation entails.

(ii) It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to arrange training and/or guidance to staff, possibly through a senior member of staff.

(iii) An up-to-date list of authorised staff should be maintained within school and teachers should know who they are.

### **Appendix 4: Authorised Staff**

#### ***From section 550A of The Education Act 1996:***

9. The Act allows all teachers at a school to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. It also allows other people to do so, in the same way as teachers, provided they have been authorised by the Head teacher to have control or charge of pupils. Those might include classroom assistants, care workers, midday supervisors, specialist support assistants, education welfare officers, escorts, caretakers, or voluntary helpers including people accompanying pupils on visits, exchanges or holidays organised by the school.

10. Head teachers should identify people, other than teachers, whom they wish to authorise to have control or charge of pupils and therefore be able to use force if necessary. Authorisation may be on a permanent or long term basis because of the nature of the person's job, or short term for a specific event such as a school trip. The Head should explicitly inform the people concerned, and ensure that they are aware of and properly understand what the authorisation entails. To ensure that, Heads may find it helpful to arrange for a senior member of the teaching staff to provide training or guidance. They should keep an up-to-date list of authorised people and ensure the teachers know whom they are.

Reviewed and updated: September 2021