



NORTHWOOD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Positive Handling Policy

2024-25



Introduction

The policy has been developed in response to The Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 93, which reinforces supersedes and replaces previous guidance. It also takes cognisance of joint guidance issued by the DfES and Department of Health and follows the guidance for 'The Use of Reasonable Force to Control or Restrain Pupils'.

The policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies and guidance relating to interaction between adults and pupils.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff, who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for care and control. Its contents are available to parents and pupils. A statement about the School's Emotional Regulation Policy is made to parents in the school prospectus. This statement includes information on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils.

Objectives

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the emotional regulation strategies practised by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate, and necessary force may be required. Northwood School acknowledges that physical techniques are only a small part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- (i) Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where use of force is necessary and
- (ii) Are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- self – injuring
- causing injury to others
- committing a criminal offence
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within school (this includes authorised out-of-school activities).

As teaching and non-teaching staff work 'in loco parentis' and have a 'Duty of Care' towards their pupils, they could be liable for a claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this policy.

The application of any form of physical control inevitably carries an attached risk of unintended harm and this places staff and the school at risk of potential litigation. It can only



be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. Staff must be aware that they are responsible for:

- assessing risks (dynamic risk assessment) related to individual circumstances which may arise in the course of their day-to-day duties and
- making judgements about when the use of force is necessary and the degree of force which may be regarded as necessary to manage a situation.
- Reporting their actions as quickly as possible after the incident, in accurate and comprehensive detail on CPOMS

Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity.
- be treated with respect and dignity.
- learn and work in a safe environment.
- be protected from harm, violence, assault, and acts of verbal abuse.

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

- individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection.
- expect staff to undertake their 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 school.
- expect PBP's to be designed to achieve outcomes that reflect the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern and others affected by the behaviour requiring intervention; be informed about the school's Complaints Policy, Allegations Management Policy, and Whistleblowing Policy.

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

Use of Physical Handling

Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Head teachers, staff, and governing bodies (DFE: July 2013)

- 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 where a student 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.
- 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.

In Northwood Community Primary School:

- Positive Handling uses the **minimum** degree of force necessary for the **shortest period of time** to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others, or property.
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be **proportionate** to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- Staff would be expected to follow the pupil's BRP / Risk Assessment in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour
- If this was unsuccessful and the situation continues to escalate staff would then be expected to call on the learning mentor, HT, DH who have been trained in Team Teach techniques.
- Only if all of the above have been tried and are unsuccessful should staff even consider any other form of restraint. The overriding consideration should still be the **reasonableness and proportionality** of the force used.

All the techniques used take account of a young person's.

- age
- gender
- level of physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- special needs
- social context

They also provide a gradual, graded system of response.

Where behavioural records and/or risk assessment identifies a need for a planned approach, plans (BRPs – Behaviour & Regulation Plans) are written for individual children and where possible, these will be designed through multi agency collaboration and, with parental consent, shared with other agencies/services supporting the child to facilitate consistency of approach so far as is possible. Risk assessment documentation will be included with this.

Physical Intervention may involve:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing or Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away
- Using more restrictive holds in more extreme circumstances

Staff should not:

- Hold a pupil round the neck or in any way that might restrict the airway
- Slap, punch or kick a pupil



- Twist or force limbs against a joint
- Trip a pupil
- Hold a pupil by the hair or ear
- Hold a pupil face down on the ground
- Carry a child
- Lock a child in a room alone
- Hold a child in a way that exerts pressure on their chest / capacity for lungs to expand

Minimising the Need to Use Force

At Northwood Community Primary School, we constantly strive to create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of force. In addition to this, pupils who present with persistent challenging behaviour are assigned time with our Learning Mentors/ELSA's who will work in partnership with the SENCO and class teacher, in supporting the BRP and associated emotional regulation targets.

Pupils who have issues relating to sensory dysfunction or other conditions that may result in increased anxiety levels, and therefore an increase in the likelihood of challenging behaviour, may have individualised support or programmes to help them to manage this. Through the PSHE curriculum pupils learn about feelings and managing conflict, where this is appropriate to their level of development. The ethos further promotes independence, choice, and inclusion; pupils are given maximum opportunity for personal growth and emotional wellbeing. Through our emotional regulation policy, we emphasise reflecting the effect of poor choices on others and voicing what were thinking and feeling and repairing harm in relationships.

All staff are trained in skills to help them to defuse situations before behaviour becomes challenging and how to de-escalate incidents should they arise. Reasonable force will only be used when the risks involved in doing so, are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

Prevention of unsafe behaviour will be enabled through:

- The deployment of appropriate staffing numbers.
- The deployment of appropriately trained and competent staff.
- Avoiding situations and triggers known to provoke challenging behaviour.
- Creating opportunities for choice and achievement.
- Developing staff expertise through a programme of Continuous Professional Development.
- Exploring pupils' preferences relating to the way/s in which they are managed
- Staff employing 'diffusion' techniques to avert escalation of behaviour into violence or aggression
- Restorative practices embedded within our emotional regulation policy

Definitions of Positive Handling

Positive Handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. Positive handling is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment, and



deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion, and de-escalation. Risk assessment identifies positive prevention strategies and how a pupil may need to be supported in a crisis.

1. Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, e.g., in the care of pupils and in order to support their access to a broad and balanced curriculum. It would seem reasonable that young children do require opportunities for close contact, as long as this is within public view, sensitively carried out and age/person appropriate.

2. 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 arm or shoulder where the pupil is compliant.

This technique cannot be emphasised enough and in the hands of a skilful practitioner, many pupils can be deflected from a potentially volatile situation into a less confrontational situation i.e., it may be possible to “defuse” a situation by a timely intervention.

3. Physical Control / Restraint / Restrictive Physical Intervention

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff, or property. All such incidents must be recorded on CPOMS using a positive handling form which focuses on the following:

- Context – explain where the event happened
- Description of event – explain what happened during the event in a clear, organised way, avoiding any judgements or emotional language. A factual step by step account of the events.
- De-escalation – a clear description of de-escalation techniques used
- Positive handling – a clear explanation of why positive handling was used, who used it, how the child was held and the length of time that the child was held for and any injuries that may have occurred for the child
- Support - how the child was supported afterwards
- Home - how the incident was reported to parent carer
- Staff must click the category POSITIVE HANDLING INCIDENT on CPOMS so these incidents can be tracked

If anyone (child or adult) is injured an accident report must also be completed. Positive Handling records of incidents must be discussed with the Headteacher or Deputy Head as soon as possible, and by the end of the school day at the latest. The HT/DHT will need to sign these forms after discussion.

The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint/RPI. Restraint is defined by Team Teach as the positive application of force by staff, in order to overcome rigorous resistance, completely directing, deciding, and controlling a person’s free movement.



Types of Incident

The incidents described in The Education and Inspections Act 2006 The Use of Reasonable Force to Control, and Restrain Pupils fall into three broad categories: -

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations which fall within one of the first two categories are:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil.
- Pupils are fighting.
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage, or vandalism to property.
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury, or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself 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 which fall into the third category are:

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

Power to Screen / Search Pupils:

The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 effective from September 2007, gives schools powers to screen or search pupils for weapons. At Northwood School it is extremely unlikely that pupils would conceal weapons and therefore staff have not received training in weapons disarmament. Staff will not be requested to undertake searches. As the power to search should only be used where it is judged to be safe, if the school decides that a search may be necessary then the Headteacher/Deputy Headteachers would seek advice from the police.

Strategies: Time-Out / Withdrawal / Planned and Emergency Physical Interventions / Recovery

Time out

This involves restricting the child's access to positive reinforcements in a room or area which they may freely leave. It is a specific behaviour management technique and does not necessarily mean time spent out of the class/group, but rather refers to a withdrawal of attention and/or things they find rewarding. It could be as simple as turning away from a child who is attention-seeking or positioning a child away from the class/group. This withdrawal of attention could also be achieved by sending a pupil to another class/group or a quiet area.



Withdrawal

Which involves removing the child from a situation that causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This can mean removing a child from the class/group, to allow them time to calm down or to prevent a situation from escalating. They may need time away from staff and pupils (either on their own or in another class/group) in order to break the cycle/pattern of their behaviour or to reduce their level of anxiety/distress. The arrangement of “quiet time” shall be negotiated between the child and staff involved.

Planned Physical Intervention

Is described/outlined in the pupil’s PBP/Risk Assessment. This should cover most interventions, as possible scenarios will be identified and planned for when the PBP is drawn up. These interventions may include the use of Team Teach techniques.

Emergency Physical Intervention

May be necessary if a situation arises that was not foreseen or is uncharacteristic of the pupil. Members of staff retain their duty of care to pupils and any response, even in an emergency, must be proportionate to the circumstances. Staff should use the minimum force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety, consistent with the training that they have received. Following any such incident, a risk assessment will be devised (or the existing one updated) to support effective responses to any such situations which may arise in the future.

Wherever possible assistance will be sought from another member of staff.

Positive Handling at Northwood School (defined as the full range of strategies used to manage behaviour including where necessary physical intervention) is seen as a proactive response to meet individual pupil needs and any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way that staff exercise their responsibilities and the range of behaviour management strategies used.

Recovery

Pupils who may be distressed by events can be offered the following support:

- Quiet time taking part in a calming activity
- Quiet time away from the incident/trigger
- Resuming their usual routine/previous activity as soon as possible, especially for pupils with special needs
- Time with a member of staff to debrief the incident

Injury to the Child

Whilst the physical techniques are intended to reduce risk, there is always risk when two or more people engage to use force to protect, release or restrain. Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the child, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the child remains safe.



Any such injury will be reported using CPOMS and Medical Tracker. Any injuries to pupils as a result of incidents involving restraint will be reported to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher and parents / carer.

First Aid trained staff may be called upon to implement First Aid or seek further guidance in the event of an injury or physical distress arising as a result of a physical intervention.

Staff: Authorised Staff / Health and Safety / Training / Support

Authorised Staff

All teachers, staff and the Headteacher are authorised to have control or charge of pupils automatically, they have the statutory power to use reasonable force within the context of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the subsequent guidance 'The Use of Reasonable Force to Control and Restrain Pupils'. Teachers and staff do not have to be trained in Team Teach strategies in order to use positive handling/reasonable force. Northwood School has a cycle of training to ensure that all staff have had access to some level of Team Teach training.

Supply staff must ensure that they are familiar with this school's policy. Appropriate guidance will be given if they have not undertaken Team Teach training.

Authorisation is not given to volunteers, students on placement, visitors, or parents as they will not have control of pupils who may present with challenging behaviour but will be supervised at all times.

Health and Safety of Staff

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, employees have a responsibility to report any circumstances which give rise to an increased risk to their Health and Safety.

Staff who have, or acquire, permanently or temporarily, any medical condition that may impact on their ability to carry out pupils' plans have a duty to report these to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher immediately, as there may be an impact on their own safety and that of colleagues and/or pupils.

Through the provision of Team Teach training, the risk of harm towards staff is reduced but it is possible for some injury to be received. All such occurrences should be treated and subsequently recorded, on a school Accident Form.

Staff Training

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that Team Teach training in the use of positive handling is available to all staff and is kept up to date. The list is reviewed on an annual basis in response to the changing circumstances of the school's population.

No member of staff should use Team Teach techniques without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of on-going staff development. Northwood school has two trained Team teach instructors on staff who will provide ongoing training and advice to staff as necessary.



Staff Support Following Incidents

Any member of staff or pupil at the school involved in or witnessing a serious incident involving the use of physical hold, may require additional support following the incident. Staff should ensure that they are fully recovered from an incident before resuming their duties and colleagues are encouraged to seek and offer support where it is deemed necessary.

At Northwood School we have a debrief procedure which should be utilised if staff need to debrief after an incident. Where staff have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force, they should have access to support; this will be made available/supported through the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Recording and Monitoring Incidents

Recording

Where physical control or restraint has been used, a record of the incident will be kept on CPOMS through the use of a Positive Handling Form.

Incidents will be written up by staff as indicated earlier in this policy and staff will be advised of how they are to do this. Incidents should be recorded in a dispassionate, factual, and detailed basis.

Monitoring

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 may require the use of reasonable force.

Monitoring of incidents will take place half termly and the results used to inform planning to meet individual pupil and school needs. The Headteacher will present an annual summary of incidents that have involved the use of force to the Governing Body.

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure including a review of PBP/Risk Assessment

Visits Out of School

Our equal opportunities policy states that all pupils should be included in all curriculum activities. However, Health and Safety remains a priority and staff should carry out risk assessments for pupils that may be a possible danger prior to each visit into the community. Due consideration should be given to the following:

- Is the pupil able to cope with the demands of the proposed visit?
- Are there sufficient, suitably trained staff - particularly if there should be an incident?
- How will you contact school to get extra help if necessary and how will you get back?



Whistle Blowing

Whilst the training in TEAM TEACH provided to selected staff, encourages the use of help protocols and reflective practice, it is acknowledged that under some circumstances, physical intervention can be misapplied. Staff are reminded that part of their duty of care to pupils includes the requirement to report any such matters which cause them concern in relation to pupil management and welfare. Any such concerns should be raised with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteachers, Safeguarding Lead or with the Chair of Governors, in order to allow concerns to be addressed and practice improved.

- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Social Services)
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
- School Emotional Regulation Policy
- Exclusions Procedure: in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff this may be considered

The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.

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

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Where the nature of any complaint made by a pupil, parent, or other person in relation to the use of physical hold within the school indicates that an allegation of mishandling by a member staff, the school's Complaints Policy or Allegations Management Policy will be followed.

In such circumstances the investigation of the complaint/allegation and any resulting action in respect of child protection, disciplinary or other procedures will be carried out in accordance with the guidance received from the LA.

This policy is underpinned by:

DFE Briefing June 2019: Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Practices

DFE 2018, Searching, Screening and Confiscation, Advice for Headteachers and School Staff

DFE 2016, Behaviour and Discipline in Schools, Advice for Headteachers and School Staff

DFE 2013, Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers and School Staff

Policy Updated: November 2024

Policy Review Date: November 2025 (or before in the event of a significant incident)