



Newlands CE School Federation

A partnership of Shere and Clandon Schools



Positive Handling Policy

1. Aims

Positive relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure positive behaviour in our schools. The Federation recognises that most pupils in both schools respond well to the behaviour management practised by staff. This ensures the wellbeing and safety of all pupils and staff.

The Federation acknowledges that, in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required. We recognise that physical techniques are only a very small part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

This policy on Positive Handling should therefore be read in conjunction with the Federation's Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies.

Specific Aims of the Positive Handling Policy

- To protect every person in both school communities from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical contact that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To ensure all staff understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where physical restraint is necessary.
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all Federation staff:

- Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where positive handling is necessary, and
- Are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur.

The application of any form of positive handling places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible.

Physical restraint will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

2. Definitions of Positive Handling:

Positive handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. It 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.

Behaviour plans are used as required and will contain positive prevention strategies and information on how pupils may be supported in a crisis.

- 2.1. **Physical Contact** – Situations in which appropriate physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, including the need for reassurance. 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.
- 2.2. **Physical intervention/control** – This may be used to divert a pupil from destructive or disruptive action, for example, guiding or leading a pupil by the arm, elbow or shoulder from the classroom. Many pupils can be deflected from a potentially volatile situation by a timely intervention from a member of staff.
- 2.3. **Physical 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. If anyone is injured, an accident form must be completed.

Records of incidents must be given to the Headteacher as soon as possible, and by the end of the school day at the latest. Incidents may also be logged on CPOMS.

3. Legislation

Physical Restraint should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort.

This policy has been developed in response to The Education and Inspections Act (2006), which reinforces and replaces previous guidance. It also takes into consideration the guidance by the DfE and Department of Health, including paragraph 38 in the Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2014) document and The Use of Reasonable Force document (2013). Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law.

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teachers and other members of staff in both schools, authorised by the Headteacher, who come into contact with pupils, and for volunteers working within either school, to explain the Federation's arrangements for care and control.

The Education and Inspections Act (2006) stipulates that reasonable force may be used as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil)

themselves)

- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the relevant school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise, including authorised out-of-school activities.

(Examples of possible situations are given in Appendix A)

4. Why use physical intervention/restraint?

Physical Intervention/restraint 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. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical Intervention/restraint would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories.

Staff should always act within the federation's Behaviour Policy, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Staff should be 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 should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and wellbeing.

Staff must be aware that they are responsible for:

- Assessing risks related to individual circumstances which may arise in the course of their day-to-day duties.
- Making judgements about when the use of physical intervention/restraint would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories.

Staff need to be aware that they are required to justify their decisions, in writing, through the recording and reporting procedures outlined later in this document when physical restraint has been used.

Staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury because of their intervention.

5. Alternative Strategies

There are some situations in which the need for physical restraint is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g., if a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g., use of assertiveness skills such as:

- The use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight), long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective.
- Withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g., if an action such as damage to property is threatened.
- The awareness of an adult's position to a child, i.e., standing to the side of a child, so the stance/position is less threatening.
- Other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high).
- The employment of other sanctions consistent with the federation's Behaviour Policy.

At Shere and Clandon Schools staff never rebuff the need some children have for physical contact, e.g., a hug for reassurance, as this can defuse a situation if a child is feeling anxious or upset. However, this will always be within appropriate boundaries and for an appropriate length of time.

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
- Exploring pupils' preferences relating to the way in which they are managed and following guidelines on individual behaviour plans.
- Staff employing techniques to avert escalation of behaviour into violence or aggression.

6. Use of physical Intervention/restraint

Physical intervention/restraint should be 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 should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force' however, for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it at Newlands Federation schools:

- Physical Intervention/Restraint uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming him/herself, others or property.
- The scale and nature of the Physical Intervention/Restraint must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- Methods which require minimal physical contact should be attempted first, e.g. blocking a pupil's path, removing items/furniture or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object.

- For identified pupils, staff would be expected to follow the procedures on their Individual Behaviour Plan to manage an incident or tackle challenging behaviour. If this was unsuccessful and the situation continued to escalate, staff would then be expected to seek the help of other members of staff.

Only if all of the above have been tried and are unsuccessful should staff even consider any form of restraint.

The overriding consideration should still be the reasonableness and proportionality of the force used.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective, and Physical Restraint should be a last resort.

Reasonable force will only be used when the risks involved in doing so, are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

When Physical Restraint becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why.
- Use the minimum force necessary.
- Involve another member of staff if possible.
- Tell the pupil what he/she must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language.
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance.

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil.
- Involve other pupils in the restraint.
- Touch or hold the pupil in sexual areas.
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair.
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing, e.g., around the neck.
- Slap, punch, kick, or trip up the pupil

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.

A member of the leadership team should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised.

An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents/carers informed.

If the behaviour is part of an on-going pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the involvement of Pupil and Parent Support Assistant (PPSA)/Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) which may include an anxiety management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SENCO.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided. All incidents should be recorded immediately on the Pupil Restraint Report Form (Appendix B). All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available.

A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss the incident.

8. Training

Positive Handling training will be made available to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the Headteacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake Positive Handling without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

9. Behaviour Plans

If staff in either school become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of restraining, the federation will plan how to respond if the situation arises, using a school behaviour plan. The behaviour plan will be created by a team of staff members who work closely with the child (Team Around the Child) and will include the following:

- Explanation of key behavioural difficulties, triggers and what the behaviour might be communicating.
- Strategies for management of the pupil (e.g., reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary and, where there is immediate risk to the child's safety, the safety of others or to property, involvement of parents to ensure they are clear about the specific action the relevant school might need to take.
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should take when different difficulties arise. This may identify a need for training or guidance.
- List of rewards and consequences.

10. Complaints

A clear restraint policy, adhered to by all staff, should help to avoid complaints from parents. Should a dispute arise about the use of force by a member of staff, this might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the police or social services, under safeguarding procedures and removal of the staff member from their current role with the child.

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

The Governing Body first adopted this policy in September 2021. It will be reviewed annually as necessary.

The Safeguarding Committee is responsible for the review of this policy. This policy is based on a template from the Key for School Leaders.

Date of last review: Summer 2024

Date for next review: Summer 2025

Appendix A

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?

Examples of situations	Strategies	Reason for reasonable force
A pupil attacks a member of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of alternative strategies to defuse the situation. • Use of Physical Intervention to remove the pupil from the situation. • Use of restraint if attack continues. • Talk to the child about what he/she needs to do for adult to remove the restraint. • Relax restraint in response to the pupil's compliance. • If injury occurs to staff member, a second adult should take over. <p>After the incident, if restraint was used, complete the PHYSICAL RESTRAINT – INCIDENT REPORT FORM.</p>	Immediate risk to others
A pupil attacks a pupil or pupils/fighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of alternative strategies to defuse the situation • Use of Physical Intervention to remove the pupil from the situation or to separate the two pupils. • Use of restraint if attack continues. • Talk to the child about what he/she needs to do for adult to remove the restraint. • Relax restraint in response to the pupil's compliance. <p>After the incident, if restraint was used, complete the PHYSICAL RESTRAINT – INCIDENT REPORT FORM.</p>	Immediate risk to others
A pupil is trying to harm themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove items that the child is using or may use to harm him/herself. • Use of alternative strategies to defuse the situation. • Use of Physical Intervention to prevent the child from hurting themselves further. • Use of restraint if pupil continues. • Talk to the child about what he/she needs to 	Immediate risk to themselves

	<p>do for adult to remove the restraint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relax restraint in response to the pupil's compliance. <p>After the incident, if restraint was used, complete the PHYSICAL RESTRAINT – INCIDENT REPORT FORM.</p>	
<p>A pupil is throwing objects in the classroom that may cause injury to others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items/furniture removed if possible. Use of alternative strategies to defuse situation. Ask the child to leave the classroom. Use physical intervention to remove the child from the classroom. <p>After the incident, if restraint was used, complete the PHYSICAL RESTRAINT – INCIDENT REPORT FORM.</p>	<p>Immediate risk to others</p>
<p>A pupil is trying to climb a fence/gate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of alternative strategies to defuse the situation. Use of physical intervention to prevent the pupil from climbing too far if it is safe to do so. <p>After the incident, if restraint was used, complete the PHYSICAL RESTRAINT – INCIDENT REPORT FORM.</p>	<p>Immediate risk to themselves</p>

Appendix B

Physical Intervention Incident Form

Pupil Name	Class	Date	
Member of staff who used physical restraint			
Witnessed by			
Events leading up to the incident (outline what dangers were perceived and what strategies other than restraint were tried).			
Brief description of the incident (outline what restraint was applied, the timescale, significant damage).			
Physical restraint was used because there was immediate risk to (<i>tick as appropriate</i>)		Themselves	
		Others	
		Property	
Was it necessary to make an entry on an accident form?			YES
Outline details			NO

Has the parent/carer been informed? Please give details including time, date, methods of communication and school staff involved (this will usually be the Headteacher).			
Form completed by		Role	
Headteacher's Signature		Date	
Copies to:	Headteacher Class teacher Parent/Carer		