



WOODBIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Positive Handling Protocol

Policy Statement

Staff with a duty of care operate in exceptional circumstances where it is sometimes necessary to act outside the norm, any physical intervention should be based upon providing the maximum amount of care, control and therapeutic support

There is no legal requirement to have a policy on the use of force, but it is good practise to do so.

Duty of Care

Both employers and employees have a duty of care. All members of school staff have a legal power to use “reasonable” force to:

- Remove disruptive young people from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction.
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, trip or visit.
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their behaviour to disrupt 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.

Introduction

The term ‘Positive Handling’ includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control a pupil. The term ‘physical restraint’ is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as ‘Restrictive Physical Interventions’ in national Guidance (Def./DoH 2002).

A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Pupils with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. The Education and Skills Act 2006 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Head teacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This protocol is designed to provide guidance only. It should be considered alongside recent national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at school should be conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. Part of the preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils should be encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents should also be encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if and when, they occur.

Alternatives to Positive Handling

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

Modifications to Environment

Consideration should be given to obvious hazards.

For Example:-

- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils, compasses and darts) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry pupil who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Are the design arrangements and/or furniture safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage angry pupils to take themselves to a safer place?

The Last Resort Principal

A school should only adopt positive handling techniques when there is no realistic alternative and have considered in the first instance de-escalation, diversion and diffusion strategies.

Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling Plan. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the best interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

It is recommended the school should have documented risk assessment procedures in place (see appendix 1,2 & 3).

Reasonable and Proportionate

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate.

When physical interventions are considered staff should consider the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

Team Teach

Team Teach remains committed to the term 'positive handling' to describe 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. Restraint is only a small part of the framework.

Health and Safety

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the school. All have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. It is recognised that it is not possible to entirely remove risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school and policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important to.

When considering a pupil's behaviour staff should consider the following:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

Structures

It is recommended the following support structures are in place:

- IEP's and Behaviour Support plans kept on file and accessible to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Debrief sessions for all staff to share experiences, concerns and access support from each other, led by a member of the SLT.

Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the statement and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, gender, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in any Pastoral Support Plan or Individual Education Plan.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and it is recognised that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to make a dynamic risk assessment.

The key principals are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;

- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;

Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions.

The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Following a serious incident the school should offer support for all involved. Individuals should take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's internal systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Time needs to be allocated to follow up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective.

Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. Schools have a formal Complaints Procedure. Pupils should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels.

If an allegation is made against a teacher the quick resolution should be a priority to the benefit of all concerned. At any stage of consideration or investigation, all unnecessary delays should be eradicated.

Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Head teacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. The local authority has adopted the Team Teach Model of training. All training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with DfE and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our clients. Once trained, staff should practice regularly.

Recording

A serious incident must be recorded using approved forms. The Incident/Concerns books should be kept in the staff room and the incident sheets are kept in folders in the staff room. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully

- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Records will be retained and cannot be altered, but may be added to after the 24 hour period . They may be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed. A record is written into the Incident Book. This refers to supporting sheets and other relevant information.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head teacher should ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, behaviour management policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures. (See staff and pupil disciplinary policy)

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Behaviour Policy
 Staff/Pupil Disciplinary Policy
 Health & Safety Policy
 Child Protection Policy
 Child Protection Procedures

-Document recommended by LBR for adoption by schools (Summer 2013)

-Document circulated to staff on 3rd September 2013 in advance of approval by the Curriculum Committee on the 14th November 2013.

-Next review date: On receipt of appropriate future guidance from LBR

-Reviewer: Mr Faheem Khan (Assistant Headteacher)