

## Positive Handling Policy

### 1. Introduction

Broadwas Primary School is committed at all times to the highest standards in protecting and safeguarding the welfare of children entrusted to its care.

As part of the ethos of the school, the staff and Governors are committed to:

- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers/guardians and working in partnership with them;
- Listening to and valuing each individual child and protecting and safeguarding their welfare;
- Ensuring that all children can learn and all staff can work in an environment that is safe, secure and free from distraction;
- Ensuring that all members of staff, full time and part time are properly trained and supported.

For the most part this is achieved through the application of the school's Behaviour Policy. However, we recognise that some children may not be able to control their reaction to events as well as others and at times may place themselves or others at risk through their uncontrolled behaviour. Within the school environment, by virtue of their day to day knowledge and contact with children, staff are well placed to be able to intervene, support and protect these children who are not able to control themselves. In exceptional circumstances, staff intervention may involve the use of reasonable force.

If used at all, restraint (or positive handling) should be seen in the context of a further positive action of care and concern. It is used as a last resort option and only in extreme cases when other strategies have been attempted first.

This policy should be considered alongside other relevant school policies, especially the Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

All staff and Governors must know and follow the Worcestershire County Council Education Guidance on the Use of Positive Handling Strategies to Control or Restrain Pupils, which is available to all staff. (Appendix A).

The Headteacher will oversee any incident relating to the implementation of the school policy. In his absence, the Headteacher will clearly identify who will deputise for this role.

The School's Policy on the Use of Positive Handling will be made available to parents and carers on the school website.

The School will help to develop better strategies for the management of children's behaviour if they are identified as needing support to control their challenging behaviour in inappropriate contexts.

This policy will form part of the induction for new staff in school.

## **2. What is The Real Use of Reasonable Force to Control Pupils?**

Teachers and other persons authorised by the Head Teacher to have charge of pupils, may use reasonable force to prevent pupils:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility)
- Causing disruption by engaging in behaviour, which is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline.

Reasonable force has no legal definition but:

- Staff must take into account the circumstances of the incident, age, sex and development of the pupil.
- The degree of force must be proportional to the seriousness of the situation, behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent, and always be the minimum force needed.
- Force could not be justified for a trivial misdemeanour or a situation that could be resolved without it.
- Everyone has the right to self-defence provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force.
- Corporal punishment is illegal.

## **3. Objectives of this Policy**

To provide all staff, governors, parents and pupils with an understanding of care and control and the use of force.

To emphasize that the use of Positive Handling is:

- Part of a positive care and control approach to discipline and welfare.
- Last resort or a necessary expedient option to be used in extreme circumstance.

To ensure that all members of staff or authorised persons who may have to positively handle pupils clearly understand the options and strategies open to them.

#### **4. Who Can Use Reasonable Force?**

We recognise that most of the time Positive Handling will be used infrequently, that is, as a last resort to maintaining a safe environment.

All teaching staff by the nature of their roles are authorised to use Positive Handling as appropriate.

Non-teaching staff require specific authorisation. This authorisation can only be given by the Head Teacher or someone deputising in his/her absence.

#### **5 Circumstances when Reasonable Force Might be Appropriate**

We recognise that some children may not be able to control their reaction to events as well as others and at times may place themselves or others at risk through their uncontrolled behaviour.

As indicated above reasonable force might be appropriate when:

- Action is necessary in self-defence or because of imminent risk of injury. For example:
  - Pupil attacks a member of staff, another pupil, attempts self-injury, pupils are fighting.
  - Pupil running in classroom or corridor in a way that is likely to cause injury to self or others.
- There is a serious and developing risk of damage to property, including the pupil's own property. For example:
  - Pupil is causing or about to cause deliberate damage or vandalism.
  - Pupil is causing or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, rough play, misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- Where pupil's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline. For example:
  - Pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave the classroom.
  - Pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Wherever possible early support from colleagues will be sought. Single handed intervention increases the risk of injury to both parties and does not provide the person intervening with the support of a colleague acting as a critical friend.

Strategies other than force will be considered. For example::

- Providing the disruptive pupil with a choice of locations to exit to
- Giving clear directions
- Allowing 'take-up' time thus allowing a 'face-saving' opportunity
- Removing the audience, ie requesting that other pupils leave the room
- Implementing Team Teach help protocols/script so that another member of staff takes over the strategic lead of the incident, if he/she feels it is appropriate to do so.

## 6 Procedures and Practical Considerations During Specific Incidents

Wherever practicable staff are expected to:

- Use a calm and measured approach
- Give clear direction to the pupil
- Seek assistance from other colleagues at as early a stage as possible
- Staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a pupil have a responsibility to provide a presence, and to offer support and assistance should this be required
- Try to defuse the situation orally and prevent escalation
- Try to remove the pupil from the peer audience
- Attempt to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident
- In as calm a manner as possible, explain that the reason for intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe
- Make it clear that Positive Handling will stop as soon as the pupil calms and the risk assessment indicates it is no longer necessary
- If it is not possible to control the extreme pupil without risk of injury to yourself or others, remove the other pupils who may be at risk and summon assistance.

## 7 Application of Force During Specific Incidents

Methods that staff may use in appropriate circumstances where a risk assessment judgement supports this:

- Shepherding a pupil away by a light touch on the elbow or near the shoulder.
- "Guiding" – remembering this is the positive application of force to control a pupil and would be used in rare circumstances, eg if the pupil is in extreme danger and no other alternative is available, or where reasonable force is used to assist a pupil's movement.
- Holding – for security and to reduce anxiety where there is potential risk, even if the pupil is not yet out of control. The purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation.
- When intervening staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted as aggressive. All holds are devised to minimise the risk of injury. They should not cause pain.
- Where pupils are presenting with more challenging behaviour which may require more restrictive holds, it is important that these techniques

have been delivered by appropriately qualified Team Teach instructors in line with Team Teach protocols.

Staff may not carry out action that might reasonably be expected to injure by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the ability to breathe.
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil.
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint.
- Tripping a pupil.
- Holding or pulling the pupil by the hair.

Other considerations for non-urgent situations where the risk to the people or property is not imminent:

- Consider carefully whether positive handling is the right course of action
- Try to deal with the situation through other strategies before using force.
- Try to defuse and calm the situation to establish good order; the use of positive handling could lead to an escalation of the problem.
- Take into account the age, understanding, personal characteristics of the pupil.
- The use of positive handling to enforce compliance is likely to be increasingly inappropriate with older pupils.
- Never use force as a substitute for good behaviour management.
- In non-urgent situations force should only be used when all other methods have failed.

## **8 Reporting and Recording Incidents**

Should an injury occur as a result of an incident at school, immediate steps will be taken to secure appropriate medical attention. This will be reported and recorded in accordance with Worcestershire policy.

All incidents that result in restraint (where a child has to be held) will be recorded in detail within 24 hours. Followed by Care and control form within 48 hrs. A Positive Handling Plan needs to be put in place or reviewed accordingly. Reports will also be completed and attached from other members of staff present and the pupil(s) involved. The Incident Report will be signed by the Head Teacher and a copy sent to the PPI team at Team Teach Advisors, West Wing, P O Box 73, Wildwood, Worcester, WR5 2YA

The member of staff concerned will report the matter orally to the Headteacher or a senior member of staff as soon as possible.

A staff member will inform parents/carers about the incident by the end of the school day. However, if parents/carers cannot be reached a letter will be sent to inform them of the incident and offer them the opportunity to discuss the matter.

A log will be kept of any occasion when Positive Handling is used. This will be reviewed by the Head teacher or a person with responsibility for Special Needs termly to consider control measures and possible training or further training needs etc.

## **9.0 Debriefing Following Serious Incident**

Pupils and members of staff will be checked for any sign of injury and first aid will be administered if required.

The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise/observe him/her. When the pupil regains complete composure, a senior member of staff and staff involved in the Positive Handling will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain the reason for it.

All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support.

A senior member of staff will provide support to the member of staff involved.

*This policy was approved by the Full Governing Body on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2012.*

*This policy was reviewed and approved by the Governing Body on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017.*

*This policy was reviewed and approved by the Governing Body in March 2018.*