

# Ashton Gate Primary School



## Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy

**Approved by: Full Governing Body**

**Date:** October 2023

**Last reviewed on:** New

**Next review due by:** October 2026

## **Objectives**

At Ashton Gate Primary School, we are committed to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of students and staff. This policy has close links with the Behaviour Policy. It is written to explain our procedures in line with:

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006
- British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) Code of Practice
- DfCS Guidance “Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils” November 2007
- Joint DfES/DH guidance issued July 2002, “The use of restrictive physical interventions for staff working with children and adults who display extreme behaviour in association with learning disability and/or autistic spectrum disorder”
- Behaviour support plan (for individual pupils)
- School Behaviour Policy and Practice.

## **School Expectations**

In our school we create a calm environment to minimise incidents that may require any physical intervention. We de-escalate incidents when they do arise. We only use physical interventions when the risks involved of doing so are outweighed by the risks of not doing so.

## **Positive Behaviour Management**

All staff and volunteers adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to build self-esteem, and promote a safe environment for students and staff. All staff work in partnership with those who know the child to help:

- Find out why this child behaves as he or she does
- Understand the factors that influence this child’s behaviour
- Identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing

This approach helps to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It reduces the incidence of extreme behaviours and makes sure that the use of physical intervention is rare.

## **What is physical intervention (‘reasonable force’)?**

The use of force is illegal if the physical circumstances do not warrant it. The force used should always be the minimum needed to regain and ensure safety and control for everyone involved or present. The Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Safeguarding policies.

## **Purpose of policy**

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils is vital to ensure order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control 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 force may be required. Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is

- necessary, and
- are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

The application of any form of physical control 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 in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Reasonable force 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.

## **Definitions**

### Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, eg, in the care of pupils with physical and/or learning disabilities; in games/PE; to comfort pupils.

### 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 hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

### Physical Control/Restraint

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. It is not possible to set out comprehensively when it is reasonable to use force, or the degree of force that may reasonably be used. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the situation.

## **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;
- be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

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

## **Authorised staff**

At our school, teachers and LSAs are authorised to use physical contact as defined within this policy. Only specifically trained staff (through the Team Teach program) may use reasonable force to manage or control pupils.

Where the use of restraint is necessary on more than one occasion, a positive handling plan will be put in place in agreement with the parents and carers.

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given, in what circumstances and settings they may use force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. The Executive Headteacher will ensure that those authorised are aware of, and understand, what the authorisation entails. Those whom the Executive Headteacher has not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where control or restraint is needed, for example to contact an authorised member of staff.

The office staff will keep a list of all staff who are Team Teach trained. This list will be updated as required when staff are trained.

The training will be renewed as required by Team Teach.

## **Training**

Training for appropriate staff, as defined in section five, will be made available and will be the responsibility of the Executive Headteacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force 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.

## **Strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour**

Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment.

Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain;
- Further verbal reprimand stating that this is the second request for compliance; an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable; an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues;
- Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible, summon assistance;
- Physical intervention. Reasonable force uses the minimum degree of force to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.

## **Escalating situations**

The 1996 Education Act (Section 550 A) stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- 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 (this includes authorised out-of-school activities);

- self-injuring or placing him or herself at risk;
- injuring others;
- causing serious and significant damage to property, including that of the pupil himself or herself;
- committing a criminal offence (even if the pupil is below the age of criminal responsibility).

## **Types of incidents**

Incidents fall into three broad categories:

- (a) where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
- (b) where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property;
- (c) 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.

## **Acceptable measures of physical intervention**

The use of any degree of force can only be deemed reasonable if.

- (a) it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident;
- (b) it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent;
- (c) it is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result;
- (d) the age, understanding and gender of the pupil are taken into account;
- (e) it is likely to achieve the desired result.

Wherever possible assistance should be sought from another member of staff before intervening.

Physical intervention uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property.

This form of physical intervention may involve staff.

- physically interposing themselves between pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- escorting a pupil;
- shepherding a pupil away.

In extreme circumstances, trained staff may need to use more restrictive holds. Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used. Wherever reasonable force is used, staff must keep talking to the pupil.

## **Recording**

Where physical intervention has been used to manage a pupil, a record of the incident **may** need to be kept. Where physical control or restraint has been used a record of the incident **must** be kept using a Physical Intervention Report form (Appendix 1). This record will be stored electronically on Integris for the duration of their time at our school, which will include

- name of pupil
- date, time and place of incident
- a brief description of the incident and actions taken.

This report will be shared with the parents/carers and the incident discussed.

The report will be completed as soon as possible after the incident, normally prior to staff going off duty and be signed by all staff involved and the Executive Headteacher and should be available to governors.

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a senior colleague or representative of their professional association/union when compiling a report.

Where staff have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force they should have access to counselling and support through the school's Employee Assistance Programme.

## **Action after an incident**

The Executive 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:

- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by the LADO or First Response)
- Staff Facing Allegations of Misconduct Procedure

- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure
- Health and Safety including an Individual Risk Assessment

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**

Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the School's Complaints Procedure. The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints but other governors will not be involved as a complaint may require further action on their part.

### **Monitoring of incidents**

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use reasonable force, this will always be recorded and documented. 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 can only be contained by the use of reasonable force.

This process will also address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Full Governing Body.

**Appendix A**

**PHYSICAL INTERVENTION – INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Year:

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Location of Incident:

Describe incident in detail:

Restraint described:

Why was restraint needed?

