



Worksop Priory C of E Primary Academy



Positive Handling Policy

February 2025

Summary of changes

Date:	Summary of changes
9/1/25	Removal of Covid19 historic guidance Updated roles and responsibilities to reflect local authority training guidance.

Statement of intent

At Worksop Priory C of E Primary Academy, we believe that it is essential to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, managing violence through control and restraint may be necessary.

This policy acknowledges that, regrettably, situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use positive handling, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to manage conflict when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that actions such as positive handling and reasonable force are used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- ✓ The Education Act 2011
- ✓ The Children Act 1989
- ✓ The Equality Act 2010
- ✓ This policy has due regard to the following guidance:
- ✓ DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force in schools'
- ✓ DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- ✓ DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- ✓ Behaviour Policy
- ✓ SEND Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The **Governing Body** is responsible for:

- ✓ Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- ✓ Evaluating logs of events requiring positive handling on the CPOMS in order to analyse how and when positive handling is used and identify any trends
- ✓ Reviewing this policy on an annual basis
- ✓ Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the Headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- ✓ Deciding whether members of staff require additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities, considering the needs of pupils.
- ✓ Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling
- ✓ Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the Allegations of Abuse Policy
- ✓ Maintaining the records of the use of reasonable force and evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used.
- ✓ Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities for completion of a physical intervention form when reasonable force has been used.
- ✓ Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the Governing Body, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force

The **SENCO** is responsible for:

- ✓ Providing training to members of staff on how to handle pupils that require it with SEND
- ✓ Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force
- ✓ Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions
- ✓ Developing individual behaviour plans and risk assessments (in conjunction with the class teacher) for more vulnerable pupils and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these
- ✓ Ensuring that staff understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions
- ✓ Evaluating on a termly basis how physical intervention is used with regard to pupils with SEND, in collaboration with the Headteacher.

Class teachers / Teaching Assistants are responsible for:

- ✓ Avoiding known triggers for children whose behaviour is at risk of dysregulation
- ✓ Developing and using appropriate distraction techniques to avoid the need for using reasonable force, where possible.
- ✓ Completing accurate records of the use of reasonable force in a physical intervention form.
- ✓ Making parents aware when positive handling has been used with their child and the reasons.

Parents are responsible for:

- ✓ Liaising with staff regarding appropriate distraction techniques for their child
- ✓ Informing school of any incidents that have occurred before school that may affect the child's behaviour at school
- ✓ Avoiding known triggers for their child

The **DSL** is responsible for:

- ✓ Providing additional reasonable force training, where the headteacher deems it appropriate
- ✓ Ensuring all members of staff use reasonable force in accordance with this policy
- ✓ Reviewing this policy in liaison with the Headteacher and Governing Body

3. What is positive handling?

For the purpose of this policy, 'positive handling' is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting pupils and limiting damage to property. The Legal framework and national guidance often refers to the 'use of force' – this policy uses the term 'positive handling' whenever possible.

Positive handling is used in the school to:

- ✓ Restrain a pupil who has lost emotional self-control until the situation is diffused
- ✓ Limit the amount of harm that the pupil involved can do to their self or others
- ✓ Limit the amount of damage that the pupil involved could do to property
- ✓ Demonstrate to pupils that they are within a safe environment in which adults can contain pupils' anger and other erratic emotions
- ✓ Protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful

Positive handling will be limited to emergency situations and used only as a measure of last resort. Where positive handling is required, the school will abide to the following guidance:

- ✓ Initial intervention will always be without force.
- ✓ Any physical intervention will follow other appropriate actions.
- ✓ Staff will take a calm and measured approach in all situations.

Positive handling will never be invasive, humiliating, flirtatious in nature or take a form which could be seen as punishment. It will 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.

4. What is reasonable force?

There is no statutory definition of reasonable force; it will always depend on the circumstance of the case. The use of reasonable force is only acceptable to control pupils or restrain them. 'Control' refers to either passive physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm.

'Restraint' refers to physically bringing a pupil under control, such as holding them back. This is typically used in more extreme circumstances, such as to separate two pupils fighting. The degree of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. age. Staff members will always use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances of the incidents. All incidents that involve the use of reasonable force will be reported to the Headteacher.

The school is able to use reasonable force in situations when:

- ✓ Disruptive children must be removed from the classroom and have previously refused to leave.
- ✓ Members of staff need to control disruptive pupils on school trips, or similar that is causing a risk to themselves, others or the environment in which they are in.
- ✓ Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom when doing so would lead to a risk to their safety.
- ✓ A pupil is attacking a member of staff or another pupil.
- ✓ A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff must intervene to prevent this.
- ✓ A pupil is causing significant damage to property or the learning environment
- ✓ Physical intervention will never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

5. Use of positive handling and reasonable force

The decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances. Any use of positive handling and/or reasonable force will be appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances of the incident.

Staff will always use a variety of techniques aimed at avoiding or defusing situations in which physical intervention might become necessary, where appropriate. When it is appropriate to do so, Staff will always calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it was necessary in a non-threatening manner. Staff will never give the impression that they are acting out of anger or are punishing the child. All staff members will develop strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and situations, which they will use to diffuse and calm a situation.

In non-urgent situations, staff will always try and deal with a situation through other strategies before using force. Staff members will always avoid acting in a way that could cause injury; however, dependent on the circumstances, this may not always be possible

Where a member of staff believes that they are at risk, such as where an injury is likely to occur, they will not intervene and will call for assistance from another staff member;

- ✓ If emergency intervention is necessary when there is a high risk of pupils being injured or property being damaged.
- ✓ If emergency intervention is required, a member of staff will use other methods of defusing the situation, without physically intervening, until assistance arrives.

Following the event, the pupil involved may be subject to separate disciplinary procedures, in which strategies should be formed to help avoid reoccurrence of such incidents. Where necessary, external agencies, such as the LA or the police if a crime has been committed, will be informed of the incident.

Positive handling techniques which present an unacceptable risk and are therefore not used include:

- ✓ The 'seated double embrace' where two staff members force a pupil into a sitting position and lean them forward whilst a third staff member monitors their breathing
- ✓ The 'double basket-hold' in which a pupil's arms are held across their chest
- ✓ The 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the pupil's nose

6. SEND

The school will have due consideration to the risks posed by the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND in terms of positive handling.

The SENCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy at all times.

To reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour that can lead to the use of reasonable force, the SENCO will establish individual behaviour plans for pupils with SEND. These will be reviewed annually with SENCO, class teacher and parents.

7. Reporting incidents

A detailed written report will be kept of any incidents where force is used. Immediately following an incident, the member(s) of staff involved will verbally report the incident to the Headteacher and provide a comprehensive written record of the situation as soon as possible, on CPOMS and the positive handling log.

The written report of the incident must be thorough, including as much detail as possible as to what had happened before, during and after the incident, and describing any injuries incurred due to the event. Every member of staff involved, or witnessing the incident must provide a written report.

The parents of any children where reasonable force has been applied will be informed of the incident as soon as reasonably possible.

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects the use of positive handling or reasonable force, where another member of staff is actively involved in physical intervention, they will report this to the Headteacher immediately. Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school's Allegations Against Staff Policy.

The Headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

8. Complaints

All members of staff will be made fully aware of the consequences and legal repercussions that can occur following the incorrect use of positive handling and force.

All complaints regarding the use of positive handling or force will be investigated in a thorough and speedy manner. The person making the complaint is responsible for proving that their allegations are true, and therefore, it is not for the member of staff to prove that their actions were made reasonably. In extreme circumstances, parents may take civil action or pursue a criminal prosecution. In the case where a member of staff has acted within the law, this will provide a defense to any civil or criminal prosecution.

Members of staff accused of using excessive force will not be automatically suspended as a response to the allegations. The following procedure will be adhered to:

- ✓ Careful consideration will be given to whether the case warrants a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved.
- ✓ The Governing Body will always take into account whether a staff member has acted within the law when considering whether or not to take disciplinary action against a staff member involved in an incident.
- ✓ Where a member of staff is suspended, the school will ensure that the staff member has access to a named contact that can provide support and guidance.
- ✓ The school will provide pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher, DSL and governing board.

The Headteacher will review records of the use of positive handling and reasonable force on a termly basis, to analyse the frequency of occurrence and determine what further measures could be taken to prevent these.