



Positive Handling Policy

March 2022

Policy Statement

The well-being, welfare and safety of all pupils and staff at Parklands Community Primary and Nursery School are of paramount importance. At Parklands, we are committed to a positive behaviour policy which encourages children to make positive behaviour choices. It is recognised that the vast majority of pupils in our school respond well to our behaviour and conduct expectations.

It is acknowledged that, in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of a physical intervention may be required to keep a child safe. The purpose of this policy is to clarify the systems in place for all teaching and support staff, to support them in relation to the use of positive handling to manage challenging behaviour. It is also intended to inform: children; their parent(s); carer(s); families and other relevant stakeholders of the legal framework and school staff position in relation to positive handling, and systems and procedures that we follow at Parklands.

There is a common misconception that any physical contact with a child is in some way unlawful. This is NOT true and never has been.

“It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary: holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school; when comforting a distressed pupil; when a pupil is being congratulated or praised; to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument; to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; to give first aid.”

Page 5, The Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies – July 2011

Our policy for physical intervention is based upon the following principles:

- Physical intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required.
- Physical intervention must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents must be recorded and reported to the Head teacher as soon as possible;
- Parents/Carers will be informed on the day of the incident.

The Legal Framework

The Legal Framework Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 allows ‘teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Head Teacher who have control or charge of pupils to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Causing injury to his/herself or others;
- Committing an offence;
- Damaging property; prejudicing the maintenance of good order & discipline.

Underpinning values

Everyone attending or working at Parklands 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 Parklands 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 are given support to understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in the school.

Team Teach

The TEAM TEACH system is recognised by the Local Authority and accredited through BILD – British Institute of Learning Disabilities. Staff undergo course (the length depending upon the needs of the children they are working with) led by qualified trainers with a refresher course undertaken every three years.

Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible. A list of staff members trained in Team Teach is kept centrally by the school.

Positive handling, Physical Restraint and Reasonable Force

The term 'positive handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. 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.

The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. Restraint is typically used in more extreme circumstances.

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force'. It will always depend upon the circumstances of each individual case. However, for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it at Parklands, the clarification provided in the DfE guidance document 'use of reasonable force', 2013 is used.

The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force.

The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and must be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Whether the degree of force used is reasonable will also be determined by the child's age; gender; stature; medical history; level of physical, emotional and intellectual development; special needs; and social context.

The application of any form of physical control inevitably carries an attached risk of unintended harm and this places staff and the school at risk of potential litigation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for positive handling. Staff need to be aware that they are responsible for:

- assessing risks (dynamic risk assessment) related to individual circumstances which may arise in the course of their day-to-day duties, and
- making judgements about when the use of force is **necessary** and the degree of force which may be regarded as **proportionate and reasonable** to manage a situation

Our Approach

At Parklands, we aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in managing situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our Behaviour Policy.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical 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 be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They must, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure all pupils' safety and wellbeing.

Staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention. Staff should understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment that is calm and supportive, especially when dealing with children who may have emotional and behavioural needs, which may increase their aggression.

All staff should understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child, which lie beneath the behaviour, as well as the behaviour itself. If a child is behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every non-physical strategy will be used to manage the behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation. Staff should view physical intervention with a child as a 'last resort' and for the purposes of maintaining a safe environment.

Primary Prevention

In the first instance, the staff will follow these approaches:

- The consistent use of positive behaviour management strategies in line with the school's behaviour policy
- 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
- Developing staff expertise through a programme of Continuous Professional Development
- Exploring pupils' preferences relating to the way/s in which they are managed.

Secondary Prevention

This involves the recognition of the early stages of a behavioural sequence that is likely to develop into violence or aggression and in employing higher level 'diffusion' techniques to avert any further escalation.

Where there is clear evidence that behaviour is escalating rapidly into aggression, violence or high levels of unsafe behaviour, the use of positive handling at an early stage in the sequence may be justified if it is clear that:

- Primary prevention has not been effective, and
- The risks associated with **NOT** using positive handling are greater than the risks of using positive handling, and
- Other appropriate methods, which do not involve positive handling, have been tried without success.

Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment. 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; (this includes negotiation, care and concern)
- 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 from other staff.
- Positive handling. **Reasonable, proportionate and necessary** force must be used in line with legislation and guidance.

Physical Intervention

Physical restraint should be applied as an act of care and intervention with the intention of re-establishing the ability to follow verbal instructions as soon as possible and, at the same time, allows the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as punishment. Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this. What constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. Teachers should apply the training they receive to de-escalate where possible then use the appropriate holds as practised in the training. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below

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 s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance.

Do not

- 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 a way that could be viewed as sexually inappropriate conduct;
- 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
- Use physical restraint or intervention as a punishment.

Examples of when this guidance could apply

- * when a pupil attacks a member of staff
- * when a pupil attacks another pupil
- * when a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism
- * when a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of resources or objects (for example, throwing objects from the balcony or misusing equipment on the sports field)
- * when a pupil absconds from class or tries to leave the school and is at risk of harm
- * when a pupil persistently refuses to obey a staff's instruction to leave a classroom
- * when a pupil is seriously disrupting a lesson through physical outbursts.

The procedure for restrictive physical intervention set out below must always be followed:

- Give the child clear warning. Offer an escape route from the situation, for example, through calming or following instructions;
- Once the restrictive physical intervention is judged necessary it should happen quickly, smoothly and confidently;
- Always remain calm and talk in a conciliatory tone. Ignore any abuse and let the high emotional state run its course;
- Once things begin to calm, it can be coupled with significant changes in restrictive physical intervention, this should be on staff terms, not when demanded by the child;
- The aim is to talk through the situation and discuss the behaviour that caused the whole episode;
- The extent of force used should be no more than necessary to control the situation.

Personal Safety

There may be times when a member of staff may need to defend themselves from a physical assault or to 'break away' from a child who has taken hold of them (e.g. biting). It is acknowledged that with some disengagement techniques pupils may encounter some minimal discomfort when appropriate release techniques are used. However, this is very brief and poses less of a risk than the behaviour they are employed in response to e.g. biting. Any minimal discomfort (example scratching and bruising) to the child should not automatically be considered as excessive force by the member of staff.

Post Incident Debrief

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of our school to offer support to all involved.. Following this, a debrief is an opportunity for learning and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other peoples' perspective. Following a serious incident, we will endeavour to:

- ensure the person is somewhere quiet and calm;
- allow the person to tell us what has happened first;
- give our (or other's) perspective of a situation;
- connect the behaviour to the drivers through careful questioning, ie, we will seek to discover not just *what* happened, but *why* it happened;
- explore alternative ways that a situation could have been dealt with;
- ensure that plans are put in place (or reviewed if a plan already exists) to help us deal with any future incidents;
- consider the emotional wellbeing of the pupil and how best to re-engage them back to their normal working environment.

As individuals, we all vary in how much support we need after an unpleasant incident. Generally, a member of senior staff would expect to talk to staff and children involved (if appropriate) in any incidents involving violence. If members of staff need time to rest or compose themselves, then the Headteacher will make arrangements for the class group to be supported.

Recording

- All incidents of unacceptable behaviour should be recorded electronically on CPOMS.
- All serious incidents or incidents involving restraint will be recorded in the Bound and Numbered Book which is kept in the Butterfly Room. The page number will also be referenced in the CPOMS incident log.

Within these recording strategies, all details must be recorded by witnesses within twenty-four hours and signed by at least two members of staff. The Head teacher also needs to be informed.

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required.

Parents

Parents will be informed following serious incidents. Where possible, parents should be informed by a staff member involved in the incident. If for any reason that this is not possible, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will inform parents of the incident.

When there is concern about a child, parents will be invited to contribute to a risk assessment and Positive Handling Plan. Written parental agreement will form part of this. Parents will be informed of the school's policies.

Complaints and Allegations

In the event of an allegation that a member of staff has used unreasonable force, or where a child has been injured during positive handling, the Headteacher should conduct a full enquiry or undertake a consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

For other types of complaint relating to an incident, the normal procedures of the school will be used and these will be made clear to all parent(s)/carer(s).

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments are required for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong.

When considering a pupil's behaviour, staff will think about the following questions:

- 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?

Positive Handling Plans (PHP)

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. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective should be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered along with the child's Educational Health care Plan (EHCP) and any other planning document relevant to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.

Searching pupils - *Power to search pupils without consent*

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following 'prohibited items':

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules. Under these circumstances The Education Act 2011 extends the power of staff to search students without their consent. Searches will be conducted by two members of staff, at least one of whom will be the same sex as the student.

Students will be offered the opportunity to have their parents/carers present. For further information the DfE have provided guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation. A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

Links with other policies

This Positive Handling policy is linked to our:

- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Anti-bullying policy

Appendix A:**Positive Handling Plan**

Name of child	DOB	Year group	
Date plan started:		Date of most recent plan:	
Effective strategies previously used:			
Strategies not recommended:			
Physical techniques used effectively:			
Physical techniques used which proved ineffective or problematic			

Date	Anticipated risk	Strategy to use	Effectiveness

Signed

Teacher:

Print Name _____ Signature _____

Parent:

Print Name _____ Signature _____

Support Staff (if applicable):

Print Name _____ Signature _____

Appendix B: **Parklands Community Primary & Nursery School Supportive Touch Continuum**

Level 1 Team Teach : Everyday supportive Touch - Prompts			
Positive Touch	Hugs, shoulder support, elbow support, hand hold etc The school recognises that the only appropriate places for supportive touch are on the shoulders, arms and back.		PH plans are referred to and updated regularly as required.
Supportive Hugs	The school- hug is a sideways hug whereby the member of staff places their hands on the child's shoulder, this type of hug prevents the child from turning themselves towards the member of staff and thus engaging in a 'front' embrace. Some children ask for a hug or will calm down well in response to being hugged or squeezed, hugs can prevent too much excitement or calming from slight frustration. Children should not be refused hugs but if staff have concerns about this it should be discussed with a member of SLT.	This includes holding a child's hand eg to prevent them from running on ahead when crossing a road. Guiding them in 'finger play" to interrupt their attempts to bite their fingers when they are upset. An element of reasonable force is being used in the above circumstances and the adult is effectively stopping a child from doing something they want to do. They are doing so with the minimum amount of contact, for the minimum amount of time in order to keep the child safe and act in their best interest. <u>Level 1 Team teach guidance</u>	Some children will not walk holding hands but will allow an adult to hold onto a sleeve or back of a coat/jumper. It is preferable to hold a hand and so this type of support must be recorded in the child's PH. If a child has preference for hand squeezing it must be recorded and Team Teach guidance must be followed at all times. A child's PH plan must include ways in which the child is helped to calm and may therefore include an element of Everyday Supportive Touch.

Level 2 Team Teach : Supportive Touch - Guides

<p>Supportive Guides</p>	<p>Caring Cs: open hands to move a child away from risk or towards something appropriately. Gentle and caring guides to support children’s movements. Guiding using open hands and one or two of the child’s upper arms. Elbow guides / Shoulder guides. Caring C with elbow or shoulder guide: One arm is guided by a Caring C while a hand is gently placed on the opposite shoulder or elbow.</p> <p>Guides would be reasonable, proportionate and necessary given the situation and knowledge of the child’s behavioural responses.</p> <p>The child will be mostly compliant and accept the support.</p>	<p>Guiding or holding a hand and moving it down to a child’s side if they are trying to hit out or take hold of another child.</p> <p>Supportively holding one or both hands momentarily to interrupt harm to self or others.</p> <p>Guiding a child out of a classroom or busy environment.</p> <p>The amount of support being used in these physical interventions will be commensurate with the level of resistance from the child and always in the child’s best interest.</p> <p><u>Level 2 Team teach guidance</u></p>	<p>These guides would not normally be recorded in the class BNB.</p> <p>If the child is compliant this is not recorded in the BNB however if the child begins to resist and more reasonable force is used then it must be recorded as Level 3 below.</p>
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Level 3 Team Teach : Resistant Supportive Touch – Escorts and Restraints

<p>Escorts (non restrictive physical intervention)</p>	<p>Caring Cs: open hands to move a child to move away from risk or towards something appropriately. If the child is non-compliant and greater support is needed to keep them safe but 'Caring Cs' remains appropriate.</p> <p>Single Person Escort is a more supportive physical intervention. Adults hands are supporting the child's lower arms. It is not intended to be entirely restrictive and should still be and feel supportive and caring. In the majority of incidents this is the most restrictive intervention used in school.</p> <p>2 person escort (friendly hold). One adult supports on each side of the child mirroring each other's support with the arms lowered to reduce pressure. The escort would be Reasonable, proportionate and necessary given the situation and knowledge of the child's behavioural responses.</p> <p>These should be recorded as an ESCORT</p>	<p>Where a child's behavioural responses indicate that this level of intervention may be necessary, a positive handling plan will be drawn up. This will be in consultation with parents, with the aim of minimising and then further reducing such occurrences with bespoke de escalation strategies.</p> <p>Only used in order to keep people safe in the child's best interest. It would be an increasingly dangerous situation when the child has refused other forms of support and proactive strategies. Where resistance to a physical restriction being placed on a child's movement becomes greater, or the situation in which it is employed becomes more serious (with greater risk of injury to any person), "restrictive physical intervention" (Restraint).</p> <p><u>Level 3 Team teach guidance</u></p>	<p>All incidents resulting in <i>restrictive physical interventions</i> must be recorded in Class BNB.</p> <p>All incidents will be reflected on and reviewed by the child's class team and anyone else involved in the incident, including reference to the child's point of view on the incident. A member of SLT will support staff in this process in order to minimise the likelihood of a recurrence of incidents. Post incident support procedures will be in place.</p> <p>The Behaviour Lead will regularly review the number of incidents of restrictive physical interventions and entry's in the Class BNB and meet with staff to offer further support where necessary.</p>
<p>Restraints (Restrictive Physical Intervention)</p>	<p>A Single adult holds a child to restrict their movement - the child is non compliant and at risk of immediate harm to themselves or to others if adults do not intervene.</p> <p>2 adult restrictive techniques - the child is non compliant and as risk of immediate harm to self or others if adults do not intervened.</p>		<p>Physical Interventions will be monitored, reviewed, collated and reported upon to work towards a co-ordinated reduction in incidents.</p>

	<p>The restraint would be would be reasonable, proportionate and necessary given the situation and knowledge of the child's behavioural responses and potential for harm.</p> <p>These should be recorded as a RESTRAINT</p>		
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In addition to the above, there will be times when significant behavioural incidents occur in school, in which a child becomes anxious, angry, upset or distressed and which are resolved without staff using physical contact. If such an incident occurs, a school incident log will be made via CPOMS, data will be uploaded to the school's monitoring system and information will be shared with parents, so that they will be aware that their child has experienced some difficulty that day. Staff at Parklands will reflect critically on such incidents to consider whether the child has any underlying unmet needs which have to be addressed, and will work to identify and respond to these in liaison with parents/carers and if required, additional multidisciplinary professionals.