



Use of Positive Handling

At Forest Academy the use of positive handling is a protective measure and is only used when other methods have failed or are likely to fail. The use of physical intervention is to prevent more serious harm from occurring.

Staff at Forest Academy recognise that the use of positive handling is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety and well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. Our policy should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Child Protection policies.

Aims of the Use of Positive handling Policy

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations

Definitions

Control: either passive physical contact e.g. blocking a pupil's path or standing between pupils or active physical contact, leading a pupil by the hand or ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the small of the back.

Restraint : Physically preventing a pupil from continuing what they are doing, usually after verbal commands have failed or likely to fail, this is used in extreme circumstances.

The Department for Education's Use of Positive handling Guidance to Head Teachers, staff and Governing Bodies, July 2013, enables school staff to use positive handling to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. Some examples where positive handling can be used are to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

Schools cannot use positive handling as a punishment.

- committing any offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil)
- causing personal injury to any person (including the pupil themselves)
- causing damage to the property of any person (including the pupil themselves)
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school, and among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

The Act also defines to whom the power applies as follows:

- All staff who work at the school
- any other person whom the Principal has authorised to have control or charge of pupils including unpaid volunteers

These powers can be used when pupils are on school premises or on school trips.

Positive handling

Comprises of two concepts. Firstly that positive handling is necessary or honestly believed to be necessary and the positive handling used must be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent.

Physical restraint does not include the use of physical prompting or guidance when the child is happy to comply and the aim is to assist him/her participate appropriately in activities.

The use of physical restraint or positive handling may be used when there is a clear risk of a pupil coming to serious harm.

If a pupil or member of staff is injured in any way during the use of restraint or positive handling a record must be made in the accident book.

If positive handling or restraint is used on a pupil, s/he should be checked for injuries by another member of staff, preferably by the Surgery staff.

Examples of situations where it may be necessary to use positive handling:

- Where a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- A pupil is damaging property or is about to do so
- A pupil's behaviour is likely to cause an accident with injury or damage
- Where a pupil attempts to leave a classroom or the school and allowing them to leave would create a risk to that pupil's or others' safety or allowing the pupil to leave would disrupt other pupils in the class or school.
- Where a pupil has been asked to leave the classroom for disciplinary reasons and refuses to do so
- Where a pupil is seriously disrupting a lesson
- Where a pupil is seriously disrupting a school event or visit

Wherever possible, staff are advised to use Control. For example if two younger pupils are fighting it may be that stepping in between them may bring things to a halt or if a pupil is about to leave the room without permission it may be best to stand in the doorway to block the exit.

A member of staff should also be mindful of his or her own safety and that of any of the other pupils affected by the disruptive conduct. If the member of staff does not feel confident that s/he can safely use positive handling or restraint in an extreme situation, the focus should shift to removing other pupils from harm.

Powers to Search

Please see policy on search. In general terms the law states that children can be searched without their consent for items which are prohibited, weapons, drugs stolen items and items of a dangerous nature. Pupils can be searched with consent for items which are banned by the school rules.

The Department for Education have a guidance document which lays out strict procedures for searching.

Physical restraint must not be used:

- As a form of punishment
- When a less severe response might have effectively resolved the situation

Physical restraint must not be considered synonymous with physical contact. The guidance by the DfE states clearly that physical contact is a normal part of school work. Situations when physical contact is necessary include:

- Demonstrations in PE
- Administering First Aid
- Offering comfort to distressed pupil

NB Staff should be aware that for some pupils touching may be unwelcome and be misinterpreted despite good intentions

Records

It is important that detailed records are kept of any incident where a member of staff uses positive handling or restraint on a pupil. The Principal will contact the parents or guardian of the pupil involved as soon as it is practicably possible to do so, unless this would put a child at risk of harm in which case the local authority would be contacted.

Members of staff using positive handling or restraint on a pupil should record it on a serious incident form.

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