



*A lifelong love of learning;
a love of life.*

THE USE OF PHYSICAL OR RESTRICTIVE INTERVENTION: Positive Handling Policy

September 2023

Bramber Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment.

Objectives

- To maintain the safety of all pupils and staff
- To prevent serious damage to property
- To prevent serious breaches of school discipline where learning and the well-being of pupils will be affected

This policy is shared and communicated to all staff and parents.

Minimising the Need to Reasonable Force (Positive Handling)

Use of reasonable force (positive handling) is only used as a last resort, underpinned by sound risk assessments. Procedures are in place at Bramber Primary School to create a calm and orderly environment and supportive school climate that lessens the risk and threat of violence of any kind. Effective relationships are developed between staff and pupils and RHSE/PHSE activities support pupils in managing conflict and coping with feelings. Staff are also given guidance and training in how to manage pupil behaviour.

Definitions

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 Child protection/Safeguarding Policy

There is no statutory definition of 'reasonable force'. It depends on:-

- whether the force used is justified in the context in which the misbehaviour takes place.
- whether the force used is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent.

In schools force is generally used for two different purposes - to 'control' and to 'restrain' pupils

Control means either passive contact (standing between pupils) or active physical contact (leading a pupil by hand or arm)

Restraint is when staff physically prevent a pupil from continuing what they were doing when told to stop, or when involved in a fight

School staff should always avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring a pupil.

Who can use Reasonable Force?

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on an organised visit.

Deciding Whether to Use Force

Staff should only use force when:

- the potential consequences of not intervening were sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force
- the chance of achieving the desired result by other means were low
- the risk associated with not using force outweighed those of using force

Staff in charge of pupils must ensure that clear guidance is given to volunteer helpers working with pupils who present particular risks to themselves or others, such as those with SEND or severe behavioural difficulties.

According to Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 reasonable force can be used in the following circumstances:-

- where a criminal offence is being committed
- self defence or where pupils may injure themselves or others
- where the behaviour is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among the pupils
- a risk of significant damage to property
- where the action occurs on the school premises or during an authorised activity off the premises
- when exercising the statutory power (sect 45 - Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006) to search pupils without their consent for weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen property.

NOTE: It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Schools can use reasonable force 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 trip
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing them 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 on the playground
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts
- prevent a child from throwing items and destroying property

Communicating the School's Approach to the Use of Force

This is done through the behaviour policy and this policy. Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a student but makes policies available to parents.

Using Force

At all times the degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result and it can not be used to prevent trivial misbehaviour. The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use should always depend on the circumstances of each case.

If at all possible, prior to physical intervention, pupils should be warned that force may have to be used.

Staff Training

The school will decide whether a member of staff requires specialised training in the use of force. Local authority advice can be sought in these circumstances.

Most Bramber Primary School staff are training in the use of positive handling 'Team Teach' approaches, which involve guiding the pupil using elbow holds, caring Cs, T wraps and hugs.

Physical Intervention can take a number of forms, for example:

- physically interposing between pupils
- standing in the way of a pupil
- leading a pupil away from an incident by the hand
- holding, pushing or pulling
- holding the tops of both arms or both hands

- sitting the child on your lap with a 'hug' to restrict movement and calm the child down (Keep your chin away from the head.)
- going for a walk so that the child is doing the holding - 'which finger will you hold?' - trying to negotiate
- taking shoes off if there is a chance you will get kicked

Advice for Staff

- 1) Stay calm and keep repeating the request to calm down in a quiet voice. Try to de-escalate the situation.
- 2) Get down to the child's level if possible.
- 3) Remember physical restraint is a last resort and try to ensure another adult is available if the situation requires it.
- 4) Never get involved physically with a child when you are angry - hand over to someone else.
- 5) Force that should NOT be used includes holding round the neck, kicking, slapping or punching, forcing limbs against joints, tripping or holding by hair or ear, holding face down on the ground.
- 6) Any form of force or restraint that is likely to injure a pupil (particularly anything that could constrict breathing) should only be used in extreme emergencies and where there is no viable alternative.

What about other physical contact with pupils?

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 are:

- Holding a hand
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Giving praise or congratulation
- Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE
- To give first aid

Pupils with SEND

The SENCO is directly involved in reviewing the needs and management programme of pupils with SEN and behavioural difficulties. An individual risk assessment is created, where it is known that force is more likely to be used to restrain a particular pupil, such as with a pupil with SEN or poor behaviour. This gives clear guidance on 'positive handling plans' and takes into account issues identified on a pupil's EHCP or IEP. Staff coming into contact with such vulnerable pupils need to be made aware of situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and what de-escalation strategies are likely to work. Parents are made aware that such a risk assessment is in place for their child and the school seeks express consent from the parent to inform staff about their child and acknowledging that physical restraint may at times be necessary.

Pupils experiencing difficulties should also be given guidance/ strategies to cope when faced with times of crisis. Eg The use of Zones of Regulation.

Recording and Reporting

Significant Incidents

A bound and numbered book is kept in the school office to record any serious, significant incidents. The record should be compiled by the member of staff involved with the Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher checking the record. The member of staff involved has a copy of the completed incident form.

An incident is significant and requires a written record when the answer is 'yes' to any of the following questions:-

- Did the incident cause injury or ongoing distress to a pupil or member of staff?

- Even though there was no apparent injury or distress, was the incident sufficiently serious in its own right to require a written record?
- Is a written record needed to justify use of force? (especially when judgement finely balanced)
- Were other agencies involved, such as the police?

All Incidents

- All injuries (staff and pupils) are recorded in line with other school procedures (see first aid policy, etc).
- All behaviours require a log entry as this acts as a record of all behaviours in school and can help identify and analyse patterns of pupil behaviour or staff training needs.

Parents, as soon as is practicable, are told when and where the incident took place, why force was used, what force was used, whether there were any injuries and what follow up action (support and /or disciplinary) was being taken in relation to their child.

If a child is subject to a care order the local authority is also informed. (If reporting the incident to a parent may result in significant harm to the child then the LA is informed.) If appropriate other external agencies are informed such as the Safeguarding LA Officer, the Health and Safety Executive etc.

Post Incident Support

Care is taken after an incident to ensure both staff and pupils are supported including meeting immediate medical needs, rebuilding relationships and reflecting on the incident so lessons can be learned.

Heads report incidents to the Governing Body and they monitor incidents where force has been used.

Complaints and Allegations

If a complaint is made reference is made to the school's Complaints Procedure and guidance on dealing with allegations of abuse by staff (Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). Further guidance is available in DfE 'Use of Reasonable Force - Advice for Headteachers, Governing Bodies and staff' July 2013.

This document should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies, the Safeguarding policy & Child Protection procedures, DfE Non Statutory Guidance for Schools - Use of Reasonable Force (2013).

Other relevant guidance and standards include:

- 'Behaviour in Schools' guidance, 2022
- 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention: Children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties in health and social care services and special education settings', 2019
- 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' guidance, 2022
- 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion' guidance, 2022