

Bounds Green School



Positive Handling Policy

Staff Leads	HCB/MR
Governor Responsible	Martin Tait
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Signed	

Bounds Green Rd, London N11 2QG

Tel no: 020-8888-8824

Fax no: 020-8365-7986

www.boundsgreenschool.co.uk

Contents

1. Introduction
 2. Legal Framework
 3. Definitions
 4. Purpose of The Policy
 5. Training
 6. Risk Assessment
 7. Action Steps whenever a child is likely to be / is being handled or restrained
 8. Recording
 9. Power to search pupils without consent
 10. Complaints
 11. Statement for parents
 12. Further Guidance Documents
- Appendix 1 - When might it be appropriate to use Positive Handling?
- Appendix 2 - Action Steps whenever a child is likely to be / is being handled or restrained
- Appendix 3 – Record of restraint recording form

Bounds Green School: Positive Handling Policy

1. Introduction

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils who may need to be handled.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils specifically the school's Behaviour Policy.

2. Legal framework

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 "enables school staff to use force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

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

The definition of 'school staff' applies to (as defined in section 95 of the Act):

- 1. any teacher who works at the school, and
- 2. any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This includes;
 - a. support staff whose job normally includes supervising pupils such as teaching assistants, learning support assistants, learning mentors and lunchtime supervisors
 - b. can also include people to whom the head has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as paid members of staff whose job does not normally involve supervising pupils (for example catering or premises-related staff) and unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits)

3. Definitions

(a) Physical contact

Situations in which proper physical contact takes place between staff and pupils; e.g. in games/ PE or to comfort pupils.

(b) 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.

(c) Positive handling

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to pupils, staff or property or if good order is being seriously prejudiced.

(d) Reasonable force

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.

Force is usually used either to **control or restrain**. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.

Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

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

4. Purpose of the policy

Good professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in school respond positively to the discipline practised by the staff via the behaviour policy. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff. It is also acknowledged that in **exceptional** circumstances staff may be in a situation where the use of positive handling may be required. Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in our School:

- i. clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where positive handling is necessary and
- ii. are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur.

The application of any form of positive handling places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy (see appendix 1 for examples). Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and **to seek alternative strategies wherever possible** in order to prevent the need for positive handling. (See appendix 2)

The staff in our school recognise that the use of Positive Handling is only one of the strategies, **and the last strategy**, available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline (see behaviour policy).

Positive Handling 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.

5. Training

Positive Handling training will be made available to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the Deputy Headteacher/Inclusion Leader. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken and the system of communication and call for assistance if required.

6. Risk Assessment/Pastoral Support Plan

Although most young people in our school will never require any form of Positive handling, staff may have to deal with some young people who exhibit disturbed, distressed and distressing behaviour. If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a way that may require the use of reasonable force, it is our intention to plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning, through either a Risk Assessment or Pastoral Support Plan, needs to address:

- Calming/ de-escalation strategies for that child
- Triggers for that child
- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary, as taught through training);
- Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take;
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for refresher training or guidance);
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate.

Examples of preventative steps can be found in appendix 2

7. Action Steps whenever a child is likely to be / is being handled or restrained

- Tell the pupil who is angry/distressed/not co-operating to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
- If possible summon another adult;
- Use only techniques for restraint which you have been trained to use
- Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident;
- Make it clear that any restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary;

Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:

- Providing medical support
- Providing respite for those involved
- Providing a time for reflection with the child on what happened and the consequences
- Informing parents /carers

A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem.

8. Recording

In the event of Positive Handling having to be used to restrain a pupil, members of staff involved must report the incident. The recording procedures must be followed. Staff should record all incidents of Positive Handling in accordance with School Policy and report these to the Deputy or Headteacher (appendix 3)

- Details should include:
- Name of pupil(s)
- Staff member(s) involved
- Factors necessitating physical intervention
- The strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention
- How physical intervention was effected
- Outcome of restraint
- Any other action taken in the management of the incident
- Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded.
- The report of incident must transferred to Restraint Log – bound book.

9. 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” (Education Act 1996)

- 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.

10. Complaints

Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by the staff, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It will not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the police and social services department under child protection procedures.

Staff subjected to physical violence or assault, have the right to be supported.

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

Remember that adhering to the principles and procedures referred to in this policy statement, is part of effective practice and should minimise risk to young people in our care and enhance our own self-protection.

11. Statement for Parents

In keeping with our home/school agreement, we will inform all parents/carers of our policy on Positive Handling via website.

The statement will highlight:

- Our emphasis on care and protection for everyone within our school community
- Our belief that restraint will be needed on very rare occasions.
- Our endeavour to handle situations with care and responsibility.
- Our intent to apply follow-up and repair strategies.

The statement will outline:

- When staff are authorised to use reasonable physical intervention.
- What steps will be taken after an incident has been dealt with.
- The responsibilities of staff, pupils and parents/carers in resolving situations.
- How parents will be informed if their child has had to be restrained

12. Further Guidance Documents

- Guidance on 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 Disorders (2002)

- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties (2003)
- Screening, searching and confiscation – advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies.
- Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff – guidance for local authorities, headteachers, school staff, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools

Appendix 1

When might it be appropriate to use Positive Handling/Reasonable Force?

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- pupils fighting and refusing to separate
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects and is not responding to verbal instructions
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself 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).
- a pupil is exhibiting at risk behaviour such as climbing to a height and not responding to requests to come down.

Appendix 2

Action Steps whenever a child is likely to be / is being handled or restrained

All teachers need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps which they can take to defuse and calm a situation before Positive Handling is required.

Move calmly and confidently.

Make simple, clear statements.

Intervene verbally as early as possible.

If necessary summon help before the problem escalates.

Remove audience from the immediate location.

Assistance should be sought when dealing with:

an older pupil,

a physically large pupil,

more than one pupil, or

when the teacher/staff member believes that s/he may be at risk of injury.

In those circumstances where the member of staff has decided that it is not appropriate to restrain the pupil without help they should:

remove other pupils who might be at risk,

summon assistance from colleagues,

where necessary, telephone the police,

inform the pupil(s) that help will be arriving,

until assistance arrives, the member of staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating

Appendix 3

RECORD OF RESTRAINT	
Date of incident: Time of incident:	
Pupil Name: D.o.B:	
Member(s) of staff involved:	
Adult witnesses to restraint:	
Pupil witnesses to restraint:	
Outline of event leading to restraint:	
Outline of incident of restraint (including restraint method used):	
Outcome of restraint:	
Description of any injury(ies) sustained by injured pupil and any subsequent treatment:	
Date parent/carer informed of incident: Time:	
By whom informed:	
Outline of parent/carer response:	
Signature of staff completing report: Date:	
Signature of Teacher-in-charge: Date:	
Signature of Head : Date:	
Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action:	