

Moorside Primary School



Positive Handling Policy



MOORSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PURPOSE, VISION & VALUES

Our Purpose

Moorside Primary is a school at the heart of our diverse community in the West End of Newcastle.

We pride ourselves in belonging to a caring school community where everyone is welcome.

We strive to deliver an outstanding education for all our children. We help everyone to become caring and active citizens.

We encourage everyone to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Our Vision

We want everyone in our school to work together to make us as good as any school can be.

We want to create new opportunities for everyone to succeed.

We want to create a culture which broadens all of our horizons.

We want everyone to be able to tackle the challenges we will face in an ever changing world.

We want all of our children to effectively engage with each other and with our community.

Our Values

We all believe...

Our local community deserves a school they can be proud of.

We are a caring community where everyone is welcome.

We all value, respect and support each other.

Our community has the right to be safe and healthy.

Our children should have the chance to enjoy and be enthused by their time in our school.

We all agree...

Everyone will always try their best and take pride in all that they do.

Everyone will demonstrate good manners at all times.

Everyone will respect each other and show consideration.

Everyone will respect and care for our environment and resources. Everyone will celebrate each other's successes and achievements.

Legal Framework

The 'DfE Use of Reasonable Force Guidance; Advice for Head Teachers, staff and governing bodies' (July 2013) allows all staff at a school to use reasonable force to keep children safe. It also allows other adults in the school to use physical interventions where reasonable, proportionate and necessary to ensure the safety of children. Those might include classroom assistants, care workers, midday supervisors, specialist support assistants, escorts, caretakers or voluntary helpers, including people accompanying children on visits, exchanges or holidays organised by the school.

The right for school staff to use reasonable force is further set out in the DfE document 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools; Advice for Head Teachers and school staff' (January 2016) which states that members of staff have the power to use reasonable force to prevent children committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline in the classroom.

Positive handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful or in an emergency.

There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (e.g. physical assault) being committed. Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement. All teachers have a professional 'duty of care' within their job description, which is underwritten by paragraph 58.7 of School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2002. Together with the legislative framework, this enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Head teacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances.

What is reasonable force?

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

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

'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed. As mentioned above, a school may generally use force to control a child and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between a child or blocking a child's path, or active physical contact such as leading a child by the arm out of a classroom.

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

School staff should 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 child.

Who can use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Head Teacher has temporarily put in charge of children such as unpaid volunteers or Parents/Carers accompanying children on a school organised visit.

When can reasonable force be used?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent children from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

In a school, force is used for two main purposes either to control children or to restrain them.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The following list is not exhaustive and aims to provide some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

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 child behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, school trip or visit;
- Prevent a child leaving the classroom where allowing the child to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- Prevent a child from attacking a member of staff or another child, or to stop a fight in the playground; and restrain a child at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools should not:

- Use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Power to search children without consent in addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, a Head Teacher 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;
- Committing an offence;
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the child themselves); or engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its children, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

What does it mean to restrain a child?

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming themselves or others or seriously damaging property. The proper use of

positive handling requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining.

The decision to use positive handling as restrictive physical intervention must take account of the circumstances and be based on an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention compared with the risks of not employing a restrictive intervention. The physical intervention must also only employ a reasonable amount of force that is the minimum force needed to avert injury or damage to property, or to prevent a breakdown in discipline – applied for the shortest period of time.

Why use restraint

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm themselves or others. Positive handling skilfully applied may be eased by degrees as the child calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

Aims

All staff at Moorside Primary School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure a child's safety or well-being and to maintain good order and discipline. Our policy on the use of reasonable force is part of our overall pastoral care procedures and closely related to our policies on managing child behaviour in the Behaviour Policy and the Safeguarding Policy.

The aims are to:

- Protect every person in the school community from harm;
- Protect all children against any form of physical intervention that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful;
- 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;
- Use the minimum degree of force necessary to accomplish positive handling;
- Give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from others;
- Maintain accurate records of incidents where positive handling has been employed.

Risk Assessment

Although most children will never require any form of positive handling, staff may have to deal with some children who exhibit disturbed, distressed and distressing behaviour. It is therefore necessary to carry out risk assessments.

We will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

- The environment;
- Body language;
- The way we talk;
- The way we act.

Environmental Risk Assessment

We will complete a risk analysis within the school and put in place strategies to minimise these risks in identified locations.

Individual Risk Assessments

The school's respect for the rights of the individual takes into consideration the context of

'The Human Rights Act' (1998) and 'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1991). The school's ethos and the guidance in this policy are based on the presumption that every adult and child is entitled to:

- Respect for their private life;
- The right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment;
- The right to liberty and security;
- The right not to be discriminated against in their enjoyment of those rights.

If we become aware that a child is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, it is our intention to plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning needs to address:

- Managing the child (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary);
- Involving the Parents/Carers 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 training or guidance);
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate;
- If positive handling is likely to be necessary, this should be included in the child's Individual Plan together with information on: de-escalation strategies; the manner in which the child will be held; how support can be summoned if needed; any medical factors to be considered.

More detailed examples of risk assessment and preventative steps can be found in Appendix 2.

Procedures

In the event of positive handling having been used, it is important to consider the strategies, which are deemed acceptable, and the recording procedures that should be in place.

Action Steps:

1. Tell the child who is misbehaving to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
2. If possible, summon another adult;
3. Continue to communicate with the child throughout the incident;
4. Make it clear that restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary;
5. Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:
 - Providing medical support;
 - Providing respite for those involved. It is important to note that 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.

Recording

Staff should record (Appendix 3) all incidents of restraint in accordance with School Policy and report these to the Head Teacher.

Details should include:

- Name of child/ren;
- 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.

Complaints

We all have a duty of care to the children in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving Parents/Carers when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by the staff, and should help to avoid complaints from Parents/Carers. 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 in making a formal complaint to the police and, if necessary, taking private action against an assailant.

It is our intention to inform all staff, children, Parents/Carers and Governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

We will review this policy on a yearly basis or sooner if appropriate.

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

Communicating the school's approach to the use of force

- Every school is required to have a behaviour policy and to make this policy known to staff, Parents/Carers and children. The Governing Body should notify the Head Teacher that it expects the school's 'Behaviour Policy' to include the power to use reasonable force.
- There is no requirement to have a policy on the use of force but it is good practice to set out, in the 'Behaviour Policy', the circumstances in which force might be used. For example, it could say that teachers will physically separate children found fighting or that if a child refuses to leave a room when instructed to do so, they will be physically removed.
- Any policy on the use of reasonable force should acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND).
- Schools do not require Parental/Carers consent to use force on a child. Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a child, or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a child causing harm.
- By taking steps to ensure that staff, children, Parents/Carers are clear about when force might be used, the school will reduce the likelihood of complaints being made when force has been used properly.

Appendix 1

It may be appropriate to use reasonable force on a child when they are:

- Committing an offence;
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the themselves);
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or amongst its children attending the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Examples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are:

- A child attacks a member of staff, or another child;
- Children fighting;
- A child is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;
- A child is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which they might have or may cause an accident likely to injure themselves or others;
- A child absconds from a class or tries to leave school (this will only apply if a child could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- A child persistently refusing to obey an order to leave a classroom; ➤ A child behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Appendix 2

Strategies

All staff need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult situations, incidents and children and steps which they can take to defuse and calm a situation.

These include trying to:

- Move calmly and confidently;
- Make simple, clear statements;
- Intervene early;
- Try to maintain eye contact if and where appropriate;
- If necessary, summon help before the problem escalates; ➤ Remove an audience from the immediate location.

There are situations where staff should not intervene without help

Assistance should be sought when dealing with:

- A physically large child;
- More than one child;
- When the member of staff believes that they may be at risk of injury.

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

- Remove other children who might be at risk;
- Summon assistance from colleagues;
- Where necessary, telephone the police;
- Inform the child/ren 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.

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following requirements:

Restraint must NOT:

- Involve hitting the child;
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the child;
- Restrict the child's breathing;
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas.

During any incident, those restraining should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the child;
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement; ➤ Reduce the danger of any accidental injury.

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between the child;
- Blocking a child's path;
- Holding;
- Pushing;
- Pulling;

- Leading a child by the hand or arm;
- Shepherding a child away by placing a hand in the centre of the back;
- In extreme circumstances, using more restrictive holds by those who have carried out 'Team Teach' training.

Some Dos and Do nots

DO:

- Be aware of any feelings of anger;
- Summon help;
- Continue to talk to the child in a calm way;
- Provide a soft surface if possible;
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the child;
- Hold the child's arms by their sides.

DO NOT:

- Try to manage on your own;
- Stop talking even if the child does not reply, where it is appropriate based on the individual's needs;
- Straddle the child;
- Push arms up the back;
- Lift the child alone;
- Touch the child near the throat or head; ➤ Put pressure on joints.

Appendix 3

Reporting and Recording Proforma

Moorside Primary School – Record of physical intervention

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Child Name:

DOB:

Member(s) of staff involved:

Adult witnesses to restraint:

Children witnesses to restraint:

Outline of event leading to restraint – including other strategies tried and reasons for using Positive Handling rather than another strategy:

Outline of incident of physical intervention (including physical intervention method used):

Outcome of restraint:

Description of any injuries sustained by injured child and any subsequent treatment:

Date Parents/Carers informed of incident: **Time:**

By whom informed:

Outline of Parent/Carers response:

Signature of staff completing report:

Date:

Signature of Teacher in charge:

Date:

Name and signature of Head teacher or Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member:

Date:

Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action:

Date Policy Implemented	April 2023
Date to Review Policy	April 2024