Southfields Primary School

Positive Handling Policy

Date agreed: September 2019
Review Date: September 2020

This policy, having been presented to, and agreed upon by the whole staff and Governors, will be distributed to:

- All teaching staff
- School governors

A copy of the policy will also be available in:

- The Staffroom
- The Head’s office
- School web site

This will ensure that the policy is readily available to visiting teachers, support staff and parents.

Southfields Primary is totally committed to social justice and improving life chances for potentially vulnerable children. It is dedicated to sharing its work and findings beyond the school to improve outcomes for as many children as it can reach and has a particular specialism in Speech and Language development.
1. The Legal Framework

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Under the Children Order 1995, it is only permissible as described under the heading “Physical Control”. Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It enables trained staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

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

(Examples of possible situations are given in Appendix 1)

2. Definition of Positive Handling at Southfields Primary School

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

2.1 General Policy Aims

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

2.2 Specific Aims of the 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.

3. Why Use Positive Handling?

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 him / herself or others. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the School’s policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils’ safety and wellbeing. Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

3.1 Alternative Strategies

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. is a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:
- the broken record in which an instruction is repeated until the pupil complies
- use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with the School’s policy on behaviour.

3.2 Use of Positive Handling

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.
There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil’s path or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective positive handling should be a last resort. When positive handling becomes necessary:

**DO**
- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve two members of staff (if possible)
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Have one voice (one lead adult) who should use simple and clear language
- Hold only long bones (no joints to minimise risk of injury)
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil’s compliance

**DON’T**
- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Attempt to reason with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in inappropriate/sexual areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Retaliate or repeat pupils actions e.g. punch or kick out

### 3.3 Actions after an Incident

Positive handling often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. **A member of the leadership team should be informed of any incident as soon as possible** and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it will be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behaviour plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the Inclusion Manager.
It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately. All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available. 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.

4. Risk Assessments

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

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- The environment surrounding the pupil and calm areas that can be used which will give pupils a safe place to regulate themselves.

5. Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. In the unlikely event that a pupil or parent complains when force has been used, the school will follow the DfE guidance which states:

- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to the “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff” guidance (see the ‘Further sources of information’ section in the “Use of reasonable force; Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies” July 2013) where an allegation of
using excessive force is made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.

- Schools must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.
- If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school should ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.
- Governing bodies should always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the teacher.
- As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that schools provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

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

We will review this policy on a yearly basis.
Appendix 1

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?

Examples of situations that may require restraint are when:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- Pupils fighting
- 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
- 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 absconding from a class or trying 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 persistently refuses to obey an order to leave an area
- A pupil behaves in such a way that seriously disrupts a lesson.
Appendix 2

Strategies and Techniques

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.

• Move calmly and confidently;
• Make simple, clear statements;
• Try to maintain eye contact;
• 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 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southfields Primary School – Record of Restraint</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of incident:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Time of incident:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pupil Name:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D.o.B:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Member(s) of staff involved name in full:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adult or child who witnessed the restraint:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outline of event leading to restraint:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outline of incident of restraint (including restraint method used):</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Escort hold</td>
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<td>□ Hip support hold</td>
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<td>□ Double wrist hold</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Seated hold</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Straight arm immobilisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Seated hold braced legs</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Cupped fist hold</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Kneeling hold</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Description of any injury(ies) sustained by pupil and any subsequent treatment (complete form B if yes):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date parent/carer informed of incident</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Time:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>By whom informed:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outline of parent/carer response:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Signature of staff completing report:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Date:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Signature of Teacher-in-charge:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Date:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Signature of Head STS:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Does Head want staff member to complete Form B?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Y/N</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brief description of any subsequent actions:</strong></td>
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Appendix 4

Serious Incidents Report Sheet

Serious Incidents Report Sheets Form B

This form must be completed as is practically possible after the incident and must be completed and handed to the senior member of staff before you leave work or go off duty.

Name of Pupil:  
Reported By:  

Location:  
Restrictive Physical Intervention □

Incident Date:  
Time of Incident:  

Other Pupils Present:  
Staff Present:  

Concise Details of How the Incident Began:

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Behaviour

Calculated act designed to physically hurt/damage:-
Staff □  Other Pupil(s) □  Property □  Self □

Outburst resulting in physical abuse of :-
Staff □  Other Pupil(s) □  Property □  Self □

Repeated, calm, calculated act(s) to goad staff and cause maximum disruption □

Deliberate attempt to be restrained for attention or reassurance □

Deliberate non-physical provocation of other pupils □
Anger / conduct disorder type response to not being able to have his/her own way

Absconding or attempting to abscond

Behaviour designed to escalate a situation in order to avoid a perceived fear elsewhere e.g. a particular lesson or taxi journey

Intolerant outburst sparked by no apparent or minimal provocation

Embarrassed/anger conduct disorder type response to a situation of not coping/achieving.

Inappropriate response to a provocation from another/others

Excitable / thoughtless but none the less potentially dangerous behaviour

Other (please state):

Environmental Factors contributing to Incident:

Damage to Property:

Details:

Value of Damage: Owner of Property:

Injury sustained during Incident:

How Were Matters Resolved and Consequences applied?

Talked Through
Reparation
Sanction
Parents called / to be called in
Internal Exclusion

Any Further Comments:

Person(s) Informed:

Brief explanation if police or parents were not informed
De-escalation techniques used prior to restraint

Verbal Advice and Support          Calm Talking
Distraction                       Offering services of other staff
Reassurance                       Informing of consequences
Humour                            Talking non-threatening body position
Negotiation                       Offering options
Step Away                         Clear Instruction / Warning
Diversion                         Use of Physical Location and Presence

Comment (optional)

Reason/Justification for Restraint

Child Liable to danger/injury     Other Child(ren) liable to injury
Staff Liable to Injury            Property liable to be damaged
Good order Prejudiced             

Behaviours displayed during the incident

Verbal Abuse                      Biting
Punching                          Self harm
Head butting                      Spitting
Damage                            Hitting
Weapons                           Swearing

Restraint Techniques Including Sequence of Techniques Used and numbers of Staff

Duration of Restraint:

Brief Description of Restraint:
Signatures

Please sign and print name below

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
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Headteacher has overseen the report

Has the log been checked? Y / N  Date: ..........  Time: ............