

Balcombe C E (C) School



Positive Handling

Adopted by Governors: October 2019

Reviewed: November 2019

Next Review: November 2022

BALCOMBE C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL



In all that we do, we are guided by God.

Positive Handling

This policy outlines our approach towards physical contact between adults and children at Balcombe Primary School and should be read alongside the Safeguarding & Child protection, SEN, Behaviour Policy and Health & Safety policies.

At Balcombe Primary School, we are a caring community where the emotional and physical wellbeing of the children is paramount. Teachers and staff are in loco parentis during the school day and therefore in some circumstances, appropriate physical contact is a perfectly normal part of the relationship between a member of staff and a pupil, e.g. to offer comfort or reassurance if a child is unwell or upset, or to support a child in their learning (perhaps in PE or writing).

At Balcombe Primary School, we are committed to a positive behaviour policy which encourages children to make positive behaviour choices. On extremely rare occasions, circumstances may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff. Our policy for physical intervention is based upon the following principles:-

- Physical intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required.
- Physical intervention must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents must be reported to a member of the Leadership Team as soon as possible.
- Parents will be informed of each incident.

1. The Legal Framework

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 states:

Power of members of staff to use force

1. A person to whom this section applies may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing a pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely –
 - a. Committing any offence
 - 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.

Additionally all persons have powers to use force under **Common Law and Section 3(1)(a) Criminal Law Act 1967**. This would include if a child was in danger of hurting someone else or themselves or intent on damaging property.

2. Our approach

At Balcombe Primary School, we aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in a minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical intervention would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise. Staff should always act within the school's policies on behaviour and physical intervention, 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 have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They must, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure all pupils' safety and wellbeing. Staff members are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

3. Use of physical intervention

Physical intervention 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, allows 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 physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this. What constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. Staff will de-escalate where possible then use the appropriate holds as practised in the Positive Handling training.

What is reasonable force?

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. Schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. 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.
6. 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 pupil.

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 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
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

Schools cannot:

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

4. When physical intervention becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use reasonable force
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what they must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- 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
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in a way that could be viewed as sexually inappropriate conduct
- Use physical restraint or intervention as a punishment

5. Actions after an incident

Physical intervention 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. The headteacher or senior member of staff 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 may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural support plan, a personal risk assessment or other strategies agreed by the Leadership Team

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 using an incident log so that any patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed. In the event of any future complaint or allegation this record will provide essential and accurate information.

A member of staff 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.

6. 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:

- Strategies to be used prior to intervention
- Ways of avoiding 'triggers' if these are known
- Involvement of parents/carers to ensure that they are clear about the specific action 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 and guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- The school's duty of care to all pupils and staff

7. Complaints and Allegations

A clear policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation.

It is our intention to inform all stakeholders about this policy and these procedures.

The positive ethos, good behaviour and excellent relationships in this school mean that restrictive physical intervention will be rarely needed. This policy will ensure that in those rare circumstances the care and well being of all pupils will be paramount.

References

- Education & Inspections Act 2006
- DfE Behaviour and discipline in schools advice for headteachers and school staff January 2016
- DfE Use of reasonable force for headteachers and school staff July 2013

Appendix

The following staff members have received positive handling training:

Wendy Millbanks
Liz Bendall
Anthony Evans
Beverley Hoddell
Hannah Rowland
Lara Power
Lucy Dunsby
Susie Couves

Reviewed: **Autumn 2019**

Next review: **Autumn 2021**