

Laburnum Primary School

Positive Handling Policy



Updated by: Head Teacher & Deputy Head Teacher **Approved Date:** January 2020

Last reviewed: January 2020

Next review due by: January 2023 (or as a result of changes to legal guidance)

1. The Laburnum School Vision

This policy is set within the context of our school vision: **CARE: Challenge, Achieve, Respect, Effort**

At Laburnum, we challenge all learners to work hard and achieve as individuals across a broad and engaging curriculum, where learning is at the heart of all we do. Our children are nurtured to show respect for themselves, others and the wider community by developing positive relationships built on our school values.

2. Introduction

The safety and welfare of our pupils is of the utmost importance. The use of reasonable force to restrain or physically direct a child is regarded as a last resort when there is no realistic alternative. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically, they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school SEND policy, Health & Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Principles and Relationships Policy and Complaints Policy. It follows guidance outlined in the DfE 'Use of reasonable force – advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies' document (July 2013) which is available to view online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance.

This policy aims to give all members of the school community clear guidance so that any physical intervention that they undertake is carried out in a way that supports the school's values. In particular, it aims to describe the circumstances in which restrictive physical intervention is an appropriate response and how staff at the school will fulfil their responsibilities in those circumstances.

3. Circumstances in which Positive Handling may be used

Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from:

- Self-harming;
- Causing injury to themselves, other children, staff or teachers;
- Causing damage to property;
- Committing a criminal offence;
- Behaving in a way that is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school or among any of its students.

4. Who can use Positive Handling?

All staff are trained in the use of de-escalation strategies, however only specific named members of staff are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach. These complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the school's Behaviour Principles and Relationships Policy.

The named Team Teach trained members of staff are:

- Ben Bardell: Head Teacher
- Minke Dawes: Deputy Head Teacher

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that staff are fully informed of the school's policy and understand what authorisation entails. The Headteacher will arrange training and guidance to staff as appropriate. Where staff act in line with school policy they will be supported.

An adult must not feel they are prevented from taking action because they have not been trained.

5. What is reasonable Force?

No legal definition of reasonable force exists however for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in Laburnum Primary School:

- 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.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. 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 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.

6. Use of Positive Handling

- Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time.
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- Staff would be expected to follow the pupil's risk assessment and reduction plan in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour.
- If this was unsuccessful and the situation continued to escalate, staff would then be expected to employ other de-escalation techniques that they have been trained in.
- If a situation escalates and reasonable force or positive handling is considered, the overriding consideration should still be the reasonableness and proportionality of the force used.
- Staff should always avoid actions that might reasonably be expected to cause injury and never use force as a threat or as a punishment.
- It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk.
- Techniques used must take account of a child's age, gender, level of physical/ emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.
- Where behavioural records and/or risk assessment identifies a need for a planned approach, a risk assessment and reduction plan will be written for individual children. Where possible, this will be designed through multi agency collaboration and, with parental consent, shared with other agencies/services supporting the child to facilitate consistency of approach.

7. Minimising the need to use Positive Handling

Before physical intervention becomes necessary staff will take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour, requesting alternatives and restating expectations.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about expectations, responsibility and consequences.
- Use well-chosen language to de-escalate situations.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.

- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

8. What to do after the use of a restrictive physical intervention.

After the use of an unplanned restrictive physical intervention, the following steps will be taken:

- Details of the incident will be recorded by all adults involved in the bound and numbered book, kept in the Head Teacher's office and a scanned copy uploaded to Edaware.
- Recording will be completed on the same day whenever possible. Staff will be offered the opportunity to seek advice from a senior colleague or professional representative when compiling their report.
- Any injuries suffered by those involved will be recorded following normal school procedures.
- The Head Teacher will check that there is no cause for concern regarding the actions of adults involved. If it is felt that an action has 'caused or put a child at risk of significant harm' the Head teacher will follow the school's child protection procedures and also inform parents/carers.
- Parents/carers will be informed by the Head Teacher or a member of the SLT on the day of the incident. Parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have regarding an incident.
- Support/debriefing will be available for adults and pupils who have been involved in any incident involving restrictive physical interventions.

After the use of a planned restrictive physical intervention, the following steps will be taken:

- If this is the first instance of RPI then a positive handling plan should be written for that pupil and an analysis of behaviour should be completed with Staff and the Head Teacher.
- Arrangements for recording and informing parents in the case of a planned restrictive intervention will be followed as agreed beforehand, but broadly will follow the same pattern as above. It may be necessary to amend a risk assessment and reduction plan following a review of the incident.

9. Complaints procedure

Any complaint will first be considered in the light of the school's child protection procedures. If child protection procedures are not appropriate, the school's complaint procedures will be followed.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed at the same time as any revisions are made to the school's Behaviour Policy.