



## ***Esher Church of England High School***

### **POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY**

Status:	<b>Approved</b>	
Date of Next Review:	Summer Term 2020	
Responsibility:	SWB Committee	
Date of Approval:	Committee:	16 May 2018
	Local Governing Body:	20 June 2018

#### **1. Aims**

This policy includes information on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain students. It should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interactions between adults and students. The contents of the policy are available to parents and students. The member of staff responsible for its implementation is Dominic O'Driscoll/Assistant Headteacher.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary
- are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

#### **2. Key terminology**

- Reasonable force – Describes a broad range of actions that involve a degree of physical contact with students. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student 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.
- Positive handling - refers to the use of the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a student harming himself, herself, others or property. 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.
- Physical contact - Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and students, eg: in the care of students with learning disabilities; in games/PE; to comfort students.
- Physical intervention - This may be used to divert a student from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a student by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.
- Physical control/restraint - This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to students, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a last resort. All such incidents must be recorded and stored in an accessible way. The level of compliance from the student determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint.

#### **3. Legislation and statutory responsibilities**

In July 2013 the Department for Education issued advice on the use of reasonable force in schools. It stipulates that:

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

- ‘In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control students 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.’

Reasonable force can be used to:

- ‘Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.’
- ‘Prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.’
- ‘Prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.’
- ‘Prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight in the playground.’
- ‘Restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.’

Conversely, reasonable force should not:

- ‘Be used as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.’

The application of any form of physical control places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when students, staff or property are at risk.

Finally, the document clearly stipulates that ‘It is not illegal to touch a student. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a student is proper and necessary.’ Examples of when physical contact is deemed to be appropriate are:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school.
- When comforting a distressed student.
- When a student is being congratulated or praised.
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument.
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.
- To give first aid.

#### **4. Roles and responsibilities**

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 Mike Boddington/Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit. Mike Boddington/Headteacher is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given, in what circumstances and settings they may use force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. The Mike Boddington/Headteacher will ensure that those authorised are aware of, and understand, what the authorisation entails. Those whom Mike Boddington/Headteacher has not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where control or restraint is needed.

#### **5. Staff Training and Management Systems for Positive Handling**

The school provides suitable training for all staff and retains a list of all those staff trained. The list is reviewed on an annual basis (or more frequently if the context requires it). See Appendix 1 for further information.

#### **6. Dealing with challenging behaviour**

As endorsed in the school's Behaviour Policy, staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. The policy of the school is to see positive handling as a proactive response to meet individual student needs.

In Appendix 2 we provide information on types of incident which may occur. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to students or staff, property, buildings or the environment. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with request for the student to refrain.
- Further verbal reprimand stating:
  - that this is the second request for compliance.
  - an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable.
  - an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the student complies. If possible summon assistance from another member of staff.
- Physical intervention with the use of reasonable force to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property. Wherever possible assistance will be sought from another member of staff.

## **7. Recording**

Where physical control or restraint has been used, Natalie Matthews/ Inclusion Manager and Dominic O'Driscoll/Assistant Headteacher will be informed. A record of the incident will be logged on SIMS. Evidence collected as a result of the incident will be placed in respective student files. Mike Boddington/Headteacher will be notified of the incident.

## **8. Monitoring incidents**

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use reasonable force, this will always be recorded and documented following agreed procedures. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Mike Boddington/Headteacher to the needs of any student(s) whose behaviour may require the use of reasonable force. Monitoring of incidents will take place on a regular basis and the results used to inform planning to meet individual student and school needs.

## **9. Action after an incident**

Mike Boddington/Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a student, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure outlined in the:

- Behaviour Policy.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Staff behavior - Code of Conduct agreement.
- Staff Disciplinary and Capability Procedures.
- Permanent exclusion procedures in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff

The member(s) of staff involved in incidents that require the use of reasonable force will be kept informed of any action taken. In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

## **10. Complaints**

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the school's complaints procedures. If necessary the complaint will be dealt with by the Staff Disciplinary and Capability Procedures and/or the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **11. Other relevant policies**

Other relevant policies that cross reference with this one are:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## **Appendix 1: Staff Training**

- No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.
- Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of on-going staff development.
- Our school acknowledges that physical techniques are only a part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.
- Training will be delivered on a needs-based approach. All training will include theory on at least the following:
  - Causes of challenging behaviour
  - Prevention strategies
  - Positive behaviour management
  - De-escalation
  - De-brief following incidents

## **Appendix 2: Types of incident**

The incidents described in the July 2013 Department for Education advice document broadly fall into three categories:

- Incidents where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- Incidents where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property.
- Incidents where a student is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations, which fall within one of the first two categories, are:

- a student attacks a member of staff, or another student.
- students are fighting.
- a student is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property.
- a student is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- a student is running in a corridor or on a stairway such that he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others.
- a student absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB: this will only apply if a student could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations which fall into the third category are:

- a student persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- a student is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.