

# Positive Handling Policy 2021

Kindness



Innovation



Passion



Imagination



Collaboration



thomas  
fairchild  
community  
school

# Introduction

The central objective of this policy is to keep all pupils and staff at Thomas Fairchild Community School safe. This policy provides the framework for the use of physical intervention within our school and takes into account the guidance published by the DfE in [The Use of Reasonable Force document \(2013\)](#) and the Hackney Learning Trust [Positive Handling - guidance for Schools and Settings](#).

Staff should always act within the school's policy on behaviour, 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 must take every reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and well being.

## Links to other policies

This policy links to a number of school policies but should be read specifically in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

## Definitions

**Positive Handling** - includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour.

**Reasonable Force** - section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables a school's staff to use such force as is reasonable.

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force however the act stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from:

- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school
- Causing harm to themselves or others
- Committing an offence

Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the situation. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result.

**Physical Intervention** - diverting or guiding a pupil from destructive or disruptive action eg leading a pupil by the hand or arm with little or no force

**Physical Restraint** - involves the use of reasonable and proportionate force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property.

## Guiding Principles

Positive handling should be applied only as an act of care with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Physical restraint should never be used to force pupil compliance with staff instructions, when there is no immediate danger present to people and property. It ***must*** only be used when there is no realistic alternative.

Staff should think proactively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective and prevent the situation escalating.

Some examples of steps which could be taken before using physical intervention include:

- Being explicit about the unacceptable behaviour
- Giving clear, simple directions for the pupil to stop
- Reminding the pupil about rules and likely outcomes
- Removing any audience or guiding the pupil to an alternative place
- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could cause harm
- Using positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere quieter
- Seeking support from other colleagues if necessary

The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces rather than increases risk. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate and should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint.
- The child should be in immediate danger of harming themselves or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied. Staff should always avoid acting in a way that might cause injury.
- Staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. 'I am doing this to keep you safe'.
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.

The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity. It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All pupils who have been identified as presenting a behavioural risk should have a Positive Behaviour Support Plan. This plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Positive Behaviour Support Plans should be considered along with any Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) and any other planning document relevant to the pupil.

## Training

The school recognises the TEAM TEACH system which is also recognised by the Local Authority and accredited through BILD - British Institute of Learning Disabilities. Identified staff undergo training led by qualified trainers.

Wherever possible physical restraint should only be used by those with appropriate training, however, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible and physical restraint may be used as an emergency measure by any member of staff to ensure the safety of children in their care. It is expected that trained staff would take over the situation as soon as possible. 3

## Recording

The school keeps a record of all incidents where physical intervention involving the use of force against resistance from a child has been necessary. These incidents are recorded on the school's Restraint Form which must be completed within 24 hours, signed by all staff involved and shared with the Head Teacher. It may be necessary to complete a Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form if injury has occurred. These forms should be submitted to the Local Authority as per the Health and Safety Policy. 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.

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 those involved in the incident should be offered support.

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The number and type of incidents in which physical intervention and/or restraint has been necessary will also be reviewed regularly. This allows the Head Teacher to identify any patterns of behaviour resulting in the use of physical intervention and explore the relationship between the use of physical intervention and behaviour in school.

## Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents however in circumstances where a complaint arises this should be dealt with in line with the school's complaints policy.

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