

# RIVERSDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Positive Handling Policy

Date:

Review Date:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Governor)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher)



## INTRODUCTION

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils who may need to be positively handled. This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils specifically the school's Whole School Behaviour Policy. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

## PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Good professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in school respond positively to the Whole School Behaviour Policy followed by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of positive handling may be required. Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff at Riversdale Primary clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where positive handling is necessary, and are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur. The application of any form of positive handling 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 positive handling.

Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed; when pupils, staff are at risk or there is a risk of significant damage to property.

## DEFINITIONS

- (a) Physical Contact Situations in which appropriate physical contact takes place between staff and pupils, e.g. in games/PE or to comfort pupils.
- (b) Physical Intervention This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.
- (c) Positive Handling This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to pupils, staff or of significant damage to property. All such incidents will be recorded in the book, which is kept in the Headteacher's office.

## UNDERPINNING VALUES

This policy is underpinned by the school's values: *Respect, Individuality, Value, Entrust, Reflect, Share, Democracy, Aspire, Love and Empathy*. Everyone attending or working at Riversdale Primary School has the right to:

- a recognition of their unique identity
- be treated with respect and dignity
- learn and work in a safe environment
- be protected from harm by pupils attending this school and their parents
- individual consideration of pupils needs by staff that has responsibility for their care and protection
- expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in the school
- be informed about the school's complaint procedure.

The school will ensure that all pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits which govern behaviour in the school. Parents should have committed themselves through the Home-School Agreement to ensure the good behaviour of their child and that the child understands and follows the school's Behaviour Policy.

## TRAINING

All school staff who are authorised to be in charge of pupils are automatically authorised to use reasonable force where necessary. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling, although we recognise that adults have a duty of care to act in the best interests of the children. Staff should use their own judgement and assess the risks before acting.

Positive Handling training will be provided to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the Headteacher. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

## STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches will be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- a) Verbal acknowledgment of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain and, if appropriate, move to a designated safe space; this involves negotiation, care and concern.
- b) Further verbal warning stating:
  - i. this is the second request for compliance
  - ii. an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable
  - iii. an explanation of the sanctions and what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- c) Warning of potential need to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible, summon assistance. It must be remembered that the restraint is a safeguard, not a sanction and the child should be told that the reason for positive handling is to protect them not to punish them. At this point, it may be necessary to remove other children from the scene for their own protection.
- d) Physical intervention.

Reasonable physical intervention using the minimum degree of contact to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property. Use of Reasonable Force See "Use of Reasonable Force; Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies" (DfE, 2013)

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 the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils 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.

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; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts. It should be; Proportionate Legal Accountable Necessary

## **REASONABLE ACCEPTABLE MEASURES OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION**

Positive handling can only be deemed reasonable if:

- it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident
- it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent
- it is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result
- the age, understanding and the gender of the pupil are taken into account
- it is likely to achieve the desired result

If the use of positive handling can be anticipated (e.g. a child refusing to come into school) then a response team should be on standby. Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervention. The form of physical intervention may involve staff doing the following:

- physically interposing themselves between pupils
- blocking a pupil's path
- escorting a pupil
- shepherding a pupil away

This is not a definitive list and other strategies may be employed. Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school. Staff should take care to avoid injury to themselves and should guide a child to a restraining position on the ground, if they become a "dead weight" or drop to their knees. In a situation where positive handling is used, pupils should be removed from the hazard and isolated where possible. Whenever positive handling is used, staff will keep talking to the pupil. Following the incident, the child will be debriefed, once calm, and encouraged to reflect on their actions.

## **RECORDING**

Where positive handling has been used a record of the incident always needs to be kept. All recording needs to be completed on the day of incident and needs to include the following:

- name of pupil
- date, time and place of incident
- a brief description of the incident and actions taken
- attempts made to calm the situation
- names of staff using restraint
- nature of physical intervention technique used
- how incident was resolved and any consequences
- effectiveness of the intervention

A clear code can be used to record types of intervention used. E.g.:

1. hands guiding;
2. hands crossed behind pupil's back;
3. seated position

The record of the incident will be made in the book kept in the Headteacher's office.

## **INFORMING PARENTS**

Parents will always be informed following an incident where positive handling has been used. If appropriate, a discussion will take place involving parents and relevant members of staff (e.g. SLT, SENCO, Pastoral Lead, class teacher) to put measures in place to address the behaviour concern.

## **ACTION AFTER AN INCIDENT**

The Headteacher (or Deputy Head in their absence) 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 pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
- School Behaviour Policy

Members of staff will be kept informed of any action taken. In case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

## **COMPLAINTS**

The availability of a clear policy regarding Positive Handling and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's Complaints Procedure. The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints, but other governors will not be involved as a complaint may require further action on their part.

## **MONITORING OF INCIDENTS**

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use positive handling, this will always be recorded and documented. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using positive handling. This process will address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.