

Positive (safe) Handling Policy

Introduction

The policy has been developed in response to The Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 93, which reinforces and replaces previous guidance. It also takes cognisance of joint guidance issued by the DfES and Department of Health, and follows the guidance for 'The Use of Reasonable Force DFE 2013

The policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies and guidance relating to interaction between adults and pupils, including Safeguarding and Behavioural policies.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff, who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for care and control. Its contents are available to parents and pupils. This statement includes information on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils.

Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity;
- be treated with respect and dignity;
- learn and work in a safe environment;
- be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake their 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 school;
- expect any additional provision e.g. risk assessments, provision maps, Thrive groups etc. to be designed to achieve outcomes that reflect the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern and others affected by the behaviour requiring intervention;
- be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

Objectives

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our schools respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required. Coast Academies acknowledges that physical techniques are only a small part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

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 use of force or handling is necessary. We aim to provide specific training for as many as possible to deal with these situations.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- self – injuring, including risk or potential of injuring self
- causing injury to others
- committing a criminal offence
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within school (this includes authorised out-of-school activities).

As teaching and non-teaching staff work ‘in loco parentis’ and have a ‘Duty of Care’ towards their pupils, they could be liable for a claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this policy.

The application of any form of physical control inevitably carries an attached risk of unintended harm and this places staff and the school at risk of potential litigation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Staff must be aware that they are responsible for:

- assessing risks related to individual circumstances which may arise in the course of their day-to-day duties and following the advice given in individual risk assessments which will be circulated to staff every time they are updated.
- making judgements about when the use of force is necessary and the degree of force which may be regarded as necessary to manage a situation.

All staff involved in any incident must log a report following the appropriate process in their individual schools.

Definitions of Positive Handling

No legal definition of reasonable force exists however for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in Coast Academies, we work to the following definition and guidelines:

“Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property.”

Positive Handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. Positive handling is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment, and deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour, diversion, and de-escalation. Risk assessment identifies positive prevention strategies and how a pupil may need to be supported in a crisis.

Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occur between staff and pupils, e.g., in the care of pupils and in order to support their access to a broad and balanced curriculum. It would seem reasonable that young children do require opportunities for close contact, as long as this is within public view, sensitively carried out and age/person-appropriate.

Pre-emptive 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 arm or shoulder where the pupil is compliant. This technique cannot be emphasised enough and in the hands of a skilful practitioner, many pupils can be deflected from a potentially volatile situation into a less confrontational situation i.e. it may be possible to “defuse” a situation by a timely intervention.

Minimising the Need to Use Force

At Coast Academies we constantly strive to create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of force. In addition to this, pupils who present with persistent challenging behaviour will be assigned a mentor who will work in partnership with the SENCO, Pastoral Team and class teacher, in supporting the provision maps, risk assessments and associated targets.

Pupils who have issues relating to sensory dysfunction or other conditions that may result in increased anxiety levels, and therefore an increase in the likelihood of challenging behaviour, may have individualised support or programmes to help them to manage this.

Through the PSHE curriculum pupils learn about feelings and managing conflict where this is appropriate to their level of development. The ethos further promotes independence, choice and inclusion; pupils are given maximum opportunity for personal growth and emotional wellbeing.

Prevention of unsafe behaviour will be enabled through:

- The deployment of appropriate staffing numbers;
- The deployment of appropriately trained and competent staff;
- Avoiding situations and triggers known to provoke challenging behaviour;
- Creating opportunities for choice and achievement;
- Exploring pupils' preferences relating to the way/s in which they are managed
- Staff employ 'de-escalation' techniques to avert escalation of behaviour into violence or aggression as recommended by the Devon PIPS training.

Strategies to prevent the need for physical intervention:

➤ Time out

This involves restricting the child's access to positive reinforcements in a room or area which they may freely leave. It is a specific behaviour management technique and does not necessarily mean time spent out of the class/group, but rather refers to a withdrawal of attention and/or things they find rewarding. It could be as simple as turning away from a child who is attention-seeking, or positioning a child away from the class/group. This withdrawal of attention could also be achieved by sending a pupil to another class/group or a quiet area.

➤ Withdrawal

This involves removing the child from a situation that causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This can mean removing a child from the class/group, to allow them time to calm down or to prevent a situation from escalating. They may need time away from staff and pupils (either on their own or in another class/group) in order to break the cycle/pattern of their behaviour or to reduce their level of anxiety/distress. The arrangement of "quiet time" can be negotiated between the child and staff involved.

➤ Planned Physical Intervention

Any such intervention is described/outlined in the pupil's Provision Map/Risk Assessment. This should cover most interventions, as possible scenarios will be identified and planned for when the risk assessment is drawn up.

Positive Handling / Physical Control / Restraint

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. All such incidents must be recorded through the schools agreed system. If anyone is injured an accident/incident report must also be completed. The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint/RPI. Restraint is defined as the positive application of force by staff, in order to overcome rigorous resistance, completely directing, deciding and controlling a person's free movement

Use of Positive Handling Guidance for staff :

- There should be two adults in attendance at all times.
- When needing an additional adult, consider the use of any school radio communication in addition to sending for help
- 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 Provision Map/ Risk Assessment in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour. If this was unsuccessful and the situation continues to escalate staff would then be expected to seek the help of other members of staff.
- The overriding consideration should still be the reasonableness and proportionality of the force used. It is recognised however that occasionally some situations will escalate very quickly and the decision making and response will therefore need to be rapid.
- Where incident logs and risk assessment identifies a need for a planned approach, provision maps are written for individual children and where possible, these will be designed through multi agency collaboration and, with parental consent, shared with other agencies/services supporting the child to facilitate consistency of approach so far as is possible.
- Use of force should never be used as a consequence or punishment.
- Reasonable force will only be used when the risks involved in doing so, are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.
- Techniques used are based on the PIPS and Team Teach approaches and will take account of a young person's:
 - age
 - gender
 - level of physical, emotional and intellectual development
 - special needs
 - social context

They also provide a gradual, graded system of response.

Types of Incident that may lead to physical intervention

The incidents described in The Education and Inspections Act 2006 The Use of Reasonable Force to Control and Restrain Pupils fall into three broad categories: -

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil 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 pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- Pupils are fighting;
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations which fall into the third category are:

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

The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 effective from September 2007, gives schools powers to screen or search pupils for weapons and other prohibited items. Details on our approach to this are given in our behaviour policy.

Recovery

Pupils who may be distressed by events can be offered the following support:

- Quiet time taking part in a calming activity
- Quiet time away from the incident/trigger
- Resuming their usual routine/previous activity as soon as possible, especially for pupils with special needs
- Time with a member of staff to debrief the incident

Injury to the Child

Whilst the physical techniques are intended to reduce risk, there is always risk when two or more people engage to use force to protect, release or restrain. We will

always seek to avoid injury to the child, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the child remains safe. Any such injury will be reported to the Senior Management team of Coast Academies and the parents / carer.

Many staff are trained in First Aid, and a proportion have a higher level qualification. Any may be called upon to implement First Aid or seek further guidance in the event of an injury or physical distress arising as a result of a physical intervention.

Authorised Staff

All members of staff at Coast Academy schools are authorised to have control or charge of pupils automatically, they have the statutory power to use reasonable force within the context of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the subsequent guidance 'The Use of Reasonable Force to Control and Restrain Pupils'. Supply staff must also ensure that they are familiar with this policy.

Health and Safety of Staff

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, employees have a responsibility to report any circumstances which give rise to an increased risk to their Health and Safety. Staff who have, or acquire, permanently or temporarily, any medical condition that may impact on their ability to carry out pupils' plans have a duty to report these to the Heads of School and Executive Principal immediately, as there may be an impact on their own safety and that of colleagues and/or pupils. This information will be shared with other members of staff. Following the above guidelines, the risk of harm towards staff is reduced but it is possible for some injury to be received. All such occurrences should be treated and subsequently recorded, on an Accident Form.

Staff Training

It is the responsibility Head of school/Headteacher to ensure all staff understand the methods outlined in this policy. Annual updates and reviews will be undertaken. Any new member of staff will be asked to demonstrate their understanding of the policy as part of their induction training. Keeping all staff up to date is important as they are expected to be able to actively support each other, and pupils, if an incident occurs and a child needs physical intervention to keep themselves and/or others safe. However, if staff are unable to support physically they are expected to support with de-escalation. A cycle of training will take place each year to train a variety of staff members specifically with safe handling skills. Currently the training module is called PIPs

Staff Support Following Incidents

Any member of staff or pupil at the school involved in or witnessing a serious incident involving the use of physical hold, may require additional support following

the incident. Staff should ensure that they are fully recovered from an incident before resuming their duties and colleagues are encouraged to seek and offer support where it is deemed necessary. At Coast Academies we have a debrief procedure which should be utilised if staff need to debrief after an incident. Where staff have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force, they should have access to support; this will be made available.

Recording and Monitoring Incidents

All records from an incident will be stored on the schools agreed electronic system. Reports need to be clear and concise and contain only the factual information with due regard to the order in which the incident occurred, the people involved (initials only) Appropriate documentation will be completed as soon as possible after the incident. The document relating to the child involved will be reviewed and risk assessments updated after every major incident. Parents should always be informed as part of this reporting process.

Monitoring

Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Pastoral Team to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour may require the use of reasonable force.

Visits Out of School

Our equal opportunities policy states that all pupils should be included in all curriculum activities. However, Health and Safety remains a priority and staff should carry out risk assessments for pupils that may be a possible danger prior to each visit into the community. Due consideration should be given to the following:

- Is the pupil able to cope with the demands of the proposed visit?
- Are there sufficient, suitably trained staff - particularly if there should be an incident?
- How will you contact school to get extra help if necessary and how will you get back?

Whistle Blowing

It is acknowledged that under some circumstances, physical intervention can be misapplied. Staff are reminded that part of their duty of care to pupils includes the requirement to report any such matters which cause them concern in relation to pupil management and welfare. Any such concerns should be raised with the appropriate line manager following the guidance in the Whistle Blowing Policy in order to allow concerns to be addressed and practice improved. The following documents will be taken into consideration:

- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Children's Services/ LADO)
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure; in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff this may be considered.
- Whistle Blowing Policy

The member of staff 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.

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. Where the nature of any complaint made by a pupil, parent or other person in relation to the use of physical hold within the school indicates that an allegation of mishandling by a member staff is warranted, the school's complaints policy will be followed.