

Silverstone CE Primary School

Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

Both Children and Staff have rights. Silverstone CE Primary will do its utmost to ensure that staffs have a safe, supportive and carefully managed environment and that the children's needs, safety and rights are respected and nurtured. Every Child Matters and we are intent on ensuring that all children are supported and helped to stay healthy, be safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

We believe that behaviour and attitude to learning have a major influence on pupil achievement and that every child at Silverstone CE Primary is entitled to learn in an environment which is safe, secure and free from distraction. We are committed to supporting our pupils including the duty to have lawful care and control over them. This is usually achieved through our very good relationships and our emphasis on positive behaviour. However, in extreme circumstances, this might entail the use of reasonable force to prevent a criminal offence, injury, damage or disruption.

Our approach to care and control is similar to that of behaviour in general with the vast majority of behaviours being managed very successfully through positive relationships and good communication. Therefore, the use of physical restraint to control a pupil is viewed as part of a continuum of positive and caring intervention, aimed at maintaining good order and keeping children safe. It is used only where there is an imminent threat or danger or when it is absolutely necessary. It is seen as a justifiable action which may occur when other strategies have failed to bring a specific situation under control.

What is the legal use of force to control pupils?

Teachers and other persons authorised by the Headteacher, may use reasonable force to prevent a pupil:

- Committing a crime
- Causing injury to themselves
- Causing injury to others
- Causing damage
- Causing disruption

Reasonable force has no legal definition but:

- Force cannot be justified for a trivial misdemeanour or a situation which could be clearly resolved without it
- The degree of force must be proportional to the seriousness of the situation, behaviour or consequences which it is intended to prevent and always be the minimum needed.

Everyone has the right to self-defence provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force. Corporal punishment is illegal.

Objectives of the policy

- To provide all stakeholders with an understanding of positive handling strategies
- To emphasise that the use of physical force is part of a positive care and control approach to pupil discipline and welfare and is used as a last resort or a necessary action to be used in extreme circumstances
- To ensure that all members of staff or authorised persons who may have to intervene physically with pupils, clearly understand the options and strategies which are open to them

Type of Incident in which reasonable force might be appropriate

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because of imminent risk of injury
- Where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property, for example
 - a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
 - a pupil attempts self injury
 - pupils are fighting
 - a pupil is causing or is perceived to be about to cause deliberate damage or vandalism
 - a pupil is causing or at risk of causing injury or damage by their actions including the misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way which is compromising good order and discipline, for example
 - a pupil persistently refusing to obey an order to leave classroom/area
 - a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

N.B. Where possible, we will seek support from a colleague and consider alternative strategies other than using force such as:

- Providing the pupil with specific locations to exit to, in a manner that conveys an expectation of compliance
- Moving the other pupils out of the classroom/area away from the disruptive pupil

Planning for Incident

- We will work with outside agencies to develop a response plan if a pupil is likely to require physical control or intervention.
- Physical intervention, unless it is an emergency situation, will only be carried out by teachers and other persons authorised by the Headteacher.
- Training in the use of physical restraint will be organised through an accredited provider.

N.B. All teachers and those authorised by the Headteacher to have charge of pupils, have a 'duty of care' to take appropriate action, up to and including the use of reasonable force, to prevent a pupil(s) committing crime, serious disruption or causing injury or damage.

Practical consideration during incident

Do – where practicable

- Tell the pupil to stop and what will happen if the pupil does not
- Try to defuse the situation orally and prevent it from escalating
- Try to move the pupil away from any peer audience
- Try to make sure another adult is present
- Ensure that additional support can be summoned if appropriate
- Make it clear that the physical contact or control will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary
- If it is not possible to control the extreme pupil without risk of injury to yourself or others, remove the other pupils who may be at risk and summon assistance.
- Use a calm approach

Try not to

- Give the impression that you are nervous
- Give the impression that you have lost your temper
- Give the impression that you are trying to punish the pupil
- Intervene in an incident without help unless it's an emergency or you are confident of being able to help without risk of injury or making the situation worse – call for help.

Application of force during incidents

May involve staff

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Guiding
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Carrying a small child
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

Staff may not carry out action that might reasonably be expected to injure by

- Holding a pupil around the neck or in any way that might restrict breathing
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Holding or pulling a pupil by hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground
- Touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent

Other consideration for non-urgent situations where the risk to people or property is not imminent

- Always try to deal with a situation through other strategies before using force
- Try to defuse and calm the situation, and establish good order – physical force could lead to escalation
- Take into account the age, understanding and personal characteristics of the pupil – physical intervention to enforce compliance is likely to be increasingly inappropriate with older children.

Reporting and recording incidents involving the use of force

- In all cases of serious concern or where force is used (except minor or trivial incidents) the incident will be reported to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- It will be recorded by the member of staff in the Pupil Incident File in the school office. The member of staff may seek advice in writing the report and should keep a copy for themselves. The report will help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident and will be helpful if there is a complaint. The Pupil Incident File sheet will be counter signed by the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher and any other members of staff involved.
- Any additional paper reports submitted to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher should be signed by the members of staff involved. All members of staff present should normally provide a written record. Report from pupil(s) present should also be collected where appropriate.
- A copy of the Incident Report and any additional information will be placed in the Pupils File which is passed from school to school on transfer. The Pupil's File will be kept for a minimum of 3 years after the pupil has left compulsory full-time education.
- The Headteacher or a nominated member of staff will tell parents about the incident by the end of the day. However, if parents cannot be contacted, we will send a letter to inform them and offer them the opportunity to discuss the matter.

Other procedures concerning incidents

- If necessary and appropriate, we will inform/consult with the Chair of Governors, the Local Authority and / or police.
- The criminal, dangerous, destructive or discipline behaviour must immediately stop.
- Where possible an attempt will be made to help the pupil change their behaviour.
- Help, support and reassurance will be given where appropriate to any victims involved.
- If possible, meaningful or appropriate, the pupil will apologise and other sanctions / reparations may take place
- Exclusion will be considered – fixed term or permanent depending upon the severity of the incident

Strategies for raising awareness and prevention

As and when appropriate, these may include

- Writing a set of school rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Participating in an individual behaviour programme
- Writing stories and/or drawing pictures which portray or promote positive social behaviour, school rules, making up role plays and having discussions about moral and social dilemmas.

Physical contact with pupils on other circumstances

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching pupils including well intentioned informal and formal gestures i.e. putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, if repeated regularly, could lead to questions/issues being raised.

The following situations are left to the staff's own professional judgement. Staff must be sensitive to matters relating to culture and gender issues and any known individual characteristics or special circumstance relating to pupils.

Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties e.g. during PE lessons.

- Administering First Aid – staff will ensure wherever possible that another adult is present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued
- Young children or children with SEND may need staff to provide physical prompts or help
- There may be occasion where a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Staff will use their discretion in such cases.