



Oakfield Lodge School Positive Handling Policy

Approved by:	John Edmonstone
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The term 'positive handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports all students, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, damaging property, or in order to maintain good order and discipline. Furthermore, the school takes seriously its duty of care to students, employees and visitors to the school.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Staff will be trained to look after students in their care and aim to focus on deescalation techniques wherever possible. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school policy.

The DfE non-statutory guidance document 'Use of reasonable force' (dated July 2013- reviewed 2015) provides advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the Act) enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. DfE guidance on the use of reasonable force in schools (2013) also states that in addition to the general power to use reasonable force, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for "prohibited items". Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

DfE guidance and the Act make it clear that school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. However, wherever possible, only staff trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategy techniques of Team Teach will use physical intervention techniques with children, and only when necessary.

Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a student who is endangering themselves or others, damaging property or to maintain good order and discipline, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible.

In March 2019 the Equality and Human Rights Commission published the guidance document, 'Human rights framework for restraint'. This guidance sets out key principles of articles 3, 8 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), incorporated into domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998, which govern the use of restraint across all settings: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/human-rightsframework-restraint>

Team Teach is accredited through ICM (Institute of Conflict Management). Staff undergo a 6 hour or 12 hour course (depending upon the needs of the children they

are working with) led by two qualified trainers with a refresher course undertaken every three years.

Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found on the Team Teach website. The website address is

<https://www.teamteach.co.uk/>

The school will keep a list of staff qualified to use Team Teach.

Before using physical interventions we take effective action to de-escalate and reduce risk by:

- Showing care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning.
- Giving clear directions for students to stop.
- Reminding the student about rules and likely outcomes.
- Removing an audience or taking vulnerable students to a safe place.
- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Using positive guidance to escort students to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensuring that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

Whilst or before intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. "I am doing this to keep you safe."

Use of Intervention

The term 'physical intervention' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. Physical intervention should only be used when there is no realistic alternative and for the shortest amount of time possible. Staff to think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. 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 challenging behaviour should be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Physical intervention must only be in accordance with the following:

- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing the child is in immediate danger of harming themselves or another person, in danger of seriously damaging property or not maintaining good order or discipline.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure a minimum of two Team Teach trained members of staff present before applying the intervention. Other staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, the intervention should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self control.

- Intervention should be an act of care and control, NOT punishment.
- Physical intervention should not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger to people and property.
- After the event, the intervention should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity

The definition of reasonable, proportionate and safe practice can change and evolve and that this will be kept under review.

Dynamic Risk Assessment - Responding to unforeseen emergencies

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet.

An unforeseen event may require an emergency response with a dynamic risk assessment. After that event, staff have a duty to plan ahead and prepare an updated risk assessment.

Risk assessments are required for students who exhibit challenging behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. Parents will be involved with the writing of the risk assessment (positive handling plan)

When considering a student's behaviour, staff and parents will think about the following:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this student's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct the risk assessment?
 - Have we provided a written plan?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from reoccurring?

Staff may also need to make an individual risk assessment where it is known that force is more likely to be necessary to restrain a particular student, such as a student who is considered to be at greatest risk of needing positive handling interventions due to their special educational need (SEN) or disability. Plans should be compatible with a student's EHCP and properly documented in the school records.

An individual risk assessment is essential for students whose SEND are associated with:

- Communication impairments that make them less responsive to verbal communication
- Physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments
- Conditions that make them fragile, such as haemophilia, brittle bone syndrome or epilepsy
- Dependence on equipment such as wheelchairs, breathing or feeding tubes.

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All students who have been identified as presenting a risk, should have a risk assessment in place.

The plan details strategies which have been to be found effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are to be avoided. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective should be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective or which have caused problems in the past.

After any incident a full debrief should take place so that learning can inform practice. Following an incident, it is the policy of the school to offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning, and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that students and staff have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate another person's perspective. It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the needs of all. As individuals we all vary in how much support we need after an unpleasant incident. Generally, a member of senior staff would expect to talk to staff and children involved in any incidents involving any intervention. Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the current risk assessment. Any further action in relation to a member of staff or student will follow the appropriate procedures.

Good practice requires that:

- All incidents where friendly guides and escorts are used are to be recorded as a Safeguarding event following school policy. Within these recording strategies, all details must be recorded within 24 hours of the incident and signed by the teacher involved and the DSL. Parents will receive a full account of incident and a copy of the report. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed before the colleague leaves site that day or, in the event that is not physically possible, at the latest within 24 hours of the event occurring. All records will be kept for 25 years from the Date of Birth of the student with their student record. Any injury/harm to staff or children involved in an incident must be reported on CPOMs or the Safeguarding Reporting system. At Oakfield Lodge School a 'bound book' for reporting is held in the main office safe. Records are scanned and attached to CPOMS electronically.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head Teacher and DSL will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further actions as required. This information will be shared with the safeguarding governor.

Paragraph F2 of the Human rights framework for restraint states 'To know whether discrimination is occurring, public bodies should collect and analyse data on their use of restraint, to identify if restraint is being used disproportionately against people with particular protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, or who share other identifiable group characteristics, for example, women, ethnic minorities, or people with particular impairments such as learning disabilities.' The Head Teacher will regularly review the use of intervention to avoid unintended discrimination.

Complaints and Allegations 10. 1 Any complaints will follow the schools Complaints Procedure.

Other physical contact with students (DfE Use of reasonable force 2013)

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 where touching a student might be proper and necessary:

- 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

This list is not exhaustive, but provides some examples of situations where physical contact is proper and necessary

Policy Review A formal review of this policy will be carried out every 3 years (in line with updating school training) to reflect changes in school strategy and/or changes in legislation.

