# POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY (WHITEGROVE)

Reviewer: SENCo

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# Positive Handling

## Procedure Statement

Staff at this school are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Procedure. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request.

*School refers to any Whitegrove activity or event operating on the school site or off the school site and supervised by Whitegrove staff.*

Introduction The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' in national guidance (DfE/DoH 2002). A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Pupils can sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Headteacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It should be considered alongside the most recent LA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

## School Expectations

The management takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management. This policy has a clear focus.

- 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.

## Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert

behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

## Alternatives to Physical Controls

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

## Modifications to Environment

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils at this school may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. In general it is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. For example:

- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils and scissors) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry pupil who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Are the design arrangements or furniture safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage angry pupils to take themselves to a safer place?

## Help Protocols

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is

necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

## Well Chosen Words

A well chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling a person to calm down can actually help achieve the opposite. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

## The Last Resort Principle

At this school we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

> "If necessary, staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring, even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predictable future."
> *Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – "The Control of Children in the Public Care:*
> *Interpretation of the Children Act 1989" – London: H M S O*

It does mean that we expect staff to consider the risk involved and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

## Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling Plan. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

## Reasonable and Proportionate

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Staff should not react in anger. If an adult feels they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- Is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Is a less intrusive intervention possible?
- Do we have to act now?
- Am I the best person to be doing this?
- Is this absolutely necessary?

If staff judge the answers to the above questions to be yes, it is likely that a physical intervention can be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

## Unreasonable use of Force

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a pupil secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

## Team Teach

It is the policy of Whitegrove Primary School that all staff working closely with pupils who display extreme behaviours are trained in the pre-emotive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the Behaviour Policy. Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found on the Team Teach website (www.teamhttp://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.team-teach.co.uk&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNF-6EsV98gJNVlMvfkWe5OCN48EIAteach.co.uk).

## Health and Safety

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences are reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the school; at Whitegrove this is the Headteacher and reports are monitored by the Site and Buildings committee. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which seems to involve the least risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important too.

When considering a pupil's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

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

## Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk, the correct decision is to do something else.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this situation the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

## Positive Behaviour Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Behaviour Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Individual Behaviour Plans should be considered alongside the Educational Health and Care Plan and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Behaviour Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration, updated regularly and shared with parents/carers.

## Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences. The key principals are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should first be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school. In general, if staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

## The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and deescalate the situation. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

## Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. Pupils should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

## Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Headteacher to use planned physical techniques should be trained. This school has adopted the Team Teach Model of training. All training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with DfES and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. Our preferred approach is for whole staff team training. Office staff may not require the same level of training in physical techniques as those working directly with the most challenging pupils, however all staff benefit from the whole school training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our clients. Once trained, staff should practice regularly under the guidance of the SENCo and experienced staff and bring any problems or concerns to them.

## Recording

Whenever overpowering force is used the incident must be recorded in the **Bound and Numbered book** by the person involved, in their own words. This is kept in the Headteacher's office. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 2 hours.

Staff should:

- Read through the Log form carefully.
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Inform child's parents by telephone of in person.
- Sign and date all forms.

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation. The health and safety governor and the safeguarding governor monitor the bound book records and other behaviour logs termly.

## Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Behaviour Plan, behaviour management policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures (see staff and pupil disciplinary policy).

## Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:
Behaviour Policy
Health & Safety Policy
Safeguarding Policy (Child Protection)

# Appendix 1

**Positive Behaviour Plan (PBP)**

**Name:** **Class:**

**Trigger Behaviours:** (Describe common behaviours/situations which are known to have led to Positive Handling being required. When is such behaviour likely to occur?)

**Topography of Behaviours** (Describe what the behaviour looks/sounds like)

**PREFERRED supportive & Intervention Strategies** (other ways of C.A.L.M.ing such behaviours. Describe strategies that, where and when possible, should be attempted before positive handling techniques are used.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Verbal advice and support | |
| Distraction (known key words, objects, likes, etc) | |
| Reassurance | |
| Take up time | |
| CALM talking / stance | |
| Time Out (requires a written plan) | |
| Negotiation | |
| Withdrawal (requires staff/carer observation) | |
| Choices | |
| Cool off: directed / offered (delete as appropriate) | |
| Humour | |
| Contingent touch | |
| Consequences | |
| Transfer adult (help protocol) | |
| Planned ignoring | |
| Success reminder | |
| Others? | |

**Praise Points / Strengths (areas that can be developed and built upon):** Please state 3 bridge builders.

1

2

3

**Medical conditions that should be considered before physically intervening**
(e.g. asthma, brittle bones)

**Preferred Handling Strategies**
Describe the preferred holds: standing, sitting, ground, stating numbers of staff, what "get outs" that can be used when holding, etc.

**Debriefing process following incident.**(What is the care to be provided?)

**Recording and notifications required:**

Whitegrove Primary School
Name

Placing Authority
Name

Parent/carer
Name Signature

Date Review Date

Other factors to consider:

- Key behavioural difficulties
- Our understanding of the behaviour
- What we want to see instead
- Environmental changes that might help
- Monitoring progress
- How the individual can help
- How parents or carers can help
- Rewarding progress

## Appendix 2 – Positive Handling Risk Assessment

Team-Teach Ltd Workbook v2013 DRAFT MARCH 29

### *Appendix 5 – Dynamic Risk Assessment Checklist*

#### ACT

- Stop and think
- Adopt a calm, non -threatening stance and posture
- Slow controlled voice
- Clear verbal directions
- Pause and allow time for delayed compliance and help to arrive

#### BALANCE

- Likely outcomes if force is used against likely outcomes if force is not used
- Short-term risks against longer term risks
- The best interests of the child against the best interests of other children and the rights and powers of staff*

#### CHOOSE

- Persons who are most likely to succeed
- Best place available
- Best time available
- Minimum use of force necessary to achieve the desired result

Allowing children to hurt themselves or damage their own property is clearly not in their best interests. But neither is it in their best interest to allow them to hurt other people or damage other people's property. Professionals may be justified in taking action to prevent children from doing something they will later regret. In the heat of the moment they may want to attack another child, smash the room up or run away. But often, after a relatively short period of time, they are glad they were not allowed to do it. There are times when the behaviour of one child threatens the physical or emotional safety of other children, with a consequent risk of significant harm. Some children have stereotypical patterns of behaviour which alert staff to a developing crisis. Failure to take early action may result in the child becoming out of control so that when action is eventually taken the risk of injury is greater. This is not in the child's best interests. Allowing a child to abscond, when that child has indicated an intention to engage in drug taking, prostitution or other criminal offences, is clearly not in that child's best interests either.

*In law, the paramount consideration is the best interests of the child in question. "Paramount" means it is the first thing to think about and it takes precedence over all other considerations. For that reason staff should carefully consider the following question: "How is the action proposed in the best interests of that individual child?"

## *Appendix 6 – Risk Assessment Checklist For Managers*

**LOOK FOR HAZARDS** - *concentrate of significant hazards which could result in serious harm*

Bites, pinches, gouges, flailing arms and feet
Unnecessary objects that could be used as weapons
Unsuitable furniture e.g. unstable or can be thrown
Manual handling requirements
Routes to danger - access to danger, roads, railways, water, heights, dangerous materials, narrow corridors and stairs

**DECIDE WHO MIGHT BE HARMED AND HOW**

Children - violence from other children, self harm, accidental injury
Members of staff working directly with children- violence from children, visitors or accidental injury resulting from child behaviour
Members of the public - violence from children or accidental injury resulting from child behaviour
Visitors - violence from children or accidental injury resulting from child behaviour
People with disabilities - specific vulnerabilities to injury,
Lone /isolated workers

**EVALUATE THE RISKS** - *for each hazard look at existing and new precautions to further reduce risk*

Getting rid of the hazard altogether (possible for equipment but not people)
Clear guidance and appropriate training
Preventing access to the hazard - change seating, stance, approach angles, doors, windows and access to heights
Install windows and mirrors to improve supervision
Change flooring surfaces to improve grip or reduce abrasion as appropriate
Organise work to reduce exposure of individuals to the hazard
Protective equipment, furniture and/or clothing
Contamination protection- gloves, spill packs, wet wipes, antiseptic alcohol gels etc.
Evaluate remaining risk - High - Medium - Low

**RECORD FINDINGS** - suitable and sufficient does not mean it has to be perfect.

Written record is just evidence of what you have done which can be helpful in legal cases.

**REVIEW AND REVISE IF NECESSARY**

When there is a significant event or change
New staff
New procedures or activities
Otherwise roughly every 8 weeks