



Bishops Down Primary and Nursery School
Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

Positive Handling policy

Reviewed by	HT and FGB
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Our vision is that Bishops Down will be
**A community which develops life-long learners who are confident
to flourish in an ever-changing world**

Bishops Down Primary and Nursery School strives to grow leaders of the future who have a strong moral, spiritual, social and cultural understanding. Our ASPIRE school values of Achievement, Self-Belief, Perseverance, Independence, Resilience and Equality, underpin the life at the school at all levels. The school's aim is to provide opportunities for our children to develop as independent, confident, successful learners with high aspirations who know how to make a positive contribution to their community and the wider society.

Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour policy. The school acknowledges the DFE guidance, 'Use of reasonable force Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies, July 2013'. Namely, below:

What is reasonable force?

- 1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.*
- 2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.*
- 3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.*
- 4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.*
- 5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.*
- 6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.*

Who can use reasonable force?

- 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.*

When can reasonable force be used?

- 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.*

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

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.*

Schools cannot:

- *use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.*

Members of staff in this school are expected to have a very positive approach with children. The sensitive issue of handling children, whether in terms of assistance in times of injury or distress or intervention in the rare instances of serious poor behaviour is covered in this policy statement.

All teachers and those assistants given this authority may intervene physically provided they adhere to the principles of this policy.

Definitions

Escorting – accompanying for protection or guidance. The level of compliance from the child or young person being escorted and the degree of physical force being used by the member(s) of staff will determine whether this act should be considered as a positive handling i.e. was the child being overpowered in order to be escorted.

Holding – to assert authoritatively. The degree of force used in relationship to the level of co-operation and compliance being displayed by the child determines when holding becomes restraining. The higher the level of force the more likely the action will be deemed restraint. Ultimately it will rest upon whether the child was overpowered and had no choice but to remain in the hold.

Positive handling – physical control as defined by the application of force with the intention of overpowering the child to prevent them from harming themselves or others or damaging property.

Authorised members of staff are expected to use reasonable force to prevent a child from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the child were not under the age of criminal responsibility);
- Injuring themselves or others;
- Causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property);
- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

These provisions apply when the teacher or authorised person is on school premises **and** when he/she has lawful control of the children elsewhere e.g. on a school trip.

Members of staff have the right to defend themselves from attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so.

Authorised members of staff should consider the phrase, "Will my intervention make things better or exacerbate the situation?" before intervening physically. Physical intervention is not to be used to replace good behavioural management. The age and understanding of the child must also be taken into account.

We know that physical intervention is the last resort in a wider behaviour management policy.

We know that children with Additional Educational Needs may require different handling from adults, that gender issues are complex and that, as a result of sexual abuse, children may be aroused or frightened by physical intervention.

Planning for Incidents

There is a wide range of incidents in which reasonable force might be appropriate/necessary, to control or restrain a child. Generally there are three main categories:

- 1 Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is imminent risk of injury. For example:
 - A pupil attacks a member of staff, another pupil, or is self-harming
 - Pupils are fighting
- 2 Where there is an assessment that risk of injury, or significant damage to property. For example:
 - A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing deliberate damage to property
 - A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, out of control behaviour or the misuse of objects
 - A pupil is running on a stairway or through a classroom in a way in which he/she might have or might cause an accident likely to injure him/herself or others
 - A pupil tries to leave the school grounds without permission and such an action is judged to put them at risk within the community

- 3 Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline:
- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an instruction to leave the classroom
 - A pupil behaves in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson. I.e. that learning becomes impossible for other members of the class.

When the school is aware that a child is likely to behave in a way that may require physical control or positive handling, it will be essential to plan how to respond if and when the need arises. Such plans need to address:

- Managing the pupil (strategies to de-scale the conflict, what holds to be used, what form of words are most likely to lead to calm)
- The involvement of the child and their parents/carers in developing the plan thus ensuring all parties are clear about what actions will be taken and why
- Staff awareness of the plan and their part in it
- Planning where appropriate how additional support can be summoned in the event of the plan being used
- Ensuring that the individual needs of the child are taken into account. In some instances, it will be necessary to consider the physical/health needs of the child in order to ensure that holds are safe.

Every intervention should be planned and conducted within the context of recognised strategies for the use of reasonable force. Only in exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of serious injury should a member of staff act/take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of reasonable force.

Staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck, by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict airways and circulation
- Slapping, punching or kicking
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping a child
- Holding a child by the hair or by the ear
- Holding a pupil in a prone position (except in exceptional circumstances)

During the course of any physical intervention, use of the voice is likely to be the most effective tool available to staff in seeking to de-escalate the situation. Holds and positive handling should be chosen with this in mind and staff should attempt to communicate with the child at all times.

The use of supine and prone positive handling should only be used in extreme circumstances and when all other techniques have either been tried and failed or the judgement of staff is that it is the only way safely to control extreme aggressive and challenging behaviour.

Should one of these techniques be used then the following will apply:

- The technique will only be used by staff specifically trained for the purpose
- The incident will be recorded in detail as prescribed in this policy and that information will be used to plan for the future. The emphasis will be on how to avoid the situation arising again. The content of the plan will be shared with the pupil, parents/carers as well as colleagues from other agencies where appropriate.
- The use of the technique will be carefully monitored by someone not involved in the positive handling. Careful attention should be paid to the amount of time that the positive handling is applied. It may be necessary to call other agencies to the scene if the pupil is failing to calm and there is concern about the safety of extending the use of the technique beyond 4-5 minutes.
- Regular checks to ensure breathing and airways are clear are imperative during the use of the technique

Recording, Reporting and Repair

A record of any occasion, prepared as soon as possible afterwards on CPOMS and must include:

- Names of pupils involved
- Names of staff and witnesses involved
- Date, time and location of the incident
- Reason force was used, its nature, degree and type of hold
- Antecedents and detail of the incident including what was said
- Pupils' responses and outcome of the incident
- Details of any injuries including marks to the skin
- Details of any damage to property

The report will be kept securely via the CPOMS system. Individual staff should keep a copy for their own records.

The report will be used to assist all concerned with planning to avoid repetition of the incident. Analysis of what was effective should similarly be carried out. A written plan will be made to be shared with the child and parents.

Staff involved in the incident will be provided with support. Reflecting on the incident and how it was managed will take place if necessary before the member of staff resumes their duties. Similarly, pupils will need time to calm down and reflect upon their part in the incident.