

Moston Fields Primary School policy document

Policy Title	Positive Handling Policy
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Last Review: May 2022

Ratified by Policy Committee: May 2022

Next Review: May 2025

Policy Statement

Staff at Moston Fields are trained to look after the pupils in their care. They 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 in such a way as to endanger themselves or others. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request.

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 (DfES/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 with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline. (See DfES document on use of reasonable force)

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It should be considered alongside the most recent LEA 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 governing body 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 governing body. This policy has a clear focus:

- The primary consideration is the welfare of the children in our care and 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.

Identified pupils and their parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices.

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, if misused, cause injury.
- 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 may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. Where a child has the propensity to escalate unsafe behaviours, the risk assessment should include the environment and availability of equipment that may cause a risk. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used.

Help Protocols (see appendix 1)

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help. Staff make this offer by using a scripted phrase 'Help is here' this will then be responded to by the initial member of staff - to indicate if help is needed or not. If the help is not needed, staff will discretely observe and inform a member of wider leadership or SLT if felt necessary.

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.

Dealing with extreme behaviour can be highly challenging for all. Real support means offering a fresh face in the situation and sometimes alerting the initial member of staff to the fact that they may need to step back.

Deescalation Strategies and/or Well Chosen Words

A well-chosen word or diverting activity can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument.

Do try these things:

- not talking and allowing child to calm
- talk with the other adult, a normal easy conversation, to reduce tensions
- use nearby objects or activities as a potential distraction
- offer a safe space away from others
- use child's interests
- get a member of staff who has a relationship with the child

Avoid these things:

- Telling child or people to calm down
- Pointing out what they have done wrong
- Making reward based suggestions or promises

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 Principal

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 sometime 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 conduct a dynamic risk assessment 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. People should not react in anger. If they feel 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:

- How is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will 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 Moston Fields that a targeted group of staff working closely with pupils are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy. All teaching staff and teaching assistants who work 1-1 with any child who may need a positive handling plan, will receive de-escalation strategies as part of bi-annual behaviour training. This will also be offered to teaching assistant staff.

Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found on the Team Teach website <https://www.teamteach.co.uk/>

Training is supported by the Outreach service from Bowker Vale Primary School SEMH resource centre and by the outreach service of Bridgelea PRU.

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 should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the school.

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 to.

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 the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

Where a child has an increasing pattern of unsafe behaviours, a risk assessment and positive handling plan will be put into place by a member of SLT/Wider Leadership team, signed off by the Headteacher/SENDCo. Parents will be part of this process and will receive a copy. Risk assessments will be sent into the Local Authority, Health and Safety team.

Appendix for Risk Assessment and the Positive Handling plan.

Getting Help

At this school the following support structures are in place:

- IEP's and Behaviour Support plans kept on file in each classroom to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Daily debrief sessions for all staff to share experiences, concerns and access support from each other, led by a member of the SMT.
- Termly refresher meetings in the Team Teach strategies and techniques for all staff, and continuous review by SMT to inform these.

Positive Handling 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 Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular actions 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. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the Statement 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 Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in and Pastoral Support Plan or IEP.

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 principles 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 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 calm the situation down. 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 Head teacher who are expected 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.

Recording (see appendix 2)

Whenever overpowering force is used the incident must be recorded using the approved forms. The incident forms are digital and when completed and signed off by a senior leader, added to CPOMs. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record and de-brief which should be completed within 24 hours.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.
- Ensure this is shared with the HT or member of SLT to be signed off
- Add the form to CPOMs

- Parents need to be informed (on the same day, where possible).

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. A record is written into the Incident Book. This refers to supporting sheets and other relevant information.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling 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.

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy