



Abbots Ripton Church of England Primary School

Positive Handling Policy

Written by: Claire Matthews

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Our church school creates a firm foundation where together, with God's help and with the help of others, we learn for life, achieve our best and grow in faith.

Introduction

At Abbots Ripton Church of England Primary School there may, at times, be children with challenging behaviour that may necessitate the use of physical intervention to prevent injury to themselves, staff and children, damage to property, or the breakdown of a safe and enjoyable learning environment. The aim of positive handling is not punishment or control but to support safe learning for everyone.

This policy has been written to support all staff who come into contact with children and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for positive handling.

Values and Principles

As a Voluntary Aided school with strong Christian values, we expect to see Christian attitudes forming the basis of the whole school ethos with the church, the school and the community working together to set a high standard and expectations for behavior.

At Abbots Ripton CE Primary School we believe that everybody in the school community:

- has the right to feel safe, secure and cared for;
- has the right to access appropriate support to manage their emotions and their behavior;
- should be provided with a framework so that all staff who come into contact with children are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the context of positive handling;
- should be provided with information and guidance to support the school's Safeguarding and Positive Behaviour Policies.

Staff have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management/ de-escalation strategies have failed or when children, staff or property are at risk.

Unless an unplanned emergency, positive handling should only be carried out by Team Teach trained staff using appropriate procedures and relating to the children's Personal Support Plan (PSP).

In the case of an unplanned emergency, physical intervention may become necessary when a child behaves in an unexpected way, the child may not have a PSP and trained staff may not be on hand. The duty of care still remains if

appropriately trained staff are not on hand to assist the child. The response must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and use the minimum amount of force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety, consistent with the circumstances and with any training the staff may have received.

Relationship to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Relevant legislation

The use of all forms of physical intervention and physical contact are governed by the criminal and civil law. The unwarranted or inappropriate use of force may constitute an assault. In addition it may infringe the human rights of a child or young person.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a children from:

- committing a criminal offence
- causing personal injury or damage to a property
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among the pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

As included in the DfE guidance on the use of force, seclusion should only be considered in exceptional circumstances and it is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order. Therefore, at no time should the door be locked as to do so is unlawful and can amount to the false imprisonment of a children.

Government Advice Informing This Policy

[Behaviour and discipline in schools: Advice for Headteachers and school staff \(January 2016\) \(DfE\)](#)

Power to use reasonable force pg 12

- Members of staff have the power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline in the classroom.
- Head teachers and authorised school staff may also use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances when conducting a search without consent for knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images or articles that have been or could be used to commit an offence or cause harm.
- Schools can also identify additional items in their school rules which may be searched for without consent. Force **cannot** be used to search for these items.

Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2013) (DfE)

- 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.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a children to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between children or blocking a child's path, or active physical contact such as leading a children by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a children under control.
- 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 a child.

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 children behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school visit;
- prevent a children leaving the classroom where allowing the children to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a children from attacking a member of staff or another children;
- restrain a children at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts;
- stop a child behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson, causing distress to the child and/or a breakdown of order.

Schools cannot use force as a punishment – this is always unlawful

Alternative Strategies

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives. However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:

- repeating an instruction until the child complies
- use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective

- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with our Positive Behaviour Policy.

Use of Positive Handling

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the children to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

Named staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the children to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective as positive handling should be a last resort. When positive handling becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the children what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the child what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple, clear language in a calm tone
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the children's compliance

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the children
- Attempt to reason with the children
- Involve other children in the restraint
- Touch or hold the children in sexual areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the children in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck

Staff Training

- Some staff are trained in Team Teach so that their use of physical restraint /positive handling falls within safe and statutory guidelines.
- Staff who are Team Teach trained have a duty to inform the Headteacher of anything which may affect their ability to handle children.
- No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training.

After the incident and Recording

Where physical control or restraint has been used, a record of the incident will be kept in the hard bound blue book in the Headteacher's office. If there is a serious incident involving a child, not involving physical intervention, it must be recorded on a Serious Log of Misbehavior form (see Positive Behaviour Policy).

- The log needs to be completed as soon as possible after the incident.
- Parents will be informed by telephone or email and this will also be recorded on the log.
- A Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form will be completed online in situations where injury has occurred to either members of staff or children. This will be done electronically by the office manager.
- Staff and children will be given basic first aid treatment for any injuries that require treatment. Where staff and children have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force they should have access to emotional support. This can be provided by other members of staff or if an exceptionally serious incident occurs then a referral to Occupational Health may be necessary.
- Debriefing must take place as soon as possible after the incident has been dealt with.
- Any injuries must be recorded in the school accident book.
- Teaching Assistants can seek guidance from the class teacher on reporting and class teachers are responsible for supporting supply staff that sustain injuries.
- If a member of staff needs hospital or GP attention following an incident with a child at work a RIDDOR online form will be completed by the office manager.

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. It is the role of the school leadership team to support staff who work with children with challenging behavior.

If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a child, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedures:

- Review of PSP or introduction of a PSP if not in place

- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Social Services)
- Staff or Children Disciplinary Procedures
- School Positive Behaviour Policy
- County Exclusions Guidance in the case of violence or assault
- Risk assessment if necessary
- The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken
- In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

If a child or parent complains when force is used

All complaints about the use of force will be investigated by the Headteacher or in the case of the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will investigate.

Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defense to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action. This reinforces the need for staff to fill in the Blue Bound Book on the day of the incident.

Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the School's Complaints Policy. If necessary the complaint will also be dealt with by the Staff Disciplinary Procedures.



Ratification of Policy

Positive Handling Policy

Presented to:committee

Policy ratified on:.....

Signed by:

Chair of Committee :.....

Chair of Governors:.....

Head teacher:.....