

MOSAIC SCHOOLS LEARNING TRUST



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POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

All schools in Mosaic Schools Learning Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Staff Responsible:

Head Teacher

Date Reviewed:

January 2025

Date of Next Review:

September 2027

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Change
January 2025	New policy

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1. Aims

At Oak Lodge there may be children with challenging behavioural difficulties, who present behaviours that may necessitate the use of restrictive physical intervention to prevent injury to themselves, staff and pupils, damage to property, or the breakdown of a safe and calm learning environment.

This policy has been prepared for the support of all staff who come into contact with pupils, and for volunteers working within the school to set out the school's arrangements for positive handling.

The policy is available to parents on request.

The aim of this policy is to ensure a safe and happy environment, where everybody in the school community feels safe and respected.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To provide a safe learning environment;
- To provide a framework in which all staff who come into contact with pupils are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the context of positive handling;
- To support the school's Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies.

2. The Law

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a statutory right for school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence or engaging in conduct that could be an offence;
- causing injury to themselves or others;
- damaging property;
- prejudicing good order and discipline at the school.

The law applies where the pupil is on school premises or any other place where s/he is in the lawful control or charge of the school staff member. This means that the power extends to school visits.

The Act does not in any way authorise the use of corporal punishment. The law forbids a teacher to use any degree of physical contact that is deliberately intended to punish, or which is primarily intended to cause pain, injury or humiliation.

3. Definitions of Positive Handling

Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming themselves, others or property.

The DfE Use of Reasonable Force Guidance (DFE-00295-2013) states that:

In a school force is generally used for two different purposes – 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 guiding a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.

- 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.

There is no statutory definition of ‘reasonable force’. However, the guidance (DFE-00295-2013) states that 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. It states, although not exhaustive, that:

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.

The guidance states that the use of force should be ‘reasonable in the circumstances.’

4. Procedures

The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the teacher concerned and usually based on a dynamic risk assessment. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result.

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 pupils, staff or property are at risk.

Assessment:

- Evaluate the situation and risk level.
- Consider alternative de-escalation techniques.
- Assess the pupil's individual needs and history.

Communication:

- Clearly communicate with the pupil, explaining what will happen if the behaviour continues.
- Use calm, non-threatening language.
- Engage with the pupil to understand the cause of their behaviour.

Intervention:

- Use the least intrusive method to achieve the desired outcome.
- Ensure another staff member is present if possible.
- Monitor the pupil's physical and emotional response throughout.

Post-Incident:

- Allow time for the pupil to calm down in a safe environment.
- When the pupil had had adequate time to regulate, discuss the incident with the pupil to reflect on the behaviour and consequences.

- Complete an incident report detailing the event.

De-escalation strategies may include:

- Verbal advice and support- including ways to change the situation
- Choices/consequences
- Using diversion & diffusion
- Sensory input- including quiet space, a drink
- Using negotiation
- Time out offered
- Re-assurance
- Planned ignoring
- Humour

5. Training

Physical restraint is an available option, only to be used when other means of dealing with the situation have failed. Staff are made aware of this policy and have training on child protection that will ensure they are aware of their duties and the law.

Staff are trained in proactive and de-escalation techniques. Key staff have training in positive handling methods of restraint and intervention from React UK.

Appendix 2 details the restrictive techniques that staff are trained to use.

6. Recording

Where physical control or restraint has been used, a record of the incident must be kept (appendix 1)

An incident form needs to be completed within 24 hrs of the incident. If more than one member of staff was involved, they should create an individual record rather than collaborate on one.

Parents will always be informed if their child has been involved in an incident which has required physical intervention. This will be done as soon as reasonably possible by telephone or in writing but before the end of the school day.

A Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form will be completed in situations where injury has occurred to either members of staff or pupils.

Staff and children will be given basic first aid treatment for any injuries that require treatment. Where staff and pupils have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force, they should have access to emotional support.

Debriefing must take place as soon as possible after the incident has been dealt with.

7. Monitoring Incidents

All handling records are viewed by a member of the Senior Management Team (SLT). Each review will consider whether the handling incident was avoidable and whether measures can be put in place to avoid handling in future.

8. Positive Behaviour Plans

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to present with challenging behaviour that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. A positive behaviour plan:

- Provides a structured intervention to manage pupil behaviour
- Is designed to support the pupil to self-regulate and manage their own behaviours
- Can serve as an individual risk assessment to reduce the likelihood of fight, flight or freeze behaviour leading to the need for positive handling or the use of force

A Positive Behaviour Plan includes:

- The target behaviours causing concern
- The triggers for this behaviour
- Strategies to support self-regulation

All members of staff working with the pupil need to be involved in the development of the plan and parents need to be involved as early as possible when their child's behaviour is a cause for concern. The Positive Behaviour Plan should be discussed with the pupil where appropriate.

9. Complaints

We all have a duty of care to the children in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by the staff, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It will not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by safeguarding procedures.

Use of physical force that is unwarranted, excessive, or punitive is not acceptable. Failure to comply with this principle when considering or using physical force should be dealt with under the school disciplinary procedures.

Appendix 1. Behaviour Incident Requiring Handling Report Form

Pupil Information	
Name	
Class/ Year	
Date	
Time	
Location	

Details of person completing form	
Name	
Position	

Context
Description of behavioural incident including any triggers/antecedents Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Description of Proactive/ De-escalation strategies tried

What do you believe would have happened without physical intervention?

What behaviour was the child presenting that warranted physical Intervention/restraint? (tick)			
Risk of injury to self or others	<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk of significant damage to property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk of criminal offence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Severe disruption to pupils/dignity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive Handling Technique used (please tick all that apply)			
Double hand restraint	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secure Cup Restraint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Straight Arm Restraint	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seated Position	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leg restriction A	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leg Restriction B	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kneeling position	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
The methods above are the only acceptable methods of restraint other than in an extreme emergency to prevent loss of life etc. Where other handling (not restraint) has been used for example, back touch used or arm lightly touched to guide, please describe it below.			<input type="checkbox"/>

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Names of Staff involved in Physical Intervention	

Was anyone injured? If so please provide details of injury and treatment

Name of member of staff who checked the pupil for injuries after physical intervention

Incident Debrief – What was the probable cause/function of behaviour? (please tick)			
Sensory	<input type="checkbox"/>	Escape	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tangible	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attention <input type="checkbox"/>			
Any learning for staff team? How could physical intervention be improved/avoided in future?			
Please specify any other recording procedures used (please tick)			
Accident book record	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accident form	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Safeguarding Concern form	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pupil Voice (where appropriate) Continue on Separate sheet as necessary

Parent/Carer informed by (please tick)			
Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact book	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Face to face contact	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature:		Date:	
Name: (please print)			
Head Teacher /SLT Signature:		Date:	
Name: (Please print)			

Appendix 2: Restrictive Techniques Used

See Appendix Attached