

Policy Document for: Mainstream schools Positive Handling and physical intervention

Approved:

Next review: November 2024

Additions/amendments in this version

	<i>Updated to changes references to include HT and changing to BA MAT policy</i>

It is recognised that the vast majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the behaviour expectations at Bobbing, Grove Park and Iwade Schools. The well-being, welfare and safety of all pupils and staff at Bobbing, Grove Park and Iwade Schools is of paramount importance. Through the implementation of the behaviour policy, whereby children are taught positive behaviours and relationships we recognise that most children respond well. Staff are trained in de-escalation techniques and strategies to support children. All our staff are trained to know that ‘all behaviour is communication’ and where a child becomes heightened/dysregulated this demonstrates that support and care is needed.

It is however acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, where a child is putting themselves or others at risk of serious injury or harm, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required.

Bobbing, Grove Park and Iwade Schools acknowledge that physical techniques are only part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management. Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies and de-escalation techniques have failed or when pupils or staff are at risk.

- We do not support the routine use of physical interventions.
- All staff at Bobbing, Grove Park and Iwade Schools understand that school cannot use force as a punishment; it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.
- Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming themselves or others
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

Training

All school staff who are authorised to be in charge of pupils are automatically authorised to use reasonable force where necessary. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling, although we recognise that adults have a duty of care to act in the best interests of the children. Staff should use their own judgement and assess the risks before acting.

Positive Handling training (Team Teach) will be made available to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the Head of School. We will prioritise non class facing staff as well as members of staff in a class where a pupil is potentially at higher risk due to their behaviours. All staff will receive training on a range of de-escalation techniques and strategies.

The Trust employs a number of qualified Team Teach trainers who deliver the training but can also offer support where staff request this.

What is reasonable force?

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 may include examples such as preventing a child leaving the classroom where leaving would risk their safety, prevent a child attacking a member of staff or another child or restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- Reasonable in the circumstances means using no more force than is needed.
- 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.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury.
- It is acknowledged that in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injury as an accidental consequence of the intervention.

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervention. The form of physical intervention may involve staff doing the following:

- Physically interposing themselves between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Escorting a pupil
- Shepherding a pupil away

This is not a definitive list and other strategies may be employed. Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school.

See "Use of Reasonable Force; Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies" (DfE, 2013)

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This power applies to any member of staff at the school. 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.

Different types of physical contact with pupils

Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupil. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when together around the school;
- When comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- To demonstrate exercise or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching;
- To give first aid.
- Intimate care (see Intimate Care Policy)

Physical Intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the arm or shoulder where the pupil is compliant.

Physical Control/Restraint

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of “reasonable force” should be seen as a last resort. All such incidents must be recorded and be stored in an accessible way. If at all possible, more than one member of staff should be present if physical restraint is necessitated. The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint.

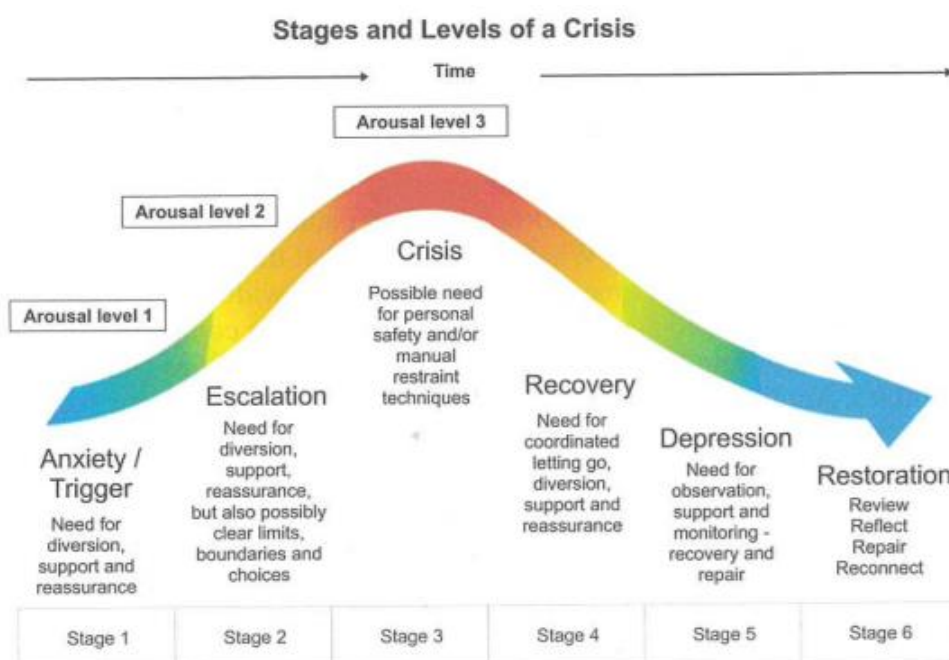
Environmental intervention

At times, the environment may be used to support children to help keep themselves and others safe. This could be through the use of a “safe space” which has been designated to help children calm and regulate, or through preventing access to spaces in school (such as stairwells) to reduce potential for unsafe behaviour.

Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour and Escalating Situations

Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order, in line with the Bobbing, Grove Park and Iwade Schools Behaviour Policy. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively.

Through Team Teach training, all staff are aware of the “6 stages” of crisis;



Staff should be able to justify that a range of de-escalation strategies have been attempted throughout Stages 1 and 2, and proved ineffective or would have been impractical before asking for a trained Team Teach adult to come and support them. These strategies would include the use of space, safe environments, diversions, calm stances and postures, non-threatening facial expressions, low tone, volume and pace in communication, careful use of words, and physical reassurance and prompts.

Consideration of these strategies should be maintained during and after the need for physical contact. If used, as soon as it is safe, any hold or restraint should be gradually relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control. The pupil should be informed about what will happen next and be offered reassurance and encouragement to remain calm. In this way the pupil will be more likely to see the restraint as an act of care.

During dealing with an incident of dysregulated behaviour, staff will check in with each other in case a change of face is needed to support the child to calm. This also offers support for colleagues, which will then be followed up after the incident. Should a member of staff be injured during an incident, this will be recorded with the expectations of the first aid policy. The Trust offers supervision and counselling as needed. This can be requested from the Head or HR.

Recording

Where positive handling has been used a record of the incident always needs to be kept. All recording needs to be completed on the day of incident on CPOMS and needs to include the following:

- a brief description of the incident and actions taken
- attempts made to calm the situation
- names of staff using restraint
- nature of physical intervention technique used
- how incident was resolved and any consequences
- effectiveness of the intervention

Informing Parents

Parents will always be informed following an incident where positive handling has been used. If appropriate, a discussion will take place involving parents and relevant members of staff (e.g. Community Assistant HT, Head of School, SENCO, Community Lead, class teacher) to put measures in place to address the behaviour concern.

Action after an Incident

The Head of School or Assistant HT will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Child Protection Safeguarding Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
- Behaviour Policy

Members of staff will be kept informed of any action taken. In case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy regarding Positive Handling and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's Complaints Procedure.

Monitoring of Incidents

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use positive handling, this will always be recorded and documented. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Head of School/Trust Safeguarding Lead/SENCo to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using positive handling. This process will address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.

Risk Assessment for children with specific needs

If a child is demonstrating challenging behaviour which is putting himself or others at harm, the school will carry out a risk assessment. This will identify the risky behaviours and then set out which strategies will be put in place to mitigate these risks; a meeting will be held with parents to design a Positive Behaviour Support Plan where strategies and Team Teach handling will be agreed with parents.

At this meeting, the parents, Inclusion lead, Head of School and Class teacher shall all be present, along with any other professionals which could have an influence on the plan.

This plan will remain under regular review and may form part of the evidence used for EHCP application.