

Broomwood Primary School

Positive Handling (Physical Restraint) Policy

Introduction

At Broomwood Primary School we believe that children have the right to independence, choice and inclusion, and we seek to provide opportunities for personal growth and emotional health and wellbeing. Children who are unable to control their actions or unable to appreciate danger have a right to be protected; as do those around them and staff have a duty of care, for all, to exercise.

Rationale

Children learn who they are and how the world is, by forming relationships with people and things around them. The quality of a child's relationship with significant adults is vital to their healthy development and emotional health and wellbeing.

Many of the pupils who require emotional support from school may have been subject to trauma or distress or may not have had a positive start in life. It is with this in mind, that staff seek to respond to children's developmental needs by using appropriate safe touch.

Our school policy takes into account the extensive neurobiological research and studies relating to attachment theory and child development that identify safe touch as a positive contribution to brain development, mental health and the development of social skills. The school has adopted an informed, evidence based decision to allow safe touch as a developmentally appropriate intervention that will aid healthy growth and learning.

Our policy rests on the belief that every member of staff needs to know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. Hence, staff need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the difference. Equally, when a child is in deep distress, staff need to know when and how sufficient connection and psychological holding can be provided without touching.

All staff need to be clearly aware of procedures within this policy. The policy should be seen in the wider context of the 'Relational Belonging Policy' which aims to promote positive values and good behaviour choices.

Legal Framework

This policy is developed in line with:

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 93.
- The DfE guidance 'Use of Reasonable Force in Schools' (2025).
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2025).
- The Equality Act 2010.

It should also be read alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy, and relevant health and safety guidance.

Objectives

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. At Broomwood we do everything that we can firstly to prevent incidents through the creation of a calm, supportive and inclusive environment and then we implement many de-escalation strategies to support pupils who become dysregulated. Examples include our overall commitment to Relational Belonging, using the zones of regulation, having a rest area in each class and where required personalising approaches to individual pupils.

However, in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force is required. Broomwood Primary School acknowledges that physical techniques are only a small part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

Types of Touch

Casual / informal / incidental touch Staff use touch with pupils as part of a normal relationship, for example comforting a child, giving reassurance and congratulating. This might include putting an arm out to bar an exit from a room, taking a child by the hand, patting on the back or putting an arm around the shoulders. The benefit of this action is often proactive and can prevent a situation from escalating.

General reparative touch This is used by staff working with children who are having difficulties with their emotions. Healthy emotional development requires safe touch as a means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, angry or sad child. Touch used to regulate a child's emotions triggers the release of the calming chemical oxytocin in the body. Reparative touch may include stroking a back or squeezing an arm.

Contact/interactive Play Contact play is used by staff adopting a role similar to a parent in a healthy child-parent relationship. This will only take place when the child has developed a trusting relationship with the adult and when they feel completely comfortable and at ease with this type of contact. Contact play may include an adult chasing and catching the child or an adult and child playing a game of building towers with their hands.

This sort of play releases the following chemicals in the brain: Opioids – to calm and soothe and give pleasure; Dopamine – to focus, be alert and concentrate; BDNF (Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor) – a brain ‘fertiliser’ that encourages growth.

Positive handling (calming a dysregulated child) There are times when the use of force is lawful. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides all school staff, including non-teaching staff, with the power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances

As per the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and subsequent DfE guidance, a member of staff may use reasonable force to:

- Prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others.
- Prevent serious damage to property.
- Committing a criminal offence
- Maintain good order and discipline (Behaviour).

At Broomwood we interpret this in our school through the use of ‘positive handling’- the positive application of force to protect and calm a dysregulated child. Positive handling will be used only as a measure of last resort and applied using a calm and measured approach. It will only be used when NECESSARY, PROPORTIONATE and REASONABLE.

No member of staff is required to use restraint, but all staff retain a duty of care to protect children and act appropriately in given circumstances.

The relevant considerations which must be taken into account:

- The degree of force must be proportionate to the circumstances and incident, and seriousness of the event (or the consequences it is intended to prevent).
- It should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result, (it might also depend on the age, understanding and sex of the pupil).
- Use of force is only reasonable if particular circumstances warrant it, otherwise it is unlawful; it therefore follows that it should not be used for situations that can be resolved without it, or for trivial misdemeanours. All use must be necessary.

-Positive handling must not be used to make a child comply with instructions unless it complies with the key points above.

- A child who is in a state of dysregulation and has no mechanism for self calming or regulating their strong emotional reactions will be physically contained by staff. This kind of containment will involve at least one member of staff who has been Team Teacher Trained and the appropriate technique will be used. It may also be necessary for another member of staff to control a child's kicking legs. Staff will employ the safest and gentlest means of holding a child, which is entirely designed to enable the child to feel safe and soothed, bring them down from an uncontrollable state of hyperarousal. Maintaining boundaries in such cases can be a vital corrective emotional experience, without which the child can be left at risk of actual physical or psychological damage.

The brain does not develop self-soothing neuronal pathways unless this safe emotional regulation has been experienced. Physical containment of a dysregulating child can be the only way to provide the reassurance necessary to restore calm.

During any incident of physical holding intervention, staff must seek as far as possible to:

- lower the child's level of anxiety during the restraint by continually offering verbal reassurance and avoiding generating fear of injury in the child;
- cause the minimum level of restriction of movement of limbs consistent with the danger of injury (so, for example, will not restrict the movement of the child's legs when they are on the ground unless in an enclosed space where flailing legs are likely to be injured);
- ensure at least one other member of staff is present.

Steps to take before positive handling

If the school is aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a way that might require physical restraint, it should plan how to respond. This will be done using the school Individual Behaviour/Inclusion Plans Consideration should be given to:

- =managing the pupil. Use reactive strategies to de-escalate event
- involving parents, where possible before an event, but if not possible after the event so that they are fully aware of how the school may have to react
- briefing staff, ensuring that everyone knows what action should be taken
- ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate
- the need to take specific advice about the safest way to hold pupils with specific health needs (particularly SEND)

- Prevention strategies and calming measures which will be employed and the following action should be taken, as much as possible, before a restraint is used;
- conversation, distraction, coaxing skills, gentle persuasion or redirection to other activities (e.g. touching the child's arm and leading him/her away from danger, gently stroking the child's shoulder).
- encouraging the pupil to help him/herself feel more secure by wrapping a blanket tightly around him/herself or holding on tightly to a large cushion or stuffed toy.
- put distance between the child and others - move others to a safer place.
- calmly remove anything that could be used as a weapon, including hot drinks, objects, furniture.
- to prevent a child continuing to pose harm in a dangerous situation, advise others to leave but remain with the child.
- use seclusion only if necessary for a short period while waiting for help, preferably where a staff member can observe the child.
- keep talking calmly to the child, explain what is happening and why, how it can stop, and what will happen next.
- use first aid procedures in the event of injury or physical distress when safe to do so.
- adults in charge should take a calm, measured approach to a situation, and never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger, frustration, or to punish a pupil. If a member of staff's response had become emotionally charged then a "change of face" strategy should be initiated either by themselves or another member of staff in attendance.
- all trained staff should apply their 'Team Teach' restraint training knowledge.

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. In exceptional circumstances, when there is an immediate risk of injury, (eg to prevent a pupil running on to a busy road, hitting someone or throwing something) staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force'.

In other circumstances, staff should never act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck or in a way that might restrict breathing.
- Slapping, punching, kicking, tripping or forcing limbs against a joint.
- Holding or pulling a pupil by the hair.
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground.

The key issue is to establish good order, and so any action which could exacerbate the situation should be avoided. The age and level of understanding of the pupil is

very relevant in these circumstances. Physical intervention to enforce compliance with staff instruction is likely to be increasingly inappropriate with older pupils. It should never be used as a substitute for good behaviour management.

Who can use positive handling?

Several key members of staff have been Team Teach trained; these staff are listed in appendix B. This training supports staff in using pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques. As far as is possible the staff using positive handling will be those which are Team Teach trained. However, there may be occasions when this is not possible. All staff have a duty of care and may need to be involved in a positive handling scenario. In these circumstances a trained member of staff will replace them as soon as possible.

Broomwood Primary School's Position

- Physical intervention will always be a last resort, used only when other de-escalation strategies have failed.
- Several members of staff at Broomwood Primary School are trained in Team Teach techniques. Where positive handling is required, staff will use Team Teach-approved methods to ensure interventions are safe, proportionate, and appropriate.
- Any intervention must use the minimum force necessary and for the shortest possible time.
- Teachers and designated support staff are authorised by the Headteacher to use reasonable force. However, where possible any teacher struggling to support a dysregulated pupil should in the first instance send the red triangle to get a senior leader. The teacher also should consider whether it is a good option to remove the rest of the class to prevent any of them from being hurt.

Recording, Reporting and Follow-Up

Detailed Records

- Staff must provide a comprehensive written account of any incident requiring positive handling.
- This record must include:
 - Time and date and where it took place
 - Events leading up to the intervention (triggers, pupil behaviour, staff responses).
 - The specific intervention used, including Team Teach strategies where applicable.
 - Duration and outcome of the intervention.
 - Names of staff and pupils involved, plus any witnesses.
 - Details of any injuries or property damage.

- Witnesses must provide statement too
 - The report must remain factual
- The statement needs to be signed

Use of CPOMs

- All written reports must be uploaded to CPOMs on the same day of the incident.
- The Headteacher (or delegated senior leader) will review each entry and monitor patterns or concerns.

Meeting the headteacher

- The headteacher will do an incident review with the staff member/s who needed to use positive handling to ensure that all procedures have been followed correctly and to ensure that the staff member is ok. If the headteacher is involved the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors will be contacted.
- Where possible the headteacher/Senior leader will meet with the child who was positively handled to gather their views

Communication with Parents/Carers

- Parents/carers will be informed by telephone on the same day of any positive handling incident.
- A formal letter summarising the incident will also be sent home within 24 hours.

LADO Consultation

- Where a complaint arises, or if there is any uncertainty about the appropriateness of staff actions, the Headteacher will consult the LADO for advice.
- In the event of a formal allegation, the school will follow safeguarding procedures in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Visits Out of School

Our equal opportunities policy states that all pupils should be included in all curriculum activities. However, health and safety remain a priority and staff should carry out risk assessments for pupils who may present a risk before visits.

Considerations include:

- The pupil's ability to cope with the visit demands.
- Sufficient suitably trained staff present.
- Communication with school for support if necessary.

A parent may be required to attend the trip with the child to support the child in being able to attend.

Legal Duties

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools must make reasonable adjustments to include children with SEND and disabilities in trips and activities.

The DfE guidance on Health and Safety on Educational Visits (2018) makes clear that schools should include all pupils where reasonably possible, but the Headteacher has overall responsibility for deciding whether a pupil can safely attend.

The Headteacher may decide a child should not attend only if:

- A risk assessment shows there are significant, unmanageable health and safety risks.
- Reasonable adjustments (extra staff, alternative arrangements, specialist support) have been considered and tried but are still insufficient to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

Process Expected

- Carry out a written risk assessment for the pupil and trip.
- Involve parents/carers in discussions about risks and possible adjustments.
- Document why attendance is unsafe and what alternatives were considered.
- Offer an alternative educational activity if the pupil cannot attend.

Whistleblowing

It is acknowledged that under some circumstances, physical intervention can be misapplied. Staff are reminded of their duty of care to report concerns to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. Concerns will be investigated and, if appropriate, referred to safeguarding or disciplinary procedures. Staff will be supported in doing so.

Complaints

The existence of this policy and early parental involvement reduces but does not remove the risk of complaints. Where complaints arise, they will be managed under the Complaints Policy, Child Protection Procedures and, if necessary, referral to the LADO.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Broomwood Primary School welcomes and values disabled people taking an active part in school life. We are committed to ensuring disabled pupils are not disadvantaged and will make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Appendix A: Team Teach Techniques

Single Person Holds

Caring C Guide

Half Shield Guide

Help Hug

Turn, Gather, Guide – Walking

Small Child Techniques

Caring C Guide

Single Person Double Elbow

Small Child 2 Chairs with Support

Small Child Beanbag Response

Small Child Escort

Small Child Response to Deadweight

Two Person Holds

Alternative Changeover

Response to Deadweight

Response to Spitting (holding head)

Two Person Graded Hold (standing)

Two Person Hold to Chairs (seated)

Appendix B: Staff Trained in Team Teach

Louise Owen- July 2025

Carl Bridge- July 2025

Sarah Stairmund- July 2025