

Positive Handling & Guidance on the use of Physical Handling

The ethos of the school is that control of pupils is based upon good professional relationships between the staff and pupils.

In the school environment the handling of children, for any reason, should always be undertaken with sensitivity and care. Adults in school may often offer a hand for comfort or reassurance and this guidance is not intended to alter that.

Some children may require physical handling for any number of reasons but the most difficult times are those that result from a refusal to co-operate. In any situation it is important to consider whether physical handling is the only way to deal with the problem.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that staff are clear as to who and when can use reasonable force on a pupil. Reasonable force should only be used as a last resort and in the circumstances as detailed below.

As responsible adults we have to consider the safety of the individual concerned but also the safety of the other children and ourselves. If an adult considers that there is risk to any one of these parties physical handling and possibly restraint might be necessary.

This policy is based on section 93 of the Education and Inspectors Act 2006, Equality Act and Guidance 2010 and Education Act 2011 and enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing any offence (or for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person (including the pupil him/herself); or
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

For the majority of children physical handling is unnecessary and inappropriate. However there are times, especially when working with children with special needs, when physical handling becomes necessary. It is therefore important to consider the following points to ensure that any physical handling is appropriate and necessary.

- One of the key factors to consider in any situation is “time” – time for the child to respond to any given request or instruction

The Act does not authorise the use of corporate punishment in any circumstances.

All teachers in conjunction with support staff at the school are authorised to use reasonable force when it is necessary.

Reasonable force would need to be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Reasonable force may be used in exercising statutory power, introduced under section 45 of the Violent and Criminal Reduction Act 2006 and Education Act 2011 to search pupils without their consent for weapons.

In any situation that might result in physical handling it is necessary to stop and think: -

- What is the norm? What happens for the majority of the children? Am I being fair?
- How often do we manipulate or manoeuvre other children?
- Do we expect the majority of the children to respond without being handled? – Children with special needs must be given the same chances as other children.
- Children should only be “handled” when absolutely necessary.
- Children need to be given a warning – whether for behaviour or for preparing to move into another activity. This is especially true for children with special needs e.g. “in 2 minutes we are going into the hall” etc.
- It is important to recognise that everyone needs personal space – for children with special needs this is very important because they may not be able to express this need, they may not have the language skills.
- Hitting out / biting etc towards another child or adult can be a child’s way of expressing frustration – when this happens it is important to examine what has gone on before, could something have caused frustration, could the situation have been prevented?

When a child fails to respond to warnings and continues with his/her own agenda then a hand in the small of the back can be used to gently push/encourage him/her towards your desired activity. If this is unsuccessful then try offering a hand to hold and lead the child where you want him or her to go - try to avoid grabbing the child’s hand or arm.

Young children and especially those with Special Educational Needs take longer to process information, therefore longer to act on it. It may be that they have not had enough time to think about what you want them to do and then act upon it.

We will not treat a disabled pupil less favourably, for a reason relating to their disability, than someone to whom that reason does not apply, without justification; and will take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage to pupils who are not disabled (known as the reasonable adjustments duty).

We may consider it necessary to use reasonable force where:

- Action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury
- There is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline
- Reasonable force should only be used when another adult is present

All attempts to avoid using reasonable force should initially be employed by attempting to de-escalate the incident. Reasonable force should only be used when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using reasonable force. All uses of reasonable force should be recorded on the school’s ‘use of positive handling record sheet’ (see attached). At Ardleigh Green Infant School teaching staff and teaching assistants only will use reasonable force as a last resort to comply with the duty of care for pupils.

Use of Positive Handling Record

Name of Pupil:		
Date:	Time:	Location:
Name of member of staff involved:		
Name of Witness:		
Details of any other pupils involved:		
Nature of incident: <i>(brief notes only)</i>		
Action taken: <i>(brief notes only)</i>		
Any injuries suffered by staff of pupils including any medical attention needed:		
Follow up, including post incident support and any disciplinary action against the pupils:		
Any information shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies:		
When and how those with parental responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed:		
Has any complaint been logged?		
Report compiled by:		
Role:		
Signature:		