

Oakwood School

Managing Behaviour- A Positive Handling Approach Policy

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Introduction

We have adopted a positive approach to behaviour which centres around de-escalation of situations in the first instance though it recognises that in a small number of cases physical intervention may be needed to prevent harm to the individual and others. At Oakwood School, staff are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Every member of staff has a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from harming themselves or others or if a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property.

The use of force is a complex and emotive issue. These issues are covered in this policy. As such this policy must be considered in the context of the whole school, its aims, organisation and curriculum.

AIMS

This policy will cover the following areas:

1. Clarification of the law around Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)
2. RPI in the context of Oakwood
3. Risk Reduction at Oakwood
4. De-escalation techniques at Oakwood
5. Recording and Reporting
6. Monitoring incidents
7. Post incident support
8. Complaints
9. Risk assessments and Positive Behaviour Plans

1. Clarification of the Law around Restrictive Physical Intervention

Section 550A of the Education Act, 1996 clarifies the position about use of restrictive physical interventions by teachers and others authorised by the head teacher to control or restrain pupils. Teachers and other authorised staff are reminded that use of physical force must be reasonable and comply with:

- Oakwood's Behaviour Improvement and Management Policy
- Behaviour Management Programmes which have been drawn up with the assistance and consent of parents/carers.
- Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing bodies, DfE July 2013
- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties, DfE September 2003.

Positive handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time.

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.

What is Reasonable Force?

'Reasonable force' is defined in DfE, July 2013: Advice for Head Teachers, staff and governing bodies as:

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.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use force 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 leading 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.
- 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 the pupil.

Who can use reasonable force?

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- 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.

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- 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 individual circumstances.
- The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force may be used:
 - Remove disruptive children from the environment
 - 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 hurting a member of staff or another pupil.
 - 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.

Communicating our approach to the use of force (Use of reasonable force, DfE, July 2013)

- This policy will be made known to staff and parents and displayed on our school website.
- There is no requirement to have a policy on the use of force, but it is good practice to set out the circumstances in which force might be used. For example separating pupils found to be fighting, or a pupil refusing to leave a room when asked to do so
- Any policy on the use of reasonable force should acknowledge the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs and/or disability.
- **Schools do not require parental consent to use reasonable force.**
- Schools should NOT have a 'no contact' policy. To do so might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil, or prevent them from causing harm.
- By taking steps to ensure that staff, pupils and parents are clear about when force might be used, school will reduce the likelihood of complaints being made when force has been used properly.

Telling parents when force has been used on their child:

Whenever a serious incident has occurred parents will be informed. In deciding what a serious incident is, professional judgement will be used taking into consideration the following:

- The pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident.
- The degree of force used.
- The effect on the pupil or member of staff.
- The child's age.

Advice:

- Physical intervention should **never** be used as a substitute for good behavioural management.
- *Before intervening physically all distraction and diversion techniques should have been exhausted to include a change of staff.*
- A calm and measured approach should be used
- Staff should not show anger or loss of temper or give the impression that the physical intervention itself is a punishment, and if necessary staff should recall the 'help script', which is to request assistance from a colleague.
- If dealing with older/stronger/physically larger pupils or if staff think they or other pupils are at risk you may:
 - remove other pupils who are at risk
 - summon assistance from colleagues

Necessary physical contact:

- Demonstrating or assisting in any form of physical education
- Providing physical prompts across all curriculum subjects
- When a pupil is in distress, comforting them appropriate to their developmental stage.
- Assisting in personal care needs.
- To give first aid

2. Restrictive Physical Intervention in the Context of Oakwood

At Oakwood we sometimes have to use a restrictive physical intervention when a child:

- Is distressed to the point that they may cause injury to themselves or other pupils and/or staff
- Is in danger of absconding
- Is causing serious disruption to the learning of others
- Is behaving in such a way as to cause emotional distress to themselves or others.

Restrictive Physical Intervention is always used as a last resort and for the shortest possible time. It must be reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary. Any restrictive intervention must also be in the best interests of the child.

A dynamic risk assessment will always be conducted before the use of any Restrictive Physical Intervention.

3. Risk Reduction at Oakwood.

At Oakwood we are committed to reducing the risks of situations occurring which may necessitate the need for a Restrictive Physical Intervention. We do this through:

- A robust training programme for all staff. We follow the Team Teach approach and have two members of staff who are accredited trainers.
It is the responsibility of the Executive Headteacher/Head of School to arrange suitable training. Training for all staff will be made available. No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff. Specific training will be provided as part of on-going staff development.

Following a review of our existing school practice, in consultation with governors and staff, Walsall Children's Services and the Health and Safety team at the LA, this school is committed to using accredited trainers.

The governors of the school are committed to establishing training in the context of:

- Reviewing the behaviour policy on an annual basis in line with any new legislation.

- A needs-based assessment and ensuring that procedures are in place to monitor incidents, audit behaviour and implement appropriate risk management procedures.
- All training for authorised staff will include at least the following areas:
 - awareness and understanding of this policy;
 - causes of challenging behaviour;
 - prevention strategies;
 - positive behaviour management;
 - intervention;
 - de-escalation;
 - risk-assessment;
 - behaviour support planning;
 - recording and monitoring incidents; and
 - de-briefing following incidents.
- Adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of our pupils
- Recognising the sensory needs of our pupils and accommodating these as far as possible
- Acknowledging and addressing the difficulties our pupils experience around communication, and teaching them to communicate appropriately
- Modifying the environment to meet the needs of our pupils as far as is possible.
- Establishing positive home/school communication
- Celebrating success and rewarding effort
- Behaviour Plans which inform staff and act as a risk assessment. They detail the most effective strategies for working with children who may display challenging behaviours. These are drawn up in consultation with all staff who work with the individual and are reviewed regularly. At Oakwood we have two levels of Behaviour Plans:
 - ❖ An **Individual Behaviour Plan** for children displaying challenging behaviours which do not require Restrictive Physical Intervention
 - ❖ A **Positive Behaviour Plan** is drawn up if a restrictive physical intervention has been used and may need to be used again. These will be drawn up by the class teacher and will need to be approved by Mrs Durnall and Mrs Boot. Parents **must** also be informed.

4. De-escalation Techniques.

At Oakwood School we recognise the value of diversion and de-escalation techniques, and endeavour to use these before any Restrictive Physical Intervention is considered. These include

- Humour (where applicable)
- Change of face
- Change of activity
- Change of environment
- Offering a snack or drink
- Offering a closed choice
- Modulating volume and tone of voice

This is not an exclusive list and techniques used will be individual to the child.

5. Recording and Reporting

At Oakwood, behavioural incidents that are different from the norm for a pupil should be recorded in area incident files. If no physical intervention was necessary, then these forms should remain in the area incident files. However, any necessary physical intervention should be recorded on the serious incident form and then placed in the school **bound and numbered** book. This is a securely bound book, with numbered pages, retained by the Head of School containing a brief reference to the:

- detailed serious incident form, and
- Walsall Council Accident & Incident Report Form (if required).

This will be completed as soon as possible after the incident, normally prior to staff going off duty and be signed by all staff involved.

Walsall Council Accident & Incident Report Form may need to be completed and returned to the LA in situations where injury has occurred to either members of staff or pupils.

Where staff have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force they should have access to a de-brief and support from the leadership team.

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use physical restraint, this will always be recorded and documented following agreed procedures. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the head teacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour may require the use of reasonable force.

After an incident, the Head of School will review it and investigate it further if required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Review of behaviour programme which may be an Individual Behaviour Plan or a Positive Behaviour Plan.
- Child protection procedure (this may involve investigations by police or social services)
- Staff or pupil disciplinary procedure
- School behaviour policy
- Exclusions procedure in extreme cases

Parents will be always notified of any recorded incident on the same day.

6. Monitoring incidents

A review of all incidents will be carried out on a termly basis by the Executive Headteacher and Head of School and reported termly to governors. The results will be used to inform planning to meet individual pupil and school needs. The outcomes of review will be incorporated in a revised risk assessment/behaviour plan if necessary.

Physical interventions are not treated in isolation and the school is committed to ensuring that following incidents, learning opportunities are created for children that allow them to reflect on and take responsibility for their behaviour. This will be based around the abilities and level of understanding of the individual pupil. Opportunities will be provided for personalised learning aimed at promoting a sense of self worth, belonging within the school community and developing positive relationships with staff and peers. Details will be outlined in Individual Behaviour Plans and/or Positive Behaviour Plans.

7. Post Incident Support

Procedures are also in place to ensure that appropriate support is provided for staff and that following any incident, pupil and staff relationships are repaired (wherever possible) to ensure that a positive learning environment is maintained.

8. Complaints

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the school's complaints policy. If necessary the complaint will be dealt with by the staff disciplinary procedures or the child protection procedures.

9. Risk assessment and positive behaviour plans

A general risk assessment has been carried out to identify the likelihood and severity of disruptive or destructive behaviour in the school generally. In addition, a specific assessment of risk will be made for each child when physical restraint may need to be used, in the context of the identified target behaviour(s) and environments in which they occur. The assessment should identify the benefits and the risks associated with the strategies being proposed. These are saved on the school store and the Behaviour file held by the Behaviour Manager.

Positive behaviour plans, where applicable will be designed through multi-professional collaboration. These should sit alongside individual educational or other plans.

Any interventions used will take account of a young person's:

- age,
- gender,
- level of physical, emotional and intellectual development,
- special needs

- social context.

Interventions and plans are based on a gradual, graded system of responses as described in the Team Teach workbook.