



David Ross Education Trust

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Broadening Horizons

# Positive handling policy

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**Introduction**

Our trust schools are committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for pupils' safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving behaviour which will put someone in danger, commit a criminal offence or disrupt the good order of the school and only use restrictive physical intervention as a last resort. If physical intervention happens, it must be deemed to be reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.



## 1. Purpose

The objectives of our policy are in maintaining our duty of care in:

- protecting the safety of all children
- protecting the safety of staff
- protecting the good order of the learning environment
- preventing damage to property
- preventing children from committing criminal acts.

In discharging that duty of care, staff might be required to use force for the purpose of preventing a pupil from, for example:

- self-harming
- causing injury to other children, staff or teachers
- causing personal injury
- absconding
- committing an offence
- causing damage to property
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline in the academy or among any of its pupils/students.

Where necessary, staff can use reasonable force on the academy premises as well as during an academy event or on an educational visit.

## 2. Procedure

### 2.1 Minimising the use of force

In order to minimise the use of force, staff work within the framework of the following principles and procedures:

- creating and maintaining a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require using force
- academies teach children PSHCE and this is different among our schools and this aims to support the children's social and emotional wellbeing
- de-escalating incidents if they do arise
- only using force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force
- using risk assessments and positive handling plans for individual pupils/students.

### 2.2 Staff authorised to use force

All staff on the academy's payroll who normally work with children are authorised to use force should that be necessary. This does not include volunteers or visitors.

### 2.3 Deciding whether to use force

Staff must consider the following guidelines when deciding whether or not to use force.

- There is a clear and unequivocal emphasis on the rights of children to be kept safe at all times.
- Physical intervention should only be used when
- the situation is, or is likely to become, dangerous for children and/or staff
- there is a risk to the maintenance of good order
- a criminal act is being committed



- property is being damaged
- or when previous history suggests that failure to act promptly will result in any of the above, and when
- all else has been tried
- the potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force
- the chances of achieving the desired result by other means were low
- the risks associated with not using force outweighed those of using force

2.4 Academy leaders must make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and children with special educational needs. Positive Handling Plans (PHPs) are produced for all pupils and keep staff informed about how to deal with the particular risks that each child presents. The PHP will also advise where a child presents a difficulty as a result of SEN/disability or personal circumstance, such as domestic violence

### **2.5 Using force**

It is essential that staff use only using the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired result. Staff are advised to give a clear oral warning to the pupil that force might have to be used. All staff are expected to be trained in Team Teach positive handling techniques and the types of force they use should be in accordance with their training.

2.6 As far as possible, they should not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.

### **2.7 Training**

All staff are expected to train in the use of appropriate methods of holding and restraint and are expected to apply them in the best interests of the child, reasonably and proportionately. Training is provided by two trained Team Teach instructors from within the trust.

2.8 The use of physical interventions including escorting, holding and restraint has been the subject of staff training days.

2.9 Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the child, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the child remains safe.

### **2.10 Key aspects of the training are:**

- Clear and unequivocal emphasis on the rights of children to be kept safe at all times.
- Physical intervention should only be used when all else has been tried and
- the situation is likely to become dangerous for children and/or staff
- there is a risk to the maintenance of good order
- a criminal act is being committed
- property is being damaged
- or when previous history suggests that failure to act promptly will result in any of the above.
- Staff need to keep themselves safe at all times.



- Past experiences of children will affect the way they respond to physical interventions. Those with a history of physical or sexual abuse will often have painful and disturbing memories triggered by such interventions.
- Children with the above experiences could also experience adverse reactions to witnessing physical interventions.
- All actions must be conducted in the context of the academy's policy.
- Staff have a right to be trained in the use of physical interventions.
- Clear and accurate records of the antecedents, behaviour and consequences must be maintained.

2.11 Where staff are not trained in Team Teach, or any other training which involves physical intervention, they still have a duty of care towards the children and the staff in the academy. Not being trained is not a valid reason for not intervening when the duty of care of another clearly indicates a reason to physically intervene. It must be noted however that it is advisable that staff are trained and where appropriate, trained staff are used to physically intervene where reasonably possible.

### **2.12 Recording and Reporting Incidents**

All incidents involving restraint and/or the use of significant force must be recorded on the **Positive Handling Record** which is different from the academy's normal behaviour reporting system. An example proforma has been attached to the end of this policy. The form must be completed on the day of the incident and include the names of all members of staff involved and any witnesses. The form must be given to the person responsible for monitoring them.

2.13 A named member of staff is responsible for ensuring the forms are viewed and signed, the named member of staff then records the incident in the bound and numbered book. A named member of staff is responsible for the overall logging, monitoring and evaluating of incidents.

2.14 When a **Positive Handling Record** has been completed for a particular child, it is the responsibility of the class teacher/support staff to ensure a phone call is made to the child's parents/carers on the day of the incidents. One call is sufficient for multiple incidents.

2.15 If it is likely that the child would come to significant harm as a result of such a phone call then the incident would not be reported to the parents/carers but would be reported to the Local Authority Safeguarding Officer.

### **2.16 Post Incident Support**

An essential element of the procedure following the use of restraint or significant force is the positive debrief. This takes place when all parties have recovered. Staff will encourage children to explore their feeling prior to the incident and how those feelings affected their behaviour. While acknowledging and understanding the child's feelings, staff should help the child to plan alternative behaviours as a response to those feelings so as to avoid physical intervention in the future. Staff must ensure that children understand why physical force was used.

2.17 Similar post incident support is also available for members of staff where the need arises. It is an expectation that all staff acknowledge the importance of using a



senior member of staff to discuss any personal issues raised for in the use of physical restraint.

### **2.18 Complaints and Allegations**

If a parent/carer or pupil is concerned about any aspect of the management of an incident requiring physical intervention, the Principal should be informed of their concern. The Principal will respond to the complaint in accordance with the academy's policy and procedure.

### **3. Resources**

3.1 The use of reasonable force advice reviewed 2015 is the main source for this policy.

3.2 The Director of Education will review this policy at least every year and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy.

3.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. The Trust may alter or adapt this policy, and any components of it, at any time provided it notifies the Chair of the Local Governing Bodies.



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