



# Care, Guidance and Support Policy

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### Statement of intent

This policy acknowledges Lancashire County Council's Restrictive Physical Intervention Protocol. It also acknowledges previous joint guidance provided by the DfES and DoH on the use of restrictive physical intervention and guidance on the use of reasonable force provided by the DfE

Acorns Primary School prides itself on promoting a positive environment which prioritises social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), educational attainment, wellbeing and positive behaviour. The school ensures, through a robust system of care, guidance and support, that all pupils are enabled to thrive and are aided to achieve their best educational and social outcomes.

### Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2015) 'Behaviour and discipline in schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'
- DfE (2022) 'Careers guidance and access for education and training providers'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2021) 'Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Social and Emotional Needs Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Data Protection Policy

### **Policy aims**

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school and the majority of pupils respond positively to the support strategies practised by staff.

This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school. In exceptional circumstances, the use of restrictive physical intervention may be required. Acorns Primary School acknowledges that physical interventions are only a small part of a holistic approach to conduct management and support.

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

1. clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities, in the context of their duty of care, in taking appropriate measures where restrictive physical intervention is necessary;
2. are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

### **School culture**

The school adopts a whole-school approach to care, guidance and support for all pupils, and the governing body will ensure this is consistently integrated throughout all policies and procedures, as well as the curriculum. The governing body will ensure that staff are supported with their own mental health and wellbeing to ensure that support is integrated into all facets of the school's culture and that staff are well-placed to support pupils.

The headteacher, SLT and staff members will promote a positive environment within the school by modelling positive behaviour, respectful and supportive communication and care for others. The headteacher will clearly communicate the school's ethos on pupil care, support and guidance to the whole school community.

Staff will ensure that pupils are aware that their health, wellbeing, safety and progress are of the highest priority to the school and that all pupils know where they can access support and guidance when they need it. The SLT will ensure that there are clear processes in place to reduce any stigma related to speaking out about their wellbeing and to make pupils feel

comfortable enough to approach staff to discuss their wellbeing and progress.

The school's Social and Emotional support policy and Child-on-child Abuse Policy include measures to ensure that all pupils are treated with respect by their peers, and that any incidents of bullying or abuse between pupils are handled quickly, effectively and in line with procedures which take into account the influence of poor wellbeing and other vulnerabilities on abusive behaviour.

### **Underpinning values**

Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity;
- be treated with respect and dignity;
- learn and work in a safe environment;
- be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- consideration of individual pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school;
- expect a social and emotional support plan and/or Positive Handling Plan to be designed to achieve outcomes that reflect the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern and others affected by the behaviour requiring intervention.
- be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

The school will ensure that pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in the school.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The governing body will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that care, guidance and support for pupils is integrated throughout the school's operations.
- Ensuring there is high-quality pastoral support available for pupils.
- Ensuring that educational support interventions are implemented for pupils who need it.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the care, welfare, behaviour and progress of all pupils, including the day-to-day implementation of this policy.
- Supporting staff to carry out their duties in line with this policy.
- Overseeing the outcomes of interventions on pupils' education and wellbeing.
- Liaising with potential future providers of education, such as secondary schools or residential settings, to ensure that pupils and their parents are informed about options and smooth transitions are facilitated.
- Overseeing the whole-school approach to mental health.
- Ensuring that the school engages pupils and parents with regards to pupils' mental health and awareness.
- Liaising with other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Acting as a source of support and advice for, and liaising with, staff on matters of safety, safeguarding and welfare.
- Liaising with the mental health lead and, where available, the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.

Staff will be responsible for:

- Modelling productive and positive behaviour for pupils.

- Ensuring all instances of poor behaviour, bullying or peer-on-peer abuse are handled in line with the Behaviour Policy and Child-on-child Abuse Policy.
- Ensuring pupils are given helpful, unbiased and age-appropriate careers guidance to help them focus their learning.
- Working with the headteacher and other relevant members of staff to ensure care, guidance and support measures are inclusive for all pupils.
- Supporting pupils to achieve their best educational and social outcomes.

### **Pastoral care**

The headteacher will ensure that pastoral care and support is implemented in all areas of pupils' school life with the aim of ensuring that pupils can consistently maintain their wellbeing at all times, in addition to times when they are experiencing specific problems.

The school implements the following pastoral activities which help pupils to manage their own wellbeing and further their progress:

- Student councils.
- School plays.
- Community visits
- ELSA sessions
- Pet therapy sessions
- Open door policy for all pupils to call in and talk about any issues they might be experiencing.

Where pupils are encountering issues at school, whether these be related to their education, welfare or wellbeing, the school will offer care and support in a variety of ways. The mental health lead will work with pupils, and any other relevant members of staff, e.g. the DSL and ELSA to develop a support plan suited to the specific needs of each pupil.

Support plans may include:

- School-based, one-to-one ELSA sessions.
- Monitoring meetings with the school and the pupil's parents.
- Play/Lego Therapy
- Engagement with the Learning Disability Nursing Team.
- Engagement with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

The mental health lead will regularly collect pupil feedback via the student council related to the pastoral care system, to gauge how well-supported pupils feel and whether there is anything the school could be doing to better meet pupils' individual needs.

### **Safety and supervision**

The school's priority will always be the safety and welfare of its pupils. The headteacher will ensure that pupils are adequately supervised during school hours, and that all necessary measures are taken to ensure the school fulfils its duty of care to keep pupils safe.

The procedures laid out within the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed in the event that there are any concerns about a pupil's welfare, and a member of staff will call Children's social care or the police immediately where it is thought that there is any immediate risk to a pupil's safety.

### **Behaviour**

The school is committed to ensuring high behavioural standards for all pupils; however, the school is aware that some pupils may need more support and guidance in adhering to behavioural expectations than others.

The school will focus on prevention strategies for unacceptable behaviour, which will carry the aim of ensuring that pupils are supported to behave appropriately, to respect staff and their peers and to trust that the school has their best interests at heart. All staff will be aware that poor behaviour on the part of a pupil is often a sign that the pupil feels that some of their



needs are not being met, but they are unable to communicate these verbally or by sign or communication aid (PECs, communication book etc)

The headteacher will ensure that all behaviour strategies primarily emphasise promoting and encouraging positive behaviour, over disciplining bad behaviour; this will include:

- Staff modelling desired behaviour.
- Promoting self-esteem, self-discipline and positive relationships through the curriculum and school activities.
- Praising and rewarding positive behaviour, e.g. star of the week
- Intervening early with pastoral support (ELSA) where pupils display low-level disruptive behaviour.
- Ensuring all the pupils' needs are met (Maslow's hierarchy of needs)
- Encouraging positive relationships with parents.
- Cultivating strong and healthy pupil-staff relationships.

The headteacher will ensure that acceptable standards of behaviour are communicated clearly to all pupils. Should the need arise to use physical interventions, all staff are trained in Team Teach which is recognised as appropriate physical intervention by Lancashire County Council.

### **Minimising the need to use force**

At Acorns Primary School we aim to create a calm environment in order to minimise the risk of incidents which require the use of restrictive physical intervention. Through the school ethos and curriculum we aim to promote independence, choice and inclusion and pupils are given maximum opportunity for personal growth and emotional well-being. The supporting Social and emotional needs Policy promotes the development of good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils/students across the school; it informs and guides staff to teach and reward appropriate pupil conduct that supports learning, progress, achievement and enjoyment of school life. Pupil behaviour is seen as a form of communication, in which the pupil is communicating that they have an unmet need. All staff members are trained in how to defuse situations to prevent them from escalating. Similarly, staff members are taught how to de-escalate incidents should they arise.

Where specific pupil groups display behavioural needs that require a more individual approach, this is addressed through specific policy and practice

which is sensitive to the broad needs of the group and promotes a consistent approach across teaching and support staff working with the group.

Where individual pupils persistently present behaviour which is challenging, an individual Social and emotional support plan is drawn up. This plan details the specific proactive strategies to support the pupil in developing positive behaviour by encouraging them to communicate their needs and make choices appropriately. Furthermore, it specifies the reactive strategies, including the use of restrictive physical intervention, to be used to maintain the safety and well-being of all concerned, and the good order of the school. Use of restrictive physical intervention is only used when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using restrictive physical intervention.

Pupils that have issues relating to sensory integration dysfunction or other conditions that may result in increased anxiety levels are supported individually through personalised programmes to help them to manage their anxiety. Implications of current policy, protocol and guidance The Education and Inspections Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- committing a criminal offence;
- causing injury to self or others;
- causing damage to property;
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise (this includes authorised out-of-school activities).

As teaching and non-teaching staff work 'in loco parentis' and have a 'Duty of Care' towards their pupils, they could be liable for a claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this policy. The use of Team Teach techniques is one of our control methods for reducing risks presented by children's challenging behaviour. Pupils' Social and emotional support plan and Positive Handling Plans are safe systems of work under Health and Safety Regulations. As such, it is imperative that these plans are followed and implemented by all members of staff.

The application of any form of restrictive physical intervention inevitably carries an attached risk of unintended harm and this places staff and the

school at risk of potential litigation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for restrictive physical intervention. Staff members need to be aware that they are responsible for:

- assessing risks related to individual circumstances which may arise in the course of their day-to-day duties and;
- making judgements about when the use of restrictive physical intervention is necessary and the degree of force which may be regarded as reasonable to manage a situation. Staff members need to be aware that they are required to justify their decisions in writing through the recording and reporting procedures outlined later in this document. Restrictive physical intervention will only be used as a last resort when all other conduct support strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 gives schools the power to screen or search pupils for weapons. At Acorns Primary School it is extremely unlikely that pupils would conceal weapons and therefore staff members have not received training in weapons disarmament and staff will not be requested to undertake searches. As the power to search should only be used where it is judged to be safe, if the school decides that a search may be necessary then the police would be called.

### **Definitions of Positive Handling**

Positive Handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies and is part of a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment, and deployment of staff. It also involves personal conduct, diversion, diffusion, and de-escalation. Social and emotional plan Strategies and Positive Handling Plans at Acorns Primary School are designed to support staff to positively manage pupils' challenging behaviour. They are based on a risk assessment and identify positive prevention strategies and how a pupil may need to be supported in a crisis.

#### **1. Physical Contact**

In line with their role of providing pupil care and supporting pupils to access to a broad and balanced curriculum situations may arise in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils. It would seem reasonable that young children do require opportunities for close contact such as cuddles/hugs or sitting on a staff member's knee and as long as this

is sensitively carried out and age/person-appropriate the Governors would fully support this approach.

### 2. 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. This technique cannot be emphasised enough and in the hands of a skilful practitioner many pupils can be diverted from a potentially volatile situation into a less confrontational situation i.e. it may be possible to “defuse” a situation by a timely intervention.

### 3. Restraint and Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

These terms are defined as follows:

"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."

(DfE – Use of reasonable force – what is reasonable force? – April 2013 .

"Restrictive physical interventions involve the use of force to control a person's behaviour and can be employed using bodily contact, mechanical devices or changes to the person's environment."

(Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who Display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders; DfES LEA/0242/2002)

Restraint and restrictive physical intervention are a last resort and will only be used when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. All such incidents must be recorded CPOMs, the school's internal systems for the reporting of accidents and incidents. If anyone is injured they must complete the LCC Accident/Incident Report Form online using the Oracle Fusion HR system as soon as possible.

The scale or nature of physical intervention or restraint/restrictive physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of harm they cause. Where force is required to overpower the will of the pupil then this should be defined as restrictive physical intervention.

### **Seclusion, time out and withdrawal**

**Seclusion:** this is where a pupil or student is forced to spend time alone against their will in a locked room or room which they cannot leave. This is considered a form of restrictive physical intervention.

**Time out:** this involves restricting the pupil or student's access to positive reinforcements as part of a planned programme of support by placing them in a room or area which they may freely leave. It is a specific behaviour management technique and does not necessarily literally mean time spent out of the class/group, but rather refers to a withdrawal of attention and/or things they find rewarding (it could be as simple as turning away from a child who is attention seeking, or positioning a child away from the class/group). This withdrawal of attention could also be achieved by sending a pupil to another class/group or a quiet area.

**Withdrawal:** this involves removing the pupil or student from a situation which causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This can mean removing a child from the class/group to allow them time to calm down or to prevent a situation from escalating. They may need time away from staff and pupils (either on their own or in another class/group) in order to break the cycle/pattern of their conduct or to reduce their level of anxiety/distress. This "quiet time" could be time in the playground, a quiet room, or sitting in an office supervised by a senior member of staff.

### **Planned and emergency physical interventions**

A planned intervention is one that is described / outlined in the pupil's Social and emotional support plan and/or Positive Handling Plan. This should cover most interventions, as possible scenarios will be identified and planned for when the social and emotional support plan strategy and/or Positive Handling Plan is drawn up. These interventions may include the use of Team Teach techniques.

An emergency physical intervention may be necessary if a situation arises that was not foreseen or is uncharacteristic of the pupil. Members of staff retain their duty of care to pupils and any response, even in an emergency, must be proportionate to the circumstances. Staff should use the minimum force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety, consistent with the training that they have received. Following any such incident, a social and emotional support plan and/or Positive Handling Plan will be devised (or

the existing plan updated) to support effective responses to any such situations which may arise in the future.

Positive Handling at Acorns Primary School (defined as the full range of strategies used to promote positive conduct including where necessary restrictive physical intervention) is

seen as a proactive response to meet individual pupil needs and any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way that staff exercise their responsibilities, and the range of conduct support strategies used.

### **Support Following Incidents**

Physical techniques are not treated in isolation and the school is committed to ensuring that as a result of incidents learning opportunities are created for pupils that allow them to 'own' and take responsibility for their conduct at a level appropriate to their stage of development.

Whilst the physical techniques are intended to reduce risk, there is always risk when two or more people use force to protect, release or restrain. Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the pupil, 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 pupil remains safe. Any such injury will be recorded and reported using CPOMs and a body map will be completed.

In addition, procedures are in place to ensure that appropriate support is provided for staff and that following an incident pupil/staff relationships are rebuilt and repaired to ensure that a positive learning environment is maintained.

### **Monitoring and review**

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the deputy headteacher in conjunction with the governing body – any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

This policy will be reviewed in light of any serious incidents regarding pupil care, guidance and support.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is March 2024.

