



Positive Handling Policy

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Introduction

Clarendon Infants' School takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors. This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for care and control. Its purpose is to give staff the confidence to work in the best interests of the child.

Duty of Care

All staff have a duty of care towards the children they look after, their colleagues and others, under Health and safety Legislation. They have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with policies and risk assessments and participate in necessary training. They should look out for obvious hazards and reduce foreseeable risks wherever possible.

The Children Act 1989 makes clear that in any decision involving a child the paramount consideration must be the child's welfare. Paramount in this context means that it is the first thing people should think about and it should take precedence over every other consideration. For this reason staff need to carefully consider what is in the best interests of the child, both in the short term and the longer term.

Physical Contact

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil is proper and necessary, for example

- holding the hand of a child in a line when going to assembly or walking together around school
- when comforting a distressed pupil
- when a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- to give first aid

The purpose of any physical contact should be to meet the needs of the child.

Positive Handling

Clarendon Infants' School uses the term 'Positive Handling' to describe the need to physically intervene when there is an obvious risk to the safety of its children, staff and property. The school

follows the approach taken by Team Teach. Positive handling is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment and the deployment of staff. The aim of this approach is to de-escalate, defuse and divert and provide security, safety and acceptance allowing for recovery and repair. Positive handling techniques are intended to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child, maintain dignity for both adult and child and allow for communication.

The following strategies are incorporated in the Team Teach approach adopted by the school:

Positive Handling Plans – Individual Behaviour Improvement Plans

Individual risk reduction plans resulting from a risk assessment are detailed within a child's Individual Behaviour Improvement Plan, (IBIP). These should include a description of the nature of the risk along with preferred risk reduction strategies (including non-physical interventions, interventions involving touch and, where absolutely necessary, more restrictive restraints).

Non-Physical Interventions (No Touch)

- adaptations to the physical environment
- use of space
- body language
- facial expressions
- volume, pitch, pace and tone of voice
- choice of words

Physical Contact

- reassuring touch (for example, holding hands in the playground)
- physical prompts and guides (for example, attracting attention or communicating with someone with a sensory impairment, helping someone to learn physical skills, escorting a young child or someone with learning difficulties)
- holding to reassure where there is little if any active resistance (for example a comforting hug around the shoulder)
- guiding and holding where there is little if any active resistance
- unobtrusive personal safety responses to low-level risks (for example, taking an object away from a small child, releasing a grip, or positive touch associated with treating a minor graze).

Restraint / Restrictive Physical Interventions (the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering a person)

This framework includes a smaller number of responses which involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term "restraint" is used whenever force is used to overcome active resistance:

- holding someone who is actively resisting to prevent them putting themselves at risk of significant harm
- holding someone who is actively resisting to reduce the risk of pain or injury
- holding someone who is actively resisting to reduce the risk of damage to property
- holding someone who is actively resisting to prevent the commission of a criminal offence
- moving someone who is actively resisting into a reduced-risk environment

- preventing a person who is actively resisting from moving into an increased-risk environment

Use of Reasonable Force

In exceptional circumstances, staff may make the decision that the use of reasonable force is required in the best interests of the child.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force for the purposes of preventing a pupil from 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 or among any pupils receiving education at the school.

In addition DFE guidance on the “Use of reasonable force” issued in July 2013 states that reasonable force can be used to: remove disruptive children from the classroom; prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or school trip; prevent a pupil from leaving the classroom where this would put their safety at risk; prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground. This guidance also states that the power to use reasonable force can apply to people whom the Head Teacher has temporarily placed in charge of pupils including unpaid volunteers and parents.

Reasonable and Proportionate

Reasonable force will only be used when no other effective alternatives are available.

When considering the use of physical intervention to control a child’s behaviour the following questions should always be asked:

- How is the intervention in the best interests of the child?
- Is the intervention proportionate to the circumstances it is intended to prevent?
- Is the intervention necessary in order to protect the best interests of the child?

Staff should also ask:

- Is a less intrusive intervention preferable?
- Do we have to act now?
- Am I the best person to be doing this?

If staff can answer these questions, it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate. Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or defuse the situation in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school. In general, if staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

Training

The provisions of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 apply by default to all school staff who are authorised to have care and control of children. The Head Teacher is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given. The Head Teacher considers the training needs of all staff, and a list is retained of all staff that have been trained and when the training needs to

be refreshed. This list is reviewed regularly and consideration given to new members of staff and to volunteers/students/supply staff. The school's preferred model of training is Team Teach.

Reporting and Recording

Whenever a physical intervention has been used, a record of the incident needs to be kept. If the physical intervention does not involve restraint it only needs to be recorded on the child's positive handling plan and risk assessment. If a restraint has been administered then the incident needs to be recorded in the Bound and Numbered Book. This is a book issued by the Local Authority, with numbered pages, retained by the Head Teacher. It is considered reasonable and good practice for staff to collaborate when recording an incident in order to ensure that the record is as complete and accurate as possible. If staff do not agree on the details of an incident, they should write separate reports. The aim is to promote clear, accurate and useful records.

Records should normally be completed within 24 hours, but the welfare of those involved takes precedence over paperwork. If this is not possible the Head Teacher needs to be informed as soon as possible and told the reason for the delay. Records should be kept for at least 7 years. After the review of the incident, a copy of the details is placed on the pupil's file. Parents/carers of the child need to be informed following the use of reasonable force. A record of this communication should be kept.

A Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form should be completed and returned to the Authority in situations where injury has occurred to either members of staff or pupils. When staff have been involved in an incident, they should be given time to recover and have access to support such as debriefing with a senior leader.

Support for Staff and Children after an Incident

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and take action as necessary.

This may include:

- Reviewing the child's risk assessment
- Reviewing curriculum access
- Reviewing staffing levels
- Considering the involvement of outside agencies
- Reviewing provision

The priority after a significant incident is to look after the people involved.

Complaints

The availability of an accessible policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

All allegations will be investigated thoroughly, however it is the responsibility of the person making the allegation/complaint to prove any inappropriate actions by the staff member.