

Positive Handling Policy

Greenleys First School



Approved by:	Kate Thurgood, Chair of Governing Board	Date: 09.10.24
Last reviewed on:	29.09.24	
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1.1 Positive Handling Statement

The staff at Greenleys First School recognise that the use of reasonable force is a last resort and only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being. Positive handling, also referred to as restraint, is used very rarely when all other strategies which do not employ force, (in accordance with our Behaviour Policy) have been tried and found unsuccessful in an emergency situation. Staff are authorised to use Positive Handling in the following situations to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including) the pupil himself/herself

In the very rare occurrence that restraint of a child takes place, the following steps are taken:

- Parents will be informed
- A paper entry will be logged in the Positive Handling/Restraint file (front office)
- A scanned copy will be attached to the relevant electronic record on My Concern
- Consideration will be given to the 'triggers' that may have caused the incident to avoid re-occurrence

The GFS Behaviour Policy will be adhered to at all times and staff are aware of the strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps, which they can take, to defuse and calm a situation. If a member of staff believes that restraint of a pupil is not safe for either themselves or the pupil, they may remove other children who may be at risk from the situation and will summon assistance from colleagues and, if necessary, the Police.

Parents/carers will be fully informed as soon as is practicable. They will be told where and when the incident took place, which members of staff were directly involved (anonymised where necessary) and why they decided that force had to be used. Parents will be shown the Record of Positive handling form and asked to sign and add any comments they may have (see form at end of this policy).

The welfare of the child remains paramount however, if there is reason to believe that a child could come to significant harm as a consequence of a parent/carer being notified, a judgement may be made that the local authority should be notified instead. This decision will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

1:2 What does it mean to use reasonable force with a child?

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself/herself or others, disrupting the education of others or seriously damaging property. Reasonable force can be broken down into two main areas of control and restraint. Control can be passive such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path or active such as leading pupil by the arm. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control.

The decision to use positive handling as restrictive physical intervention must take account of the circumstances and be based on an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention compared with the risks of not employing a restrictive intervention. It should also consider the individual needs of a child i.e. if a SEND child / whether there is a behaviour support plan in place. The physical intervention must also only employ a reasonable amount of force – that is the minimum force needed to avert injury or damage to property, or to prevent a breakdown in discipline – applied for the shortest period of time.

1:3 Why use restraint?

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him/herself or others. Positive handling, skilfully applied, may be eased by degrees as the child calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

2:1 General Aims

The staff at Greenleys First School recognise that the use of reasonable force is **a last resort** and only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.

Our policy on the use of reasonable force is part of our overall pastoral care procedures and closely related to our policies on managing pupil behaviour in our Behaviour Policy.

2:2 The aims

- To protect every person in the school community from harm
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate or excessive
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes reasonable force
- To use the minimum degree of force necessary for the minimum amount of time necessary to accomplish positive handling
- To maintain accurate records of incidents where positive handling has been employed

3:1 Risk Assessment

Although most children at Greenleys First School will never require any form of positive handling, staff may have to deal with some pupils who exhibit disturbed, distressed or distressing behaviour. Parental consent is not required in order to use reasonable force. Staff will carry out a dynamic risk assessment and use their professional judgement. We will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

- The environment
- Body language
- The way we talk
- The way we act

4:1 Procedures

In the event of positive handling having been used it is important to consider the strategies, which are deemed acceptable, and the recording procedures that should be in place.

4:2 Action Steps

1. Tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
2. If possible, summon another adult;
3. Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident;
4. Make it clear that the control or restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary;
5. Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:
 - a. Providing medical support

b. Providing respite for those involved

A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem.

4:3 Recording

Incidents will be recorded by the person carrying out the restraint in the Positive Handling/Restraint file which is kept in the front office. The forms will be scanned & attached to the electronic record of the incident on My Concern for the child. The most senior member of staff on site at the time will be informed in order to facilitate communication to parents.

Details should include (follow the template in the Positive Handling/restraint file – see Appendix 3):

- Name of pupil(s)
- Staff member(s) involved
- Factors necessitating physical intervention
- The strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention
- How physical intervention was effected
- Outcome of restraint
- Any other action taken in the management of the incident

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as practically possible and the incident explained to them. This action should be recorded.

5:1 Complaints

We all have a duty of care to the young people in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by the staff, and should help to avoid complaints from parents. It will not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and Social Services Department under Child Protection procedures.

Staff subjected to physical violence or assault, have the right to be supported in making a formal complaint to the police and, if necessary, taking private action against an assailant.

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

This policy is reviewed on a regular basis and adjusted as required.

Appendix 1

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?

Examples of situations

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- Pupils fighting;
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objectives;
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure herself/himself or others;
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).
- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom
- A pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

Appendix 2: **Strategies**

All teachers need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps, which they can take to defuse and calm a situation.

- Move calmly and confidently
- Make simple, clear statements
- Intervene early
- Try to maintain eye contact
- If necessary, summon help before the problem escalates
- Remove audience from the immediate location

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time.

During any incident the restrainer should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil – talk through what is happening
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

Appendix 3

Record of Positive Handling/Restraint used

MyConcern reference no:	
Date of positive/handling/restraint used:	
Time positive handling/restraint used:	
Name of pupil	
Staff member/s involved (include any staff who supported/observed)	
Factors necessitating physical intervention e.g. Why was positive handling/restraint required?	
The strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention e.g. What did staff do to prevent the above before deeming positive handling/restraint was necessary?	
How was physical intervention was effected? e.g. Who did what, how and for how long? Use body map (on reverse side) to indicate main points of contact between staff & pupil.	
Outcome of restraint	
Any other action taken in the management of the incident	
Name of staff member completing this record	
Position of person completing this record	
Name & signature of parent/carer to confirm that they have been informed about the use of positive handling/restraint	Name: Signature: Date:
Staff and/or parent/s to check for any marks on child's body following positive handling & make note here at point of hand-over from school to home.	
Please record any comments from parent/carer regarding the restraint/positive handling used	

You must **inform** a member of SLT once this form has been completed and the parent has been informed. This form must be given to a member of SLT who will then scan and attach this to relevant electronic record/s on My Concern.

Indicate main points of contact/s between staff & pupil by circling the area.

Label any parts of the body that child engaged with self-harm e.g. biting self, butting head against object

