

Positive Handling Policy



Formby High School
Determined To Achieve

Policy Statement

This policy seeks to ensure the provision of a safe environment for staff, students, parents and visitors. Governors regard the need for physical intervention as something they hope can be avoided but understand that, in extreme cases, it may be necessary to use reasonable force to either restrain or control students. It may be necessary for all staff to use positive handling strategies on rare occasions; however, staff should only use such strategies where they are not putting themselves at risk of harm.

The policy has been set out in accordance with the 'Use of Reasonable Force' guidance issued by the Department for Education in July 2013.

Legal Position

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing any offence.
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the student himself/herself).
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school (including when students are on a school trip or educated off-site).
- Schools cannot use force as punishment – it is always unlawful to do so.

Policy Aims

- To offer a secure, carefully structured environment, promoting positive behaviour, where students develop as confident and independent learners.
- To provide all staff with the necessary support and information to enable them to understand their professional and legal responsibility in carrying out their duty of care which may, at times, involve the use of positive physical intervention.
- To inform staff, students, parents, carers and outside agencies about the rationale and use of physical interventions in managing any challenging behaviours warranting their use.
- To always use non-physical strategies initially to de-escalate the situation.
- To establish consistent procedures for the use of all physical interventions, ranging from positive handling to restrictive physical intervention of students throughout the school.
- To embed procedures in practice that work towards use of non-intrusive intervention such as positive reinforcement, distraction and other de-escalation techniques.

Definition of Positive Handling

No legal definition of positive handling exists; however, for the purpose of this policy and its implementation in Formby High School, positive handling is defined as: ***the use of the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a student harming himself/herself, others or property.***

Positive handling by staff can take several forms. It can be passive or restrictive and could be appropriate to involve:

1. Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and students; for example, in the care of students with learning disabilities or physical impairment, in Physical Education lessons or to comfort students.

2. Passive Physical Intervention (PPI)

The most commonly used forms of physical intervention are escorting and holding. These may be used to divert a student from a destructive or disruptive action; for example, guiding or leading a student by the arm or shoulder with little or no force. The development of trusting, confident relationships is of high priority so that students are accepting of the use of the friendly escort or a calming hand to support their own efforts to manage their behaviour. Such positive handling holds rarely need force and are not classed as restrictive.

3. Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

This will involve the use of reasonable force, usually to restrain a student, when there is an immediate risk to students, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a last resort. The degree of restrictive physical intervention will be dependent upon the level of compliance from the student. All such incidents must be recorded and stored as outlined in the Recording and Reporting section of this policy.

All physical interventions must be reasonable, appropriate and justified.

School staff use RPI as opposed to PPI as the last resort after:

- Appropriate de-escalation techniques have failed to help the child to control him/herself (such as requests to comply, negotiation, exposition of consequence, verbal advice).
- Instant risk assessment by staff lead them to believe that injury or serious damage to property is an immediate danger.
- Knowledge of the child's history and behaviour pattern leads staff to believe that speedy removal from the environment is necessary to prevent escalation.
- The student has been cautioned that his/her continued choice of behaviour may lead to RPI.

Staff have acknowledged their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

In the event of a situation deteriorating to the extent that physical intervention is required, the member of staff involved initially should normally seek the assistance of another member of staff. It is also important that staff members should have a witness that no excessive physical intervention techniques have been employed and that due consideration is given to the safety of students and staff throughout the duration of the incident. Used correctly, positive handling techniques are designed to protect both student and staff member; staff who have a physical disability should automatically seek help from another member of staff. This also applies to female members of staff at any stage during a pregnancy.

Power to Search Students without Consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force, the Headteacher and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search where they believe a student is in possession of any of the following 'prohibited items':

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs / drugs paraphernalia
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force will not be used to search for other items banned under the school rules. All procedures for searching, screening and confiscation will be fully compliant with the DfE guidance (Searching, Screening and Confiscation January 2018).

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- o Ensure that the positive handling policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff.
- o Devolve responsibility to the Headteacher to ensure guidance in this policy is adhered to.
- o Monitor the implementation of this policy and review it on a regular basis.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- o Ensure guidance in this policy is adhered to by all staff.
- o Ensure that appropriate and regular training is provided to all staff.
- o Ensure that the appropriate records and reports are maintained.
- o Manage any complaints and/or allegations.

Senior Pastoral Staff

Senior pastoral staff will:

- o Abide by the guidelines outlined in this policy and procedures.
- o Wherever practicable, provide support to all staff with incidents requiring use of reasonable force.
- o Maintain appropriate records and reports, providing regular feedback to the Senior Leadership Team.

All Staff

All staff will:

- o Remember that the child concerned is still owed a duty of care and that the least physical intervention is still the most desirable course of action.
- o Follow practices and procedures identified in this policy.
- o Attend all training provided.
- o Report all incidents promptly and efficiently.
- o Ensure they do not put themselves at risk and place their safety and that of other staff and students as their first priority.

All Students

All students will:

- Behave in accordance with the expectations set out in the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy and School Rules.
- Cooperate with members of staff, following reasonable requests to avoid situations where other members of the school community are placed at risk.

Procedures

Staff Training

The Senior Leadership Team provides regular training on behaviour management and seeks guidance from external agencies as to what constitutes best practice in relation to positive handling.

Recording and Reporting

It is important that, on occasions necessitating its use, RPI is recorded in order to:

- Prevent later misunderstanding of the incident.
- Prevent misrepresentation of the facts.
- Identify patterns of behaviour.
- Encourage students to acknowledge/take responsibility for their actions.
- Allow the Headteacher to monitor the operation of the policy.
- Allow positive handling plans or individual risk assessments to be developed for individual students who are assessed as being at greatest risk of needing RPI.

A written record of the incident in which RPI was used should be provided by the member of staff involved to the member of SLT responsible for line management of the Curriculum Area or Department. Records will be centralised by the Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding.

It is good practice to contact the parent of the student(s) involved when RPI has been used.

Following an incident where RPI is used, all involved must be given the time to have support and talk about the incident, including both staff and students involved. Support to the student will be given according to their individual need.

First Aid

In certain medical/first aid circumstances, the use of physical contact or PPI may be required to ensure safety and or treatment of the student; the same guiding principles and training outlined in this policy will apply.

Complaints

This policy document outlines the powers at the disposal of the Headteacher and school staff.

Complaints should be made in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy. Any allegation made against a member of staff in relation to misusing these powers will be dealt with reasonably and in accordance with guidance provided by the DfE in 2012 entitled 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff'.