

Positive Handling Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is based upon DfES Circular 10/98 and the corresponding Rotherham MBC (ECALS) document, “Policy and Guidance for Schools on the Use of Positive Handling” (March 2003)
- 1.2 Meadow View Primary School recognises that there is a need, reflected in common law, to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to its pupils, staff and property.
- 1.3 Meadow View Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children’s safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour, **and only use positive handling as a last resort** in line with DfES and RMBC (ECALS) advice. If used at all it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.
- 1.4 This policy must be read and implemented in conjunction with the whole school behaviour policy and approach to behaviour management.
- 1.5 The Education Act 1996 (Section 550A) states that it is lawful for teachers and other authorised staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from committing an offence, causing injury or damage or disrupting the good order and discipline of the school. Teachers are not contractually obliged to carry out restraint procedures and they are not contractually obliged to undertake training in any restraint procedures. This policy applies to all staff who are authorised to use positive handling (see Section 7)
- 1.6 All staff authorised to positively handle children and young people must be aware that they must not:
 - Use corporal punishment
 - Use pain to gain compliance
 - Deprive the person of food or drink
 - Require the person to wear inappropriate clothes

- Humiliate, degrade the child or young person

2.0 Our approach to best practice

2.1 The best practice regarding positive handling outlined below should be considered alongside other relevant policies in the school, specifically those policies involving behaviour, bullying, child protection and health and safety.

2.2 In line with Education Act 1996 (Section 550A) in the following situations staff must judge whether or not positive handling would be reasonable or appropriate:

- Risk to the safety of staff, pupils or visitors or
- Where there is a risk of serious damage to property or
- Where a pupil's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline or
- Where a pupil is committing a criminal offence

This judgement will take into account the circumstances of the incident. All staff should be aware that the use of positive handling in response to a clear or developing danger of injury will always be more justifiable than the use of force to prevent damage or misbehaviour.

2.3 Staff will view positive handling of pupils as a **last resort for the purposes of maintaining a safe environment**. If pupils are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every strategy will be used to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation.

2.4 Staff will understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment that is calm and supportive especially when dealing with pupils who may have emotional and behavioural needs, which may increase their aggression.

2.5 All staff will understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child, which lie beneath the behaviour as well as to the behaviour itself.

3.0 Practice regarding specific incidents:

3.1 All policies and practice regarding the supervision of pupils during the school will be appropriate to the identified needs and behaviours of the pupils, this combined with the whole school approach to behaviour should minimise the likelihood of requiring positive handling to an absolute minimum.

- 3.2 The physical action taken will take into consideration the age and competence of the child and will be the least detrimental alternative
- 3.2 Staff intervening with children will seek assistance from other members of staff as early as possible, since single-handed intervention increases the risks of injury to both parties and does not provide a witness.
- 3.3 A member of staff recognising that a situation is escalating to a point demanding positive handling yet feeling unable to carry this out must, as part of their duty of care, clearly tell the pupil(s) to stop the behaviour and seek help by any means available.
- 3.4 Staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a pupil will have a responsibility to provide a presence and to offer support and assistance should this be required.
- 3.6 Where possible, staff who have not been involved in the initial confrontation leading up to an incident may be in a better position to intervene or restrain the pupil if this proves necessary.
- 3.7 A pupil's behaviour may be adversely affected by the presence of an audience. Wherever possible, the audience will be removed, or if this is not possible, the pupil and member(s) of staff will withdraw to a quiet, but not completely private, place (e.g. two members of staff should be present or a door left open so that others are aware of the situation).
- 3.8 Staff will be aware of the need to tell the pupil being restrained, in a calm and gentle manner that the reason for the intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the pupil calms down, she/he will be released.
- 3.9 The force used will be commensurate with the risk prevented.
- 3.10 All staff are aware that we operate a back-up system to enable staff to call for help in emergencies (e.g. a member of staff will give a red card to a bystander, pupil to take to the general office or staff room. The card indicates to staff that help is required urgently) – (refer to system used in school)

4.0 **Positive handling**

4.1 Examples of situations where positive handling maybe appropriate include

- pupil attacks member of staff or another pupil
- pupils are fighting

- pupils are engaging in, or on the verge of, committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- pupil is causing, or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- pupil absconds from school or room (this only applies if pupil could be at risk if not kept in school or a room).
- a pupil persistently refusing to leave a classroom
- a pupil behaving such that the lesson is being seriously disrupted.

4.2 The following approaches are regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances.

- a. Holding for security and to reduce anxiety where there is potential risk, even if the pupil is not yet out of control. This is best used when the pupil is anxious or confused. Its purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation. Staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted by the pupil as aggression.
- b. Physically interposing between pupils.
- c. Blocking a pupil's path.
- d. Pushing if restricted to situations where reasonable force is used to resist a pupil's movement, rather than a forceful push that might cause the pupil to fall over.
- e. Escorting a pupil by the hand or arm

5.0 Holds to be avoided

5.1 The following holds should not generally be used.

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict a pupil's ability to breathe
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping a pupil
- Holding a pupil by the hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground

6.0 Recording an incident

6.1 All incidents that result in non-routine interventions will be recorded in detail in the school incident book.

6.2 Contemporaneous record (i.e. written within 24 hours of the incident's occurrence) will be made by the staff member involved in the incident.

6.3 Similarly, contemporaneous notes will also be made by any other members of staff involved (i.e. as witnesses or additional providers of support). The notes will be signed and dated.

6.4 The record will contain the following information:

- The name(s) and the job title(s) of the member of staff who used reasonable force
- The name(s) of the pupil(s) involved
- When and where the incident took place
- Names of staff and pupils who witnessed the incident
- The reason that force was necessary
- Behaviour of the pupil which led up to the incident
- Any attempts to resolve the situation
- The degree of force used
- How it was applied
- How long it was used for
- The pupils response and the eventual outcome
- Details of any injuries suffered by either staff or pupils
- Details of any damage to property

- Details of any medical treatment required (an accident form will be completed, where medical treatment is needed).
 - Details of follow-up, including contact with the parents/carers of the pupil(s) involved.
 - Details of follow up involvement of other agencies – police, Social Services
- 6.5 Pupil witnesses may also be asked to provide a written account if appropriate.
- 6.6 Copy of this entry will be kept on the pupil's file and retained in line with LEA guidance on keeping educational records.
- 6.7 The school will report any injuries to pupils or staff in accordance with RIDDOR (HSE Regulations 1995)¹
- 6.8 Pupils who are identified as likely to require positive handling as part of their behaviour management will require an Individual Behaviour Plan alongside their Individual Education Plan. This is drawn up in response to the risk posed by the pupil's behaviour and is shared with all staff, parents / carers and the pupil if appropriate.

7.0 Debriefing Arrangements

- 7.1 The pupil and the member of staff will be checked for any sign of injury after an incident. First aid will be administered to anyone who requires it, or medical treatment obtained.
- 7.2 The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise her/him. When the pupil regains complete composure, a senior member of staff (or her/his nominee) will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain the reason for its occurrence. The pupil will be given an opportunity to explain things from her/his point of view. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish the relationship between the pupil and the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.
- 7.3 In cases where it is not possible to speak to the pupil on the same day as the incident occurred, the debrief will take place as soon as possible after the pupil returns to school.
- 7.4 All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external

¹ RIDDOR _ Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 6FS

support. A senior member of staff (or her/his nominee) will provide support to the member(s) of staff involved.

7.5 The Headteacher will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity of any incidents where positive handling was used. The Headteacher (or his/her nominee) will initiate the recording process if not already underway (see 6.0) and review each incident to ensure that any necessary lessons are learned.

7.6 See paragraph 10.1 about informing parents.

8.0 Training Needs of Staff

8.1 In cases where it is known that a pupil will require positive handling on occasions, the school will ensure that appropriate training is provided, Staff involved will identify their training needs in this area.

8.2 Where the school anticipates that positive handling maybe required on occasions Rotherham MBC have colleagues trained in the use of the TEAM TEACH approach and techniques. All teaching staff and a number of support staff were TEAM TEACH trained during the INSET of 4th January 2010.

8.3 Staff trained in positive handling techniques need to update their training on a regular basis and ensure that their training record is kept up to date

9.0 Authorisation of staff to use positive handling

9.1 We recognise that positive handling will be seldom used and it is a last resort to maintaining a safe environment.

9.2 All teaching staff are, by the nature of their roles, authorised to use positive handling as appropriate. Support staff will require specific authorisation, either temporarily or permanently. The Head Teacher or someone deputising for him/her when she/he is absent can only give this authorisation. Authorised staff will be notified formally. A pro forma for authorising staff is in attached.

9.4 In the event of a complaint being received by the school in relation to the use of physical force by staff, the matter will be investigated in accordance with DfEE circular 10/95 – Protecting Children from Abuse and in accordance with Rotherham LEA Circular 61A – Note new DfES guidance to replace circular 10/95 is due late in 2003.

10.0 Arrangements for Informing Parents

10.1 Parents will be informed of the school's policy regarding positive handling in the following ways:

Included on the school website.

A section about the school's legal obligations to maintain a safe environment and the possible use of positive handling (as a very last resort) with pupils will be included in the school brochure.

Staff who work with particular children who have learning or physical disabilities (and who have Individual Education Plans, Individual Behaviour Plans and/or Pastoral Support Plans) may need to use specific techniques routinely to manage challenging behaviour. Such arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers in advance on an individual basis. All interventions will be routinely recorded.

All parents will be informed after a non-planned incident where positive handling is used with a child.

Governors will be informed of the number of incidents where positive handling has been used on an annual basis.

Karen Smith January 2010

Agreed by Staff: 26.01.10

Agreed by Governors: 03.02.10