



Northgate Primary School

Policy Statement

De-escalation, Positive Handling & Touch

Objectives

At Northgate Primary School we aim to promote and maintain appropriate good behaviour through the application of methods and approaches detailed in our school Behaviour Management Policy. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when such approaches fail or are judged likely to be unsuccessful. In some circumstances it may become necessary to use force to control or restrain pupils. Such circumstances include:

- The requirement to maintain the safety of pupils or staff.
- The prevention of serious breaches of school discipline.
- The prevention of serious damage to property.

Minimising the Need to Use Force

Staff will make maximum efforts to avoid the need to use force by:

- Promoting a nurturing ethos, thereby creating a calm and positive environment, with good relationships between staff and pupils, that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might necessitate the use of force.
- Using opportunities to teach social and emotional skills (including PATHS) in PSHE and assemblies to teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings.
- Training staff in positive behaviour management techniques, which enable them to avoid confrontation and 'de-escalate' incidents as they arise.
- Carrying out risk assessments and developing specific plans to deal with pupils with known behaviour problems, which carry risk of harm.

Staff Authorised to Use Force

All teachers and staff the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils automatically have statutory power to use force (i.e. teachers, TAs, MSAs).

Deciding Whether to Use Force

The judgement on whether or not to use force will depend on the circumstances of each case and – crucially in the case of pupils with SEN or disabilities – information about the pupil concerned. Such decisions may have to be made quickly with little time for reflection. In general staff should only use force when:

- The potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering the use of force.
- The chances of achieving the desired result by other means are low.

- Risks associated with not using force outweigh those of using force.

Having used force to restrain, staff must be able to demonstrate that it was **Reasonable**, **Proportionate** and **Necessary**. However, staff are not expected to put themselves at risk (ref: The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974).

Examples of situations where staff may consider using force include:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil.
- Pupils are fighting, causing risk of injury to themselves or others.
- A pupil is committing or is on the verge of committing deliberate damage to property.
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- A pupil absconds from class or tries to leave school other than at an authorised time where
 - i) There are serious risks to the pupil's health and safety, the safety of other pupils and staff, or damage to property.
 - ii) Absconding leads to behaviour, which prejudices good order and discipline, such as disrupting other classes.
- A pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave the classroom
- A pupil is behaving in such a way that seriously disrupts a lesson, a school event or school visit.

Judgements made in such situations will take account of the particular characteristics of the pupil, age, understanding, SEN, disability, or the outcomes of any risk assessment.

Staff with authorisation to use force will be kept informed by the Head or SENCo about how to deal with pupils who present particular risks to themselves and others.

Using Force

Where staff judges it to be necessary to use force they will ensure that they use the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired result.

Staff will give a clear oral warning to the pupil that force may have to be used. They will communicate in a calm and measured manner throughout the incident.

Types of Force That May be Used

Passive Physical Contact e.g. standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path.

Active Physical Contact e.g.:

Staff who have been trained might use the following:

- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm, using Level 1 techniques from Norfolk Steps and Step On training

- Ushering a pupil away by placing using 'Caring C's' technique.

Staff will not normally intervene in an incident without help, unless it is an emergency. They will summon help as necessary. Some pupils will have designated staff to be called if incidents occur (e.g. as part of a risk assessment or behaviour plan). However this does not necessarily mean that no action should be taken before their arrival if the need for action is urgent.

Staff have a 'Duty of Care' towards the students in their care. Therefore, if a student is likely to be at risk from harm if you do not physically intervene in an emergency situation, you must take action. The action you take will be dependent on the dynamic risk assessment that you take at the moment in time.

Recording Incidents

- School will keep a record of any incidents where force is used to control or restrain a pupil as part of reporting the incident on CPOMs. The record will form part of the pupil's educational record.
- Parents will be informed after any recorded incident. They will be telephoned as soon as possible after the incident, before details are confirmed in writing.
- The School Committee will monitor such incidents.

Post Incident Support

- School will consider whether an individual behaviour plan (or PSP) is required for the pupil, if not already in place.
- Pupils will be held to account for their actions and made to understand the harm or repairs caused by their actions. In some cases the incident may lead to exclusion.
- Staff and pupils affected by the incident will have continuing support for as long as deemed necessary for:
 1. Any physical consequences.
 2. Emotional distress or loss of confidence
 3. The opportunity to analyse, reflect and learn from the incident.

Complaints and Allegations

Complaints will be dealt with under the school's complaints procedure. The Head will respond to the complaint in the light of this procedure. School will strive to involve those with parental responsibility for pupils with behaviour problems to try to avoid such incidents occurring.

Touch Policy

At our school, we have a touch policy. This means that as a member of staff you are able to physically guide, touch or prompt children in appropriate ways at the appropriate times. It is extremely important that you have read and understood this policy to appreciate the reasons why we may choose to hold/touch children and the appropriate ways in which we do so.

Why Do We Use Touch?

We generally avoid having physical contact with children. Occasionally physical contact might occur if comforting/consoling a child. We may also need to physically touch, guide or prompt students if they require personal care, assistance with writing, eating, dressing etc.

How Do We Use Touch?

Hugging

Hugging children is not general practice but may be appropriate in situations where a child needs to be comforted as stated above. At this school, we require staff who are using touch for comfort to use a 'school hug'. This is a sideways hug, with the adult putting their hands on the child's shoulders. With safeguarding in mind, we do not take part in 'front on' hugging. Having the adult's hands on the shoulders limits the ability of the child to turn themselves into you. This can be done either standing or sitting.

Hand-Holding

We recognise that children sometimes enjoy being able to hold hands with adults around them. This is perfectly acceptable when the hand holding is compliant. However, if the handholding is being used by an adult as a method of control to move children, this can become a restraint. Therefore, we encourage the use of the 'school hand-hold'. This is done by the adult holding their arm out, and the child encouraged to wrap their hand around the adult's lower arm. The adult's other hand can then be placed over the child's for a little extra security if it is required.

In summary, it is generally deemed appropriate to touch others on the upper arm which would appear to be regarded as a neutral zone in most cultures.

Lap-Sitting

At our school we actively discourage lap-sitting. Children should be taught to seek comfort/attention through other means, for example the school hand hold or hug. If a child attempts to sit on your lap ask them to sit next to you if it is appropriate.

At times, children may be in such crisis or distress that they hold you in a way which is not described as above (e.g. 'front on' hug/lap-sitting). If this should happen please ensure that you have informed a senior member of staff to protect yourself.

Staff should record such incidents on CPOMs. This will be partly in order to record and monitor the amount of times the student is doing this to staff to see whether this is a 'controlling' behaviour, or whether the child is displaying distressed behaviour regularly.

It should also be realised that some children will not want to be touched and this should be respected.

If you have any questions or would like a further discussion regarding this policy, please speak to your line manager at this earliest available opportunity.

Looked After Children/EAL (English as an Additional Language)/SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability)

No child who qualifies under one of the above headings will be discriminated against. These extra needs will be taken into account and consideration be given on an individual basis (through IEP, PEP, PSP, BSP).

Northgate Primary School

De-escalation, Positive Handling & Touch Policy

Agreed by Staff:

Agreed by Committee: P. Waters Bunn Dec 2, 2022

Review Date: Annually

Chair of School Committee

Risk Reduction Plan (Child)

Child's Name:	
No. of Plans	Sheet of
DOB:	
Age:	
Risk Assessment Coordinator:	
Issue No:	
Issue Date:	
Closing Date:	
Risk Score:	

Potential Harm	
Behaviour resulting in potential harm	

Risk Reduction Measures	Notes
Proactive Intervention (before child arrives) 1.	

2.	
3.	
Developing Intervention (where are the triggers) 1. 2. 3.	
Reactive Intervention (what do we do when it happens) 1. 2. 3.	
Debriefing Preferences (what do we say when its over)	

Monitoring Sheet

Manager					
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effectiveness of support ● Impact on Risks ● Suggestions to Modify ● Reasons implementation not possible 	Signature	Accept for Review	Accept for Re-issue	Maintain Current Plan

Sheet _____ of _____

Review Date: ____/____/____

Closure/Re-issue Date:	
Managers Signature:	
Date:	

Northgate Primary School Record of Harm			
Name:		Class:	
Date:	Time:	Activity:	
Harm caused:	To self	To others	To property
Physical harm/injury Details:			
Emotional harm			
Disruption/loss of learning	No. of children:	No. of minutes:	
Description of harm and behaviour shown:			

Resolution:		
Staff present:		
Signed:		Date:
Print name:		Logged on SIMs?