



Learning Together, Building Futures

Positive Handling Policy

Head Teacher: Ms E D'Souza

Reviewed: September 2020

Date for Review: September 2022

1. The Legal Framework

Positive Handling / Physical Restraint should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort. Under the Children Order 1995, it is only permissible as described under the heading "Physical Control". Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

(Further examples of possible situations are given in Appendix 1)

2. Definition of Positive Handling at Hermitage Primary School

Positive Handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself/herself or others or seriously damaging property.

General policy aims

Staff at Hermitage Primary School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety / well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. Our policy on Positive Handling should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Child Protection policies.

Everyone attending or working at Hermitage Primary School has the right to:

- a recognition of their unique identity
- be treated with respect and dignity
- learn and work in a safe environment
- be protected from harm

Specific aims of the Positive Handling policy

- To protect every person in the school community from harm
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations

3. Why use Positive Handling?

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. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the School's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

Alternative strategies

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (eg is a pupil about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:

- repeated and clear instruction until the pupil complies
- use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with the School's policy on behaviour.

Use of Positive Handling

Positive Handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of ***re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control and safety.*** It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing

him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

In all circumstances other methods should always be deployed appropriately, effective positive handling should only be a last resort.

When positive handling becomes necessary:

DO

- Calmly tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff as soon as possible
- Inform a member of the senior leadership team immediately
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the positive handling (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax the positive handling in response to the pupil's compliance

DON'T

- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Attempt to reason with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the situation
- Touch or hold the pupil in sensitive areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)

Actions after an incident

Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. **A member of the leadership team should be informed of any incident as soon as possible** and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a Pastoral Plan (Behaviour Plan and Risk Assessment) co-produced with the Parent and child, which will include a positive management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SENDCO.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately using the positive handling record (Appendix 2). All sections of the record should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available. A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

4. Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of positive handling, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate

5. Monitoring of Incidents

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use positive handling, this will always be recorded and documented. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using positive handling. This process will address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.

6. Training

Positive Handling training will be made available to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the Headteacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

7. Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to 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 Care under child protection procedures.

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

SignedDate (Chair of Governors)

SignedDate(Headteacher)

Appendix 1:

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force / positive handling?

Examples of situations that may require *positive handling* are when:

- 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 objects
- 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 her/himself or others
- a pupil absconding from a class or trying 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 an area (Parent will be called as an initial measure to avoid any contact with the child)
- a pupil behaves in such a way that seriously disrupts a lesson

Appendix 2: Record of Positive Handling

Pupil name:	Class:
Date of incident:	Time of incident:
Staff involved:	
Adult witnesses to positive handling:	Pupil witnesses to positive handling:
Outline of event leading to positive handling:	
Outline of incident of positive handling (including positive handling method used):	
Description of any injury sustained and any subsequent treatment:	

Date /time parent/carer informed of positive handling:
Informed by:
Outline of parent/carer response:
Signatures of staff completing record:
Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action: