

OUR LADY'S
CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL



Positive Handling Policy

Approved by:

BAEPD Committee

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Last reviewed on:

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Next review due by:

Summer 2022

Purpose of policy

Our Lady's Catholic High School enjoys a longstanding and excellent reputation for excellent pastoral care of pupils which in turn leads to outstanding academic achievement. The very positive relationships between staff and pupils are instrumental in achieving these standards and supporting our school mission. We are very fortunate that incidents requiring approaches from staff outlined in this policy are extremely rare.

However, the purpose of the policy is to provide appropriate guidance to staff in dealing with the very exceptional circumstance where the use of reasonable force may be required.

Introduction

This policy, produced in October 2007 (and re-ratified in May 2016), should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to the interaction between adults and pupils. Its contents are available to parents and pupils. A statement about the school's Discipline and Behaviour policy is made to parents in the parent's handbook. This policy includes information on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. The responsible person for implementation is the Headteacher.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

Implications of the policy

The 1996 Education Act (Section 550A) stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within the school (this includes authorised out-of-school activities)
- self-injuring
- causing injury to others
- committing an offence

Individual members of staff cannot be required to use physical restraint. However, teaching and non-teaching staff work in loco parentis and should always operate with an appropriate 'Duty of Care', they could be liable for a claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this policy.

The application of any form of physical control places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

Definitions of Positive Handling

- Positive Handling refers to the use of the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property.
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause. (Para. 3.4, page 10 of Es Guidance ref. LEA/024212002 -contact of Es SEN Schools Term).

Useful terms in this context are:

1. Physical contact: Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, eg: in the care of pupils with learning disabilities; in games/PE; to comfort pupils.

2. Physical intervention: This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

3. Physical control/restraint: This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a last resort. All such incidents must be recorded and stored in an accessible way. The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint.

Underpinning values

Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity;
- be treated with respect and dignity;
- learn and work in a safe environment;
- be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school;
- be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

The school will ensure that pupils are given support to understand the need for and to respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in the school.

Authorised staff

All teachers are authorised to use reasonable force (within the context of Circular 10/98 - 'The use of reasonable force to control and restrain pupils'), and those non-teaching staff specifically authorised by the Headteacher to have control or charge of pupils. Authorisation is not given to volunteers, students or parents.

The Headteacher is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given, in what circumstances and settings they may use force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. The Headteacher will ensure that those authorised are aware of, and understand, what the authorisation entails. Those whom the Headteacher has not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where control or restraint is needed.

Support Services will have their own policies for care and control of pupils. When working within the school it is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that colleagues from Support Services are aware of school policy and practice.

Staff Training and Management Systems for Positive Handling

The school provides suitable training for all staff and the Headteacher retains a list of all those staff trained. The list is reviewed on an annual basis (or more frequently if the context requires it). Guidelines for the provision and content of training are provided in Appendix 1.

In addition to training the school will put in place systems for ensuring:

- reduction in the occurrence of behaviours which precipitate the use of a physical intervention
- effective 'de-escalation' or 'de-fusion' which can avert the need for a physical intervention
- procedures for post-incident support and de-briefing for staff, children, service users and their Families

Dealing with challenging behaviour

As endorsed in the school's Behaviour Policy, staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. The policy of the school is to see positive handling as a proactive response to meet individual pupil needs. Positive handling measures will be most effective in the context of the mission and the overall ethos of the school, the way that staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

In Appendix 2 we provide information on types of incident which may occur. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident and in association with Circular 10/98.

- Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain (this includes negotiation, care and concern).
- Further verbal reprimand stating:
 - -that this is the second request for compliance;
 - -an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable;
 - -an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies, if possible summon assistance from (cite school support structures).
- Physical intervention with the use of reasonable force to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property. Wherever possible assistance will be sought from another member of staff. The approach of the school to a developing understanding in the school of "reasonable force" is contained in Appendix 3.

Recording

Where physical control or restraint has been used, a record of the incident will be kept. This record should be made in the school Serious Incident Book, statutory for all special school provision. This is a hard-backed book, with numbered pages, retained by the Headteacher containing a brief reference to the detailed Restraint Form and Health & Safety/Incident Form as appropriate.

The Restraint Form will be completed as soon as possible after the incident, normally prior to staff going off duty and be signed by all staff involved and the Headteacher. After the review of the incident, copies of the Restraint Form will be placed on the pupil's file. A Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form will be completed and returned to the Local Education Authority in situations where injury has occurred to either members of staff or pupils. Where staff have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force they should have access to counselling and support.

Monitoring incidents

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use reasonable force, this will always be recorded and documented following agreed procedures. 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 may require the use of reasonable force. Monitoring of incidents will take place on a regular basis and the results used to inform planning to meet individual pupil and school needs.

To support the Headteacher and the school and ensure objectivity, the Link Advisor and or Behaviour Support Service Consultant to the school will be involved with the monitoring process.

Action after an incident

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Review of Behaviour Programme
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by police and/or Social Services)
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff

The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken. In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the school's Complaints Policy. If necessary the complaint will be dealt with by the Staff Disciplinary Procedures and/or Child Protection Procedures.

Other relevant policies

Other relevant policies that cross reference with this one are:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Appendix 1: Staff Training

No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of on-going staff development.

Following a review of existing school practice, in consultation with governors/staff and the LEA, the school is committed to using (insert name of provider), providing this approach continues to adopt the BILD Code of Practice on physical intervention, and has been or is working towards being accredited through the BILD Physical Interventions Accreditation Scheme. Our school acknowledges that physical techniques are only a part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management. The governors of the school are committed to working within the LEA's framework for accessing training in that:

1. We will review our Behaviour Policy on a two-year cycle at least.
2. The Headteacher will assess the standard of behaviour management to be achieved within the school and ensure the provision of training that will enable this standard to be reached.
3. Training will be delivered on a needs-based approach and procedures will be in place to monitor incidents, following a behavioural audit and implementation of appropriate risk management procedures.
4. All training will include theory on at least the following:
 - Causes of challenging behaviour
 - Prevention strategies
 - Positive behaviour management
 - De-escalation
 - Risk Assessment
 - Behaviour Support Planning
 - De-brief following incidents
5. Physical techniques are not treated in isolation and the school is committed to ensuring that, as result of incidents, learning opportunities are created for children that allow them to 'own' and take responsibility for their behaviour.
6. In addition, procedures are also in place to ensure that appropriate support is provided for staff and that following an incident pupil/staff relationships are rebuilt and repaired to ensure that a positive learning environment is maintained.
7. All the techniques used take account of a young person's:
 - age
 - gender
 - level of physical, emotional and intellectual development
 - special needs
 - social contextand provide a gradual, graded system of responses.

8. Where appropriate, Positive Handling Plans are written for individual children and where applicable, these will be designed through multi-professional collaboration. These should be included in any Pastoral Support Plans/IEPs.

9. Risk Assessments need to be completed against each child when physical restraint may need to be used, in the context of identified target behaviour(s) and environments in which they occur. The assessment should identify the benefits and the risks associated with the strategies being proposed.

Appendix 2: Types of incident

The incidents described in Circular 10/98 fall into three broad categories:

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- Where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil is behaving in away that is compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations, which fall within one of the first two categories, are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism 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 is running in a corridor or on a stairway such that he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself 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).

Examples of situations which fall into the third category are:

- a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- a pupil is behaving in away that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Appendix 3: Reasonable Force

The school will put in place systems for managing and reviewing the concept of reasonable force with reference to all the circumstances, including:

- the seriousness of the incident
- the relative risks arising from using a physical intervention compared with using other strategies
- the age, cultural background, gender, stature and medical history of the child or service user concerned
- the application of gradually increasing or decreasing levels of force in response to the person's behaviour
- the approach to risk assessment and risk management employed
- the distinction between:
 - **seclusion** where an adult or child is forced to spend time alone against their will in a locked room or room which they cannot leave (NB: this is not a permissible form of control).
 - **time out** which involves restricting the service user's access to all positive reinforcements as part of the behavioural programme
 - **withdrawal** which involves removing the person from a situation which causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities
- the distinction between planned physical interventions (where incidents are foreseeable in that they have occurred previously and a response planned following a risk assessment) and the use of force in emergency situations (which cannot reasonably be anticipated)
- first aid procedures to be employed and those responsible for implementation in the event of an injury or physical distress arising as a result of a physical intervention
- unacceptable practices that might expose service users or staff to foreseeable risk of injury or psychological distress. (Para 10.8, page 19 DfES Guidance. Ref:LEA/0242/2002)