

# Bridge Specialist Academy

## Positive Handling Policy



### Introduction

The policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for the care and control of pupils presenting very challenging behaviour. Its contents are available to parents and pupils. A statement about the school's Behaviour and Relationships policy is made to parents in the school prospectus.

This statement includes information on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils.

### Aims and objectives

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school have SEMH needs that can impact on their behaviour. It is also acknowledged that staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required. Bridge Specialist Academy acknowledges that physical techniques are only part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management and are only used as a last resort under-pinned by sound risk assessment.

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 for taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

### Aims:

- To ensure that all pupils remain safe and secure in a safe and secure environment
- To provide a safe environment for those pupils exhibiting challenging behaviours
- To promote de-escalation and diversion methods in dealing with challenging behaviours
- To promote a caring ethos for pupils exhibiting challenging behaviours
- To ensure that key staff are trained in the use and application of positive handling methods

### School Ethos

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we aim to:

- create a positive climate with realistic expectations;
- emphasise the importance of being valued as an individual within the group;
- promote, through example, honesty and courtesy;
- provide a caring and effective learning environment;
- encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others;
- ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability;
- show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.

### **Implications of the policy**

The Education and Inspection Act 2006 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;
- damage to property

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.

### **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/provision 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 respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in the school as set out in the school's Behaviour and Relationships policy.

## **Definitions**

### **Reasonable force**

No legal definition of reasonable force exists. However, for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in Bridge Specialist Academy:

- positive handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming him/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.

### **Physical contact**

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

### **Physical intervention**

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, e.g. guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

### **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".

The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint.

## **Strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour**

As endorsed in the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy, staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order.

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, discipline and provokes intervention, positive handling strategies are required. Some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident.

- Where possible, verbal acknowledgment 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 another member of staff.
- physical intervention. Reasonable force being used to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff.

Positive handling at Bridge Specialist Academy is seen as a proactive response to meet individual pupil needs.

## **Types of incident**

The incidents fall into three broad categories:

- 1) Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
- 2) Where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property;
- 3) Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline, or is having a psychological effect on themselves and/or others

Examples of situations 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, 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).

## **Management and review of Positive Handling Strategies**

The management and review of positive handling strategies is proactive and will be done after every incident where positive handling is used.

- strategies for '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.
- The concept of reasonable force where 'reasonableness' is determined 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

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.

## **Individual Behaviour Management Plans (IBMP)**

Where appropriate, Positive Handling plans are written for individual pupils within their IBMP and take account of the context of identified target behaviour(s) and environments in which they occur. Where applicable, these will be designed through multi-professional collaboration.

Positive Handling plans within an IBMP must take account of A) Proactive Control measures; B) Early Intervention; C) Reactive Control measures and D) Positive Handling strategies. The Positive Handling plans should identify the benefits and the risks associated with the Positive Handling strategies being proposed.

These are reviewed on a bi-annual basis and should result in a reduction in the use of positive handling through physical intervention. If the amount of physical intervention is increasing or their reactions to physical intervention are unsafe, a review of the individual pupils Positive Handling strategy must be made.

## **Authorised Staff**

In this school all staff are authorised to use reasonable force within the context of The Education and Inspection Act 2006 – 'The use of reasonable force to control and restrain pupils'. The school provides training for all staff.

## **Staff from the LA working within the school**

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.

## **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, commonly referred to as the 'Bound and Numbered Book'. This is a bound book, with numbered pages, retained by the Headteacher.

Records of all incidents should be completed objectively using clear, factual and non-emotive words.

Entry into the Serious Incident Book 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.

A separate log will be completed when a child is excluded, or when an incident is of the most extreme nature.

A Health and Safety Accident Form will be completed 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 support as appropriate.

## **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.

## **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 IBMP;
- 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**

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.

## **Training**

It will be the responsibility of the Headteacher to arrange suitable training. Training for all staff will be made available. 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.

In consultation with governors/staff, the school is committed to using Team Teach, providing this approach continues to adopt the British Institute for Learning Difficulties (BILD) Code of Practice on physical intervention, and has been or is working towards being accredited through the BILD Physical Interventions Accreditation Scheme. Bridge Specialist Academy acknowledges that physical techniques are only a part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

Positive Handling Training will:

1. Be delivered on a needs-based approach

- 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.

Physical techniques are not treated in isolation and the school is committed to ensuring that, as a result of incidents, learning opportunities are created for children that allow them to 'own' and take responsibility for their behaviour.

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.

All the techniques used take account of a young person's: age; gender; level of physical, emotional and intellectual development; special needs and social context. They will also provide a gradual, graded system of responses.

**This Policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour and Relationships Policy.**

Adopted by the Governing Body at Bridge Specialist Academy

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Governors