



Together, we learn and grow.

Shepherdswell Academy

Positive Handling Policy

2022 – 2023



Every child deserves to be the best they can be.



Collaboration



Courage



Curiosity



Creativity



Community

Review date: January 2023

Shepherdswell Academy – Positive Handling Policy

Rationale

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years
- Use of Reasonable force in Schools: a summary for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (DfE)
- Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website (Cabinet Office)

At Shepherdswell Academy we work hard to maintain a positive school ethos where all members of the school community work well alongside each other developing positive working relationships.

We are fully committed to every child receiving the very best education and ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential in a safe, secure, welcoming and nurturing school environment where everyone is valued equally and where the use of positive handling is minimised.

We want pupils to come to school to enjoy the meaningful experiences that we offer and where they feel valued and special. We want them to be well behaved and to have a sense of pride in themselves and their school.

We acknowledge that Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 allows school personnel to use reasonable force to restrain a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- committing any offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil).
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

(Department for Education – Use of reasonable force)

We understand that there is no legal definition when reasonable force can be used. 'That will always depend on the precise circumstances of individual circumstances of individual cases. To be judged lawful, the force used would need to be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Use of force could not be justified to prevent trivial misbehaviour'.

(Department for Education – Use of reasonable force)

We understand that unpaid school volunteers or parents accompanying pupils on an educational visit who have been put in temporary charge of pupils by the Headteacher may use reasonable force if need be. We do not support the use of force as a form of punishment under any circumstance.

Aims of this Policy

Staff at Shepherdswell Academy recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.

The key objectives of the policy are:

- To maintain a positive school ethos where all members of the school community work well alongside each other developing positive working relationships.
- To make staff aware that they can use reasonable force to restrain a pupil only in extreme circumstances.
- To protect every person in the school community from harm.

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- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which 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.

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 physical restraint 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 Positive Handling Policy.

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 wellbeing.

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 (e.g. if a pupil is about to run across a road).

However, in many circumstances there are alternative strategies such as:

- An instruction is being repeated until the pupil complies.
- Distraction, 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 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. 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 be used if appropriate or effective and positive handling should be a last resort.

When positive handling becomes necessary:

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why.
- Use the minimum force necessary.
- Involve another member of staff where possible.

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- Tell the pupil what he/she must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition).
- Use simple and clear language.
- Use appropriate holds, that have been taught during Team Teach Training.
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance.

Actions to be taken after an incident

Positive handling 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 positive behaviour and handling plan (**see appendix 1**), which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SENCO.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided, discussing what led to the incident, the pupil's actions and resolutions or strategies moving forward, using the emotional coaching model (**see appendix 2**).

All incidents should be recorded immediately in the Bound and Numbered book stored in the Head teacher's office. All sections of this report 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, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

Risk assessment and Behaviour Plans

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may need the use of reasonable force, 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.

Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. If you would like to raise a complaint please refer to the EMAT complaints policy, which can be found on our website, or contact the school office who will also be able to provide you with a copy.

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 Services department 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.

Appendix 1 – Positive Behaviour and Handling plan



Positive Behaviour and Handling Plan

Name of Pupil:		Year:	Class:
Date of Plan:		Date to Review Plan:	
Health and Safety Arrangements (Include medical and dietary requirements):			
Staff Involved in Plan:			
1.			
2.			
3.			
Triggers (common situations/behaviour known to result in the need for positive handling):			
1.			
2.			
3.			
Behaviour (description of observable behaviours)			
Step One (Positive Handling Strategies – preferred strategies to keep the situation calm)			
Verbal support		Time out offered	
Repeat instructions		Time out directed	
Take up time		Tactical ignoring	
		Controlled choices	
		Distraction	
		Reassurance	
Other strategies:			
Remind of:			
Rules rights responsibilities – agreed on plan		Consequences	Successes
Other strategies: Humour, provide job etc.			
Step Two: Intervention Strategies including physical intervention where necessary (preferred strategies/Team Teach holds to be used):			
Step Three: De-escalation Strategies (preferred strategies to be used to de-escalate situation):			
Step Four: Praise (appropriate praise & reward can be offered to improve situation):			

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Step Five: Consequences (appropriate & agreed consequences to be issued after de-escalation):		
Risk Assessment		
Description of high-risk behaviour:		
Proactive intervention to prevent risk	Early Intervention to manage risk	Reactive intervention to respond to adverse outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSHE (circle time) Support from class teaching assistant(s) and teacher. Move other children away. Distract Prior warnings of what is happening that day – and if anyone is coming in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, consistent and simple instructions Frequent reward of positive behaviour seen merits and verbal comments. Keep child in mind consistently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow positive behaviour/handling strategies. Telephone call to parents or speaking to them at the end of the day
Frequency: Hourly Daily Weekly Monthly		
Intention: Deliberate Accidental Involuntary Need for Control Embarrassment and Shame		
Probability of Harm: Improbable Possible Probable Likely		
Flash points: (locations, times, and people at greatest risk):		
Parent Name:	Parent Signature:	Date:
School Representative Name:	School Representative Signature:	Date:

Parent Signature: _____

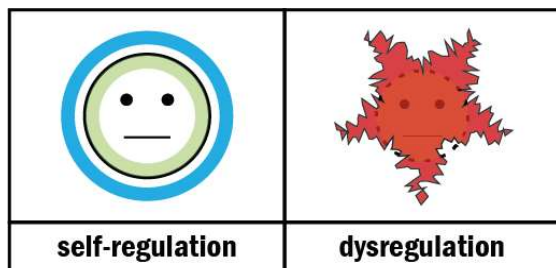
Date: _____

School Representative _____

Review Date:

Appendix 2 – Emotional Coaching Strategy

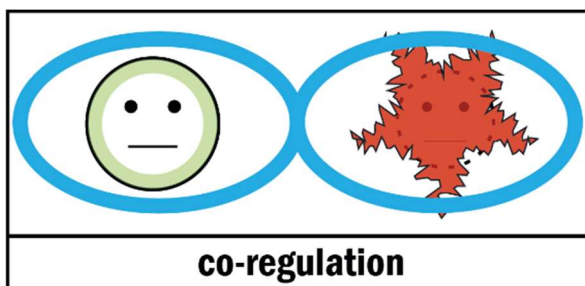
Step 1: Empathise, validate and label



Step 1
The adult recognises, empathises with and validates the feelings of the child

- Recognise all emotions as being natural and normal, and not a matter of choice.
- Look for physical and verbal signs of the emotion being felt.
- Take on the child’s perspective (attunement / mentalising / mindedness).
- Use words to reflect back the child or young person’s emotion and help them to label the emotion.
- Affirm and empathise, allowing the child or young person to calm down through co-regulation.
- Provide a narrative for the emotional experience, creating cognitive links through co-learning.

Step 2: Set limits



Step 2
The adult empathically sets limits on the behaviour of the child

First co-regulation

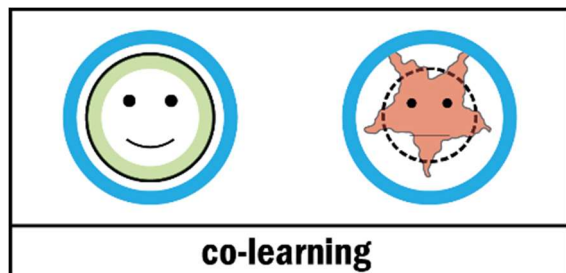
Establish rapport:

- Building on attunement with the child or young person.
- Mirror neurones then create engagement with the social and emotional brain.
- Important that the adult sets the emotional tone – not the adult reflecting back the angry or distressed face of the child, but the child being able to reflect the calm and empathic face of the adult.

Then teaching / co-learning

- State the boundary limits of acceptable behaviour.
- Make it clear that some behaviours cannot be accepted.

Step 3: Problem-solve with the child



Step 3
The adult problem-solves with the child or young person

When the child is calm and in a relaxed and rational state...

Explore the feelings that gave rise to the behaviour, problem, or incident:

- Remember that all feelings are acceptable.
- We manage our feelings by making choices about how we respond.
- **Scaffold** alternative ideas and actions that could lead to more appropriate and productive outcomes.
- **Empower** the child or young person to believe they can overcome difficulties and manage their own feelings and behaviour.

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