



Reasonable Force Policy

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Delegated to: Inclusion Manager
Reviewer: Francine Howard

Mission Statement

Botwell House Catholic Primary School is distinguished by the care, courtesy and concern extended to all its members, regardless of cultural differences and strives to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ to:

“Love one another as I have loved you”

Through an effective partnership between home, school and parish and through a broad and balanced curriculum, each valued individual is encouraged to grow in their journey of faith and strive towards excellence.

Botwell House Catholic Primary School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her potential.

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1. Aims

At Botwell House Catholic Primary School, we believe that children have the right to independence, choice and inclusion. Children who are unable to control their actions or unable to appreciate danger have a right to be protected; as do those around them and staff have a duty of care, for all to exercise.

At school, we have many calm spaces to minimise incidents that may require any physical intervention. We believe that the 'de-escalation' of a situation is always a priority and will only use physical interventions when the risks involved of doing so are outweighed by the risks of not doing so.

2. Rationale

Children learn who they are and how the world is by forming relationships with everyone and everything around them. The quality of a child's relationship with significant adults is vital to their healthy development and emotional wellbeing.

We acknowledge the extensive research and studies relating to attachment theory and child development that identify safe touch as a positive contribution to brain development, mental health and the development of social skills.

The school has adopted an informed, evidence based decision to allow safe touch as a developmentally appropriate intervention that will aid healthy growth and learning. Our policy rests on the belief that every member of staff knows the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. Equally, when a child is in deep distress, staff understand when and how sufficient connection and psychological holding can be provided without touching.

3. School Expectations

As part of our dedication to the Zones of Regulation approach, we have created safe and calm areas in each classroom. In addition to this, there are other more secluded quiet spaces around the school. This allows us to help children to de-escalate and self-regulate so that they are able to return to a calm state.

We will only use physical interventions when the risks involved of doing so are outweighed by the risks of not doing so.

4. Positive Behaviour Management

As per our Positive Behaviour policy, our staff and volunteers adopt a whole school approach to teaching and supporting all of our children to recognise their emotions, self-regulate and then reflect by using a restorative approach.

Where harmful behaviours are consistently repeated, staff are equipped to observe and record so that patterns may be identified. This approach helps to ensure that appropriate, preventative intervention is put in place at the earliest opportunity.

4.1 What is physical Intervention ('reasonable force')?

The use of force is illegal if the physical circumstances do not warrant it. The force used should always be the minimum needed to regain and ensure safety and control for everyone involved or present. This policy should therefore be read in conjunction with our Positive Behaviour and Safeguarding Policy.

Restrictive - physical interventions may include bodily contact - where the physical presence of one or more people is used to control a child, e.g physically interposing between children; blocking a child's path; holding or 'shepherding' a child; using agreed, approved restricted holds learned as part of positive handling training delivered by School Staff Training: The Institute of Conflict Management.

Environmental – where a change is applied within the environment for example shutting a door or the use of locks or key pads to prevent access to a particular area.

4.2 In what circumstances can physical intervention be used?

- To prevent a child causing, or being at risk of causing, injury or damage to themselves or others, whether by accident, rough behaviour or by misuse of materials or objects
- To prevent a child committing a criminal offence
- To prevent a child committing deliberate serious damage or vandalism
- To prevent a child from attacking a member of staff or another child
- To prevent behaviour which is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline

The decision to use physical intervention will be taken in the context of the level of risk presented by the behaviour, the seriousness of the incident and the relative risks of the use of physical intervention compared with any available alternative.

The use of physical intervention will take into account the characteristics of the child (which may be protected under the Equality Act 2010), including their age, gender, SEN, physical needs or disability, developmental level or cultural issues.

Where physical interventions are needed to prevent injury to the child, other children or staff, or to prevent serious damage, these should be for the minimum length of time possible and using the least possible force. This is always a consideration by all staff when in this situation. In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate and effective positive handling should be a last resort.

When positive handling becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the child what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary · Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the child what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the child's compliance

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the child
- Attempt to reason with the child
- Involve other children in the restraint
- Touch or hold the child in sexual areas

- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the child in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck, lying face down or pulling arms across the child's chest
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the child

Positive Handling Plans:

Positive Handling Plans management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning.

All children who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan (see appendix ...). The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective, they should be named along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past.

Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside any other planning documents which relate to the child. They should take account of age, gender, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, neurodiversity and social context.

Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be discussed and updated regularly.

5. Staff Training

It is the policy of this school that all staff working closely with children are trained in the proactive and responsive positive handling strategies and, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the Positive Behaviour Policy. In cases where a Positive Handling Plan is in operation, selected staff will be trained in any physical interventions to be used. These staff will be trained by the accredited provider School Staff Training and will be the only staff authorised to use the intervention.

5.1 General Advice for staff

- Be sure that you are aware of and complying with the school policy for behaviour and discipline and positive handling procedures.
- It is better to defuse situations wherever possible, as this prevents them from escalating to a level where force is necessary
- Send for the assistance of another member of staff as soon as possible, using the agreed call-out protocol (Red cards to a member of the Senior Leadership Team)
- All those involved should be de-briefed after incidents to explore more positive/effective responses to future difficult situations

6. Recording

Whenever overpowering force is used, the incident must be recorded using the approved forms. The All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours. The details recorded on the forms are kept confidentially. Families must also be notified and this is to be recorded on the form.

Staff should:

- Inform a member of SLT as soon as possible

- Complete the school recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly
- Complete all names in full
- Sign and date all forms Post-Incident Support Incidents that require use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and could result in injuries to the child or staff.

After incidents have subsided, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries.

Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require other than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures which can be viewed in the First Aid Policy.

7. Complaints regarding reasonable force

The use of restrictive physical intervention can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive use. In the event of a complaint being received by a school in relation to use of force by staff, the matter should be dealt with in accordance with Hillingdon Local Authority guidelines and agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff (see Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff Policy). The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) would coordinate any actions.

8. Policy Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or when relevant national or local guidance indicates is amended.

9. Other relevant policies / documents

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff
- 1st Aid Policy
- Equality Act 2010