



<b>POLICY:</b> Positive Handling Policy	<b>SIGNATURE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS:</b> <i>Gavin C Brown</i>
<b>DATE APPROVED:</b> November 2024	
<b>FREQUENCY OF REVIEW:</b> Annually	
<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:</b> November 2025	

# **POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY**

## **FOR OXLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**VERSION: NOVEMBER 2024**

## Introduction

Staff at Oxley Primary School are trained to look after pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. Staff trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategy techniques of TEAM TEACH will use physical intervention techniques with children when necessary. Further details of the TEAM TEACH approach can be found on the TEAM TEACH website.

The website address is <https://www.teamteach.co.uk/>

The term positive handling includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety. The school takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors to the school.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

*"Team teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the pupil, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of the professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring the pupil remains safe"*

*George Matthews – Founder of Team Teach.*

## Minimising the need to use force

The power to use force helps ensure pupil and school safety.

Because the use of force should only be a last resort, our school minimises the possibility of force being needed by creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that lessens the risk and threat of violence of any kind.

## Staff authorised to use force

The staff to which this power applies are:

- Any member of staff at the school.
- Any other adult whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This can also include people to whom the head has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits)

The power to use force may be used where the pupil (including a pupil from another school) is on the school premises or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of the staff member (for example on a school visit).

**All school staff members have a legal power to use reasonable force** to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others or damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline.

Members of staff should not put themselves at risk. An individual would not be seen to be failing in their duty of care by not using force to prevent injury, if doing so threatened their own safety.

### **Deciding whether to use force**

Section 93 of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006* enables school staff to use **reasonable force** to prevent a pupil from:

- committing a criminal offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
- causing personal injury or damage to property; 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.

**There is no statutory definition of 'reasonable force'.** Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the circumstances of individual cases. Deciding on whether the use of force is justified will depend in part upon the context in which the misbehaviour takes place. The force used must be proportionate 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 low level misbehaviour.

Some examples of situations where reasonable force might be used are:

- To prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff, or another pupil, or to stop a fight between two or more pupils;
- To prevent a pupil causing deliberate damage to property;
- To prevent a pupil causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or object;
- To ensure that a pupil leaves a classroom where the pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to do so;
- To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson; or
- To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or school visit.

The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use should always depend on the circumstances of each case and – crucially in the case of **pupils with SEN or disabilities** – information about the individual concerned.

We make **individual risk assessments** where it is known that force is more likely to be necessary to restrain a particular pupil, such as a pupil whose SEN and/or disability is associated with extreme behaviour.

A Positive Handling Support & Intervention plan is then drawn-up based on specific needs and in response to the risks identified.

### **Team Teach**

The TEAM TEACH system is recognised by the Local Authority and accredited through BILD – British Institute of Learning Disabilities. Staff undergo a one or two-day course (depending upon the severity of behaviour of the children they are working with) led by qualified trainers.

*Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible.*

### **Steps to be taken before using physical controls**

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning.
- Give clear directions for the pupil to stop.
- Remind the pupil about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take the vulnerable pupil to a safe place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

### **Restraint**

At Oxley Primary School we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. We expect staff to risk assess and choose the safest alternative. This also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces rather than increases risk. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate.

Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming him/herself or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property.
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing this.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint.
- These staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control. Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Physical restraint should never be used to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property.
- The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity.

In addition, whilst or before intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. 'I am doing this to keep you safe'.

### **Responding to unforeseen emergencies**

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. An unforeseen event may require an emergency response. After that event, staff have a duty to plan ahead and prepare a new risk assessment.

## **Risk Assessment**

Risk assessments are required for pupils who exhibit **extreme** behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong.

When considering a pupil's behaviour, staff will think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

## **Positive Handling Plans**

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective should be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered along with the child's Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) and any other planning document relevant to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.

## **Post Incident Debrief**

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of our school to offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other peoples' perspective.

It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the need of all staff. As individuals we all vary in how much support we need after an unpleasant incident. Generally, a member of senior staff would expect to talk to staff and children involved (if appropriate) in any incidents involving violence. If members of staff need time to rest or compose themselves, then the Head teacher will make arrangements for the class group to be supported.

## **Recording**

- All incidents of unacceptable behaviour should be recorded electronically on CPOMS.
- All serious incidents or incidents involving restraint will be recorded in the Bound and Numbered Book which is kept in the school office and this will also need to be recorded on CPOMS.

Within these recording strategies, all details must be recorded by witnesses within twenty-four hours and signed by at least two members of staff. The Head teacher needs to be informed.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required.

### **Parents**

When there is concern about a child, parents will be invited to contribute to a risk assessment and Positive Handling Plan. Written parental agreement will form part of this. Parents will be informed of the school's policies. Parents will be informed following serious incidents.

### **Complaints and Allegations**

Any complaints will follow the school's complaints procedure.

### **Staff Team teach Trained:**

Mr Daniel Caldwell (Head Teacher) Valid: 21.11.25

Mrs Shobna Maisuria (Class Teacher and SENCo) Valid: 21.11.25