



POSITIVE HANDLING GUIDELINES POLICY

Value Statement (who we are):

Coombe Hill Infants' School is an inclusive, community school with a strong tradition of mutual respect and tolerance within a nurturing family environment. We provide an outstanding education for all children.

Vision Statement (what we strive for):

Our vision is to develop strong minds, bodies and spirit in preparation for life. We sow the seeds of curiosity, enthusiasm and resilience to ensure all children continue to delight in their lifelong love of learning.

Responsibility: Headteacher
Reviewed :Spring 2023
Next review Date: Spring 2026
Governor Committee: Community, Children & Safeguarding

"Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility"

Coombe Hill Infants' School complies with the relevant legal duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998; we promote equality of opportunity and take positive steps to prevent any form of discrimination, either direct or indirect, against those with protected characteristics in all aspects of our work.

Positive Handling at Coombe Hill infants' school and Coombe Connections

These guidelines are to be read, with regard for:

Education and Inspections Act 2006

DfE Use of Reasonable Force 2013

Coombe Hill Infants' Behaviour and relationship Policy

Coombe Hill Infants' Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

At Coombe Hill Infants' school we have a well –established positive behaviour management policy which is followed by all members of staff when dealing with behavioural incidents. It is based on an attachment, trauma informed approach, where relationships are key. We aim to create a calm and supportive school climate to ensure all children are kept safe and feel safe.

When considering the use of positive handling techniques, de-escalation techniques will always be attempted first; ensuring staff effectively manage incidents by communicating calmly with non-threatening verbal/ body language.

If used at all, the use of 'reasonable force' to control or restrain pupils will be used in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the child.

Definition of positive handling

Positive handling uses the **minimum** degree of force necessary for the **shortest** period of time to ensure minimal risk of injury to children and staff.

The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be **proportionate** to both the behaviour of the individual that we would like to manage and the nature of the harm they might cause.

Positive Handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies involving policy, guidance, management of the environment and deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour management, diversion, diffusion and de-escalation techniques.



Objectives

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure behaviour is positive at Coombe Hill Infants' School. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the boundaries put in place by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school.

Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to

- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Learn and work in a safe environment
- Be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse
- Recognition of their unique identity

It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required. This is a small part of our whole school setting approach to behaviour management.

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

- Clearly understand our positive handling guidelines and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care and take appropriate measures where 'use of force' is necessary
- Every step has been taken to de-escalate incidents before carrying out any restraint techniques
- Are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations
- Are made aware that they are required to justify their decision to restrain in writing, through the recording and reporting procedures (see Appendix A)

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following;

- self-injuring
- causing injury to others
- causing deliberate damage to property
- leaving the school, where this would entail serious risks to the pupil/s and their safety



Training

Specific staff within the school have received training in de-escalation and restraint techniques. All staff will be briefed on the use of restraint as part of the induction process and provided with copies of the positive handling guidelines.

All trained staff and their position within the school will be reviewed on an annual basis, taking our pupils' needs and staff changes into consideration.

No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training.

All staff are trained in skills to help them defuse situations before behaviour becomes challenging and how to de-escalate incidents should they arise. Reasonable force will only be used when risks involved in doing so, are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

Prevention of unsafe behaviour will be enabled through;

- Deployment of appropriate staffing numbers
- Deployment of appropriately trained staff
- Avoiding situations and triggers known to provoke challenging behaviour in specific children
- Creating opportunities for choice and achievement
- Developing staff expertise through a programme of continuous professional development
- Exploring pupil preferences relating to the way/s in which they are managed
- Staff employ diffusion techniques to avert escalation of behaviour into violence or aggression.

De-escalation techniques shared in our training

CALM communication

- **Communication** - stance, posture, gestures, facial expressions, intonation, the use of scripts
- **Awareness and assessment** - Knowing the child and their individual behaviour plan, anticipating what might happen next, reviewing support regularly

- Listening and learning - give time and space, allow pauses for take up time, giving a way out.
- Making Safe - Ensure the area around the child is safe - objects, space etc

Use of positive handling

At Coombe Hill Infants' we believe physical restraint should always be a last resort. As a general rule nobody has the right to touch, move, hold or contain another person. However, people with a duty of care operate in exceptional circumstances where it is sometimes necessary to act outside the norm.

Before using force staff should engage the pupil in a calm and measured tone, making clear that their behaviour is unacceptable and setting out how the pupil could choose to change their behaviour. Staff should not give the impression of acting out of anger or frustration, and should make it clear that they only intend to use physical intervention as a last resort to ensure that the situation is addressed as safely as possible. The use of force must always be proportionate to the level of risk and should always be reduced at the earliest possible time.

Staff are expected to follow the pupils PLP (personal learning plan) and/or individual behaviour plan and school risk assessments in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour. Using de-escalation and diversion techniques known to work with that child.

If this was unsuccessful and the situation continues to escalate, staff would then be expected to employ other techniques that they have been trained in.

A safe quiet room/area may be offered to a pupil by a member of staff or a pupil may be directed to go there. In either case the aim is to allow opportunities for the young person to regain control and they are always accompanied by a member of staff. A pupil may also request some time in a safe room/ area if they are starting to feel stressed in order to manage their own behaviour. At Coombe Hill we have many rooms/areas that could be used, which include our sensory room, ICT suite or library

Only then, if all of the above have been tried and are unsuccessful should staff even consider any form of restraint. The overriding consideration should still be the reasonableness and proportionality of the force used.

All the techniques used take into consideration, the child's

- gender



- age and level of physical, emotional and intellectual development
- special needs
- social context

For more information, please refer to the DfE documentation 'Use of reasonable force' 2013 by clicking on the link below

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf

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 child to regain self-control. It should **never** take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

Rebuilding relationships and managing feelings afterwards is vital and will occur once the child is ready to accept.

Authorised Staff

All teachers, staff and the Head teacher are authorised to have control or charge of pupils automatically, they have the statutory power to use reasonable force within the context of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the subsequent guidance from the DfE 'The use of reasonable force' July 2013

Authorisation is not given to volunteers, students on placement, visitors or parents as they will not have control of the pupils who may present with challenging behaviour, but will be supervised at all times. However authorisation can be given to unpaid volunteers or parents, whom the Head teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils, accompanying children in an organised school trip.

Recording and reporting incidents

After the use of a restrictive physical intervention, the following steps will be taken;

- Details of the incident will be recorded by all adults involved immediately on the positive handling/ restraint Log (see Appendix A)
- Recording will be completed within 12 hours whenever possible. Staff will be offered the opportunity to seek advice from a member of the SLT if needed, when compiling their report.



- Any injuries suffered by those involved will be recorded in the office.
- Parents/carers will be informed on the day of the incident (except in cases where reporting the incident to a parent will result in significant harm to the pupil, the LA will be informed instead). They will be told when and where the incident took place, the strategies used to avoid force, what force was used, any injuries and any significant follow up action. Parents will also be offered the opportunity to discuss any concerns that they might have with the Head teacher and other staff involved.
- If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of an individual behavioural plan

Appendix A

Positive Handling/ Restraint Log

		Lead up events De-escalation used	What happened? Where? Type of restraint used	Follow up action Parents informed/ Injuries logged/ PLP developed	Pupil Voice How do you feel?
DATE					
CHILD'S NAME					
RESTRAINED BY					
WITNESSES					
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