

Golden Flatts Primary School
Positive Handling Policy

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Statement of intent

Golden Flatts Primary School believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, taking control of a situation through the use of positive handling may be necessary, to support a child to regulate their emotions.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use positive handling, in order to manage conflict when other de-escalation measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that actions such as positive handling are used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

Golden Flatts Primary School believes that physical intervention should be the last possible technique used in managing children and young people's behaviour, however challenging that behaviour may be. As a school we seek to reduce levels of stress and anxiety for our pupils through the implementation of trauma informed practice.

It is recognised that all behaviour is communication and as such we understand that children are communicating through their behaviour which gives adults the opportunity to respond differently. When children feel valued, respected and have their needs met, there is no longer a reason to use challenging behaviour to communicate. As a school we have adopted a non-punitive approach to managing behaviour which allows the teachers to work with the child in a restorative, non-threatening way, with adults seeking to connect and support the child's emotional needs.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Children Act 1989
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force in schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Mental Health, Well-being and Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Federate Governing Body is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Monitoring the use of positive handling incidents in school
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the Executive Headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of positive handling.

The Head of School / Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring all members of staff receive the appropriate training to employ positive handling.
- Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling.
- Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the Safeguarding Policy.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the governing board, from pupils or parents regarding the use of positive handling.

The SENDCo is responsible for:

- Providing training to members of staff on how to physically intervene for all pupils.
- Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to positive handling.
- Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions.
- Developing individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable pupils and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these.

- Ensuring that staff understand how positive handling principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.
- Maintaining the Positive Handling Log/CPOMS and sending this to the governing board at the end of each term for it to be monitored.
- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses positive handling completes the Positive Handling Report Form.
- Evaluating the Positive Handling Log/CPOMS to analyse how and when positive handling is used and identify any trends.
- Reviewing and updating the Positive Handling policy.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Providing staff with annual positive handling training.
- Ensuring all members of staff use positive handling in accordance with this policy.

3. What is positive handling?

For the purpose of this policy, 'positive handling' is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting pupils and limiting damage to property.

Legal framework and national guidance often refers to the 'reasonable use of force' – this policy uses the term 'positive handling' whenever possible.

Positive handling is used in the school to:

- Physically intervene with a pupil who has lost emotional self-control and has entered into a state of crisis whereby they are a risk to themselves, others, property or prejudice to natural order of the classroom.
- Limit the amount of harm that the pupil involved can do to their self or others.
- Protect all pupils against any form of physical harm which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.

Positive handling will be limited to emergency situations and used only once attempts to de-escalate a situation have been unsuccessful and as a measure of last resort.

Where positive handling is required, the school will abide to the following guidance:

- Initial intervention will always be without force and focus on the 95% de-escalation rule

Any physical intervention will follow other appropriate actions.

Staff will take a calm and measured approach in all situations.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who subsequently gets injured, or injures another pupil, could lead to an accusation of negligence.

Positive handling will never be invasive, humiliating, flirtatious in nature or take a form which could be seen as punishment.

Positive handling will 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.

4. What is reasonable force?

- There is no statutory definition of reasonable force; it will always depend on the circumstance of the case.
- The use of positive handling is only acceptable to control pupils or physically intervene to protect them, others or property.
- 'Control' refers to either passive physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm.
- 'Positive handling' refers to physically bringing a pupil under control, such as holding them back. This is typically used in more extreme circumstances, such as to separate two pupils fighting or to remove/reduce the risk of physical injury to the pupil concerned.
- The degree of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. age.
- Staff members will always use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances of the incidents.
- All incidents that involve the use of positive handling will be reported to the Inclusion lead, recorded in writing using CPOMs and the Incident log. Communication should take place to inform the pupil's parents.
- The school is able to use physical intervention in situations when:
 - A child needs to be removed from the classroom and have previously refused to leave. Other pupils should be moved to a safe space within school where practicable.
 - Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom when doing so would lead to a risk to their safety.
 - A pupil is causing physical harm to a member of staff or another pupil.
 - A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves or others
- Physical intervention will never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management in accordance with the school's Mental Health and Behaviour Policy.

5. Use of positive handling

- All members of staff when applying the principles of positive handling should be mindful to ensure that minimal force is applied, minimum restriction to movement and for the shortest time possible.
- All members of staff will be permitted to use positive handling where they believe it to be appropriate, as long as all necessary precautions are taken.
- The decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances as stated in section 4.
- Staff will always calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it was necessary in a non-threatening manner.
- Staff will never give the impression that they are acting out of anger or are punishing the child.
- All staff members will develop strategies and techniques for dealing with challenging situations, which they will use to diffuse and calm a situation.
- In non-urgent situations, staff will always try and deal with a situation through other strategies before using force.
- Staff members will always avoid acting in a way that could cause injury; however, dependant on the circumstances, this may not always be possible.
- Where a member of staff believes that they are at risk, such as where an injury is likely to occur, they will not intervene in an incident without help and assistance of another staff member.
 - Emergency intervention is necessary when there is a high risk of pupils being injured or property being damaged.
 - If emergency intervention is required, a member of staff will use other methods of defusing the situation, without physically intervening, until assistance arrives.
- Where necessary, external agencies, such as the LA or the police if a crime has been committed, will be informed of the incident.

6. SEND

- The school will have due consideration to the risks posed by the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND in terms of positive handling.
- The SENCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy at all times.
- To reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour that can lead to the use of reasonable force, the SENCO will establish individual behaviour plans for identified pupils with SEND.
- The SENCO will liaise with the DSL, in terms of using positive handling on pupils with SEND, and establish how training may need to be amended.

7. Reporting incidents

- A detailed written report will be kept of any incidents where force is used.
- Immediately following an incident, the member(s) of staff involved will verbally report the incident to the SEND and Inclusion Lead and provide a comprehensive written record (CPOMs) of the situation as soon as possible, and in addition complete a Positive Handling Report Form.
- The written report of the incident must be thorough, including as much detail as possible as to what had happened before, during and after the incident, and describing any injuries incurred due to the event.

S- Situation – a description of the incident prior to physical intervention

T- Triggers – what were the perceived triggers that led up to the incident

A- Actions taken – what actions were taken and by whom with accurate timings

R- Resolution – restorative conversation

- Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school's Safeguarding Policy.
- The Executive Headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

8. Complaints

- All members of staff will be made fully aware of the consequences and legal retributions that can occur following the incorrect use of positive handling and force.
- All complaints regarding the use of positive handling or force will be investigated in a thorough and speedy manner.
- The person making the complaint is responsible to prove that their allegations are true, and therefore, it is not for the member of staff to prove that their actions were made reasonably.
- In extreme circumstances, parents may take civil action or pursue a criminal prosecution.
- In the case where a member of staff has acted within the law, this will provide a defence to any civil or criminal prosecution.
- Members of staff accused of using excessive force will not be automatically suspended as a response to the allegations. The following procedure will be adhered to:
 - Careful consideration will be given to whether the case warrants a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved. Advice will be sought from Human Resources.
 - The Federate Governing Body will always take into account whether a staff member has acted within the law when considering whether or not to take disciplinary action against a staff member involved in an incident.

- Where a member of staff is suspended, the school will ensure that the staff member has access to a named contact that can provide support and guidance.
- The school will provide pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation.

9. Staff training

- All staff will be regularly reminded of the positive handling techniques employed by the school, and will communicate these to the pupils they are in contact with.
- Senior Leaders will model appropriate physical intervention techniques for staff as and when required to ensure staff feel confident in employing techniques when situations arise.
- Only techniques and strategies that have been previously discussed with the Team Teach trainer and have been safely demonstrated, will be used.
- Staff will be made aware of subsequent risks of their actions and fully understand when it is appropriate and necessary to use such actions.

10. Monitoring and review

- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by SENDCo, Head of School, the Executive Headteacher and Federate Governing Body, who will consider any necessary changes and communicate the findings of the review to all members of staff.
- The SEND and Inclusion Lead will review records of the use of positive handling and reasonable force on a termly basis, to analyse the frequency of occurrence and determine what further measures could be taken to prevent these situations from reoccurring. A report will be prepared for governing body review.

Review Date: August 2019

Reviewed by: M. Newbury

Approved by Governors:

Next Review Date: August 2020