

Positive Handling Policy

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Rationale

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.

At Filton Avenue Primary School, we have a well-established positive behaviour policy which is followed by all members of staff when dealing with behavioural incidents. We aim to create a calm and supportive school environment. We will always try to de-escalate first; ensuring staff effectively manage incidents by communicating calmly with non-threatening verbal and body language. If used at all, the use of positive handling will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the child.

Definition of Positive Handling

Positive handling is the positive application of force intended to prevent a child from harming themselves or others, or seriously damaging property. 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. Positive Handling also describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies involving management of the environment, diversion, diffusion and de-escalation techniques.

When may Positive Handling be used?

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves, others or damaging school property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically, they will follow the school's policy, and only use positive handling when there is no realistic alternative. Such necessary interventions are fully in line with guidelines set out in the Government Document, 'New Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force in School.' (DfEE 1998)

At Filton Avenue Primary School, positive handling must only be used in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming themselves or another person or in danger of damaging property, or the member of staff should have good grounds for believing this to be the case.
- The safest and gentlest means of holding a child should be used to help the child regulate and enable the child to feel safe and soothed.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff to assist and act as witnesses.
- Once safe, holding should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.

- Positive handling should be an act of care and control and should never be used to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property.
- The incident 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'.

Before using physical controls, where reasonable and appropriate, staff should:

- 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.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects that could be thrown.
- Attempt to use positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

Staff Training

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.
- Are regularly trained in behaviour management and de-escalation techniques.
- Are made aware that they are required to justify any decision to use positive handling in writing, through the recording and reporting procedures.

Specific staff are trained in the responsive positive handling strategy techniques of Team Teach.

Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found on the Team Teach website:

www.team-teach.co.uk

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 where possible.

Positive Handling Plans and Risk Assessment

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. It is the Special Educational Needs Coordinator's responsibility to create this, in collaboration with other colleagues, and then share this plan with all staff who are involved.

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 alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered along with other planning documents relevant to a pupil, such as Educational Health care Plans (EHCP). They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development and special needs.

Risk assessments may also be required for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong and prepare a risk assessment which anticipates Health and Safety risks related to this pupil's behaviour and tries to mitigate risk by ensuring steps are taken to prevent dangerous behaviour from occurring.

When there is concern about a child, parents will be invited to contribute to positive handling plans and/or risk assessments. Written parental agreement will form part of this.

The school has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN), and any positive handling plan and/or risk assessment will reflect this.

Recording and Monitoring

All incidents involving positive handling will be recorded in the Bound Book which is kept in the reflection room. Within these recording strategies, all details must be recorded by witnesses within twenty-four hours and signed by at least two members of staff. Parents and carers will always be notified of the incident on the same day.

Incidents will also be recorded on CPOMs as a Team Teach incident with the incident number and the page number of the bound book entry.

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 will be given for following up incidents so that pupils and staff have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other peoples' perspectives. Generally, a member of senior staff would expect to talk to those involved (if appropriate) in any incidents involving violence.

The Bound Book will be regularly monitored and signed by the Deputy Headteacher or the Headteacher.

The School Improvement Board will support the Headteacher in monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the school's positive handling policy and incidents relating to this.

Complaints

All complaints about the use of force will be thoroughly and appropriately investigated, referring to the DFE guidance "Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff".

Any complaints will follow the school's complaints procedure. See complaints policy.

Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy