

The Pochin School - Positive Handling Policy

This policy was revised in the Spring Term 2015 through a process of consultation with the teaching staff and was approved by the Governing Body on 17 March 2015. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to implement this policy.

Introduction

Our school expects all members of the school community to treat each other with respect and care. Behaviour can usually be managed by verbal means. In exceptional circumstances, but rarely, it may be necessary to restrain a pupil/pupils in order to secure their own or others safety. In these circumstances, the staff at The Pochin School are authorised to do so by the Head Teacher.

Legal Framework

Positive Handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 and DFEE Circular 10/98 allow teachers, and other members of staff at a school who are authorized by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in circumstances where the pupil may need to be prevented from engaging in behaviours which are likely to cause injury to themselves, others or damage to property. The guidance extends this to maintaining good order and discipline, for both on-site and off- site activities.

Positive Handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful **or in an emergency situation.**

There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (e.g. physical assault) being committed. Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement. All teachers have a professional 'duty of care' within their job description which is underwritten by paragraph 58.7 of School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2002. Together with the legislative framework this enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence;
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself);
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Positive handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful or in an emergency situation. It should only be used with the intention of protecting the child from harming him/herself or others, or seriously damaging property.

What does it mean to restrain a child?

Positive Handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property. The proper use of Positive Handling requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining.

The decision to use Positive Handling as restrictive physical intervention must take account of the circumstances and be based on an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention compared with the risks of not employing a restrictive intervention. The physical intervention must also only employ a reasonable amount of force – that is the minimum force needed to avert injury or damage to property, or to prevent a breakdown in discipline – applied for the shortest period of time.

Why use restraint

Positive Handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him/herself or others. Positive Handling skilfully applied may be eased by degrees as the child calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

For those children with a Special Educational Need whose difficulties include, ‘disturbing, distressing and challenging behaviour, which may result in self injury, injury to others or damage to property’ and whose behaviour needs direct handling as a matter of course; a Positive Handling Plan will be written to work alongside an Individual Education Plan and will be supported by a Risk Assessment.

Procedure

- it is important to talk through your actions in a calm way
- if necessary ask other children to move away and other staff to make the area safe eg. removing potential hazards
- release the child when they are calm
- remove to a quiet area if possible to discuss/resolve incident
- allow yourself time to calm down and assess the incident (other staff to step in if needed)
- incidents resulting in injury – however minor- will be logged as soon as possible using the Positive Handling Incident Report Form

Acceptable action includes

- standing between pupils
- placing a hand on back or shoulders to move a child
- holding in a ‘hug’ from behind if arms and legs need securing
- holding hand or arm firmly to guide away from situation

Unacceptable actions include

- hitting, slapping or punching
- twisting limbs or tripping
- pushing or holding against the floor or a wall
- holding hair or ears
- holding in any way that will restrict a child’s ability to breathe

Positive Handling: Incident Report Form
The Pochin School

<p>Pupil:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Time:</p> <p>Member(s) of staff involved:</p> <p>Witnesses:</p>

<p>Outline of event leading to use of restraint, including detail of other strategies used:</p>

<p>Restraint method used and duration:</p>
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<p>Pupil's response and outcome:</p>

<p>Injuries/treatment</p> <p>Pupil: Staff:</p>
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<p>Follow up</p> <p>Parents informed (date/time/method):</p> <p>Response:</p>
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<p>Signatures</p> <p>Person completing report:</p> <p>Witness:</p> <p>Head teacher:</p>
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