

### Introduction

The school recognises that there is a need to physically intervene when there is an obvious risk to the safety of its children, staff, or property. Such intervention or restraint is termed 'Positive Handling'.

### Purpose of the Policy

Good professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in school respond positively to the discipline practised by the staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of positive handling may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff at Robert Peel:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where positive handling is necessary and are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur.
- The application of any form of positive handling places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for positive handling.
- Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

### Definitions

#### (a) Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact takes place between staff and pupils, e.g. in games/PE or to comfort pupils.

#### (b) Physical Intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

#### (c) Positive Handling

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to pupils, staff or property or if good order is being seriously prejudiced. All such incidents will be recorded.

### Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working at Robert Peel Primary School has the right to:

- a recognition of their unique identity
- be treated with respect and dignity
- learn and work in a safe environment
- be protected from harm



Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupils needs by staff that has responsibility for their care and protection
- expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in the school be informed about the school's complaint procedure

The school will ensure that all pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits which govern behaviour in the school.

Parents should have committed themselves through the Home-School Agreement to ensure the good behaviour of their child and that the child understands and follows the schools Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

### **Training**

Positive Handling training will be made available to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the Headteacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling without appropriate training.

Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

### **Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour**

Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches will be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- Verbal acknowledgment of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain; this includes negotiation, care and concern.
- Further verbal reprimand stating:
  - this is the second request for compliance
  - an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable
  - an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- Warning of potential need to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible summon assistance.
- Physical intervention. Reasonable physical intervention using the minimum degree of contact to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.

### **Escalating Situations**

The 1996 Education Act (Section 550A) stipulates that reasonable physical intervention may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following;



- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils; whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom, during a teaching session or elsewhere (this includes authorised out-of-school activities)
- self-injuring or placing himself or herself at risk
- injuring others
- causing damage to property, including that of the pupil himself or herself
- committing a criminal offence (even if the pupil is below the age of criminal responsibility)

### **Types of Incidents**

Incidents described above fall into 3 broad categories:

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline

### **Examples of situations which fall within one of the first two categories are:**

- a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- pupils are fighting
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing injury, damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of materials or objects
- a pupil is running in a corridor or in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave the school

### **Examples of behaviour which fall into the third category are:**

- a pupil persistently refusing to do as requested.
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

### **Acceptable measures of Physical Intervention.**

Positive handling can only be deemed reasonable if:

- it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident
- it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent
- it is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result
- the age, understanding and the gender of the pupil are taken into account
- it is likely to achieve the desired result

### **Guidance: Before an Incident**

Any physical intervention involves a degree of risk; an assessment of the level of risk must be undertaken before deciding to intervene.



The positive handling of a pupil should lead to the calming of the situation and not lead to greater injury or an escalation of violence.

All efforts to avoid physical intervention should have been taken.

Positive handling is a form of control which should only be used when the situation does not allow for any other method to be employed and when a situation is about to exist where:

- the actions of a pupil would place him / herself, other pupils or staff at the risk of serious injury;
- there could be serious damage to property.

The following considerations should form part of the risk assessment:

- the location of the incident and the potential for the restraint to be carried out safely;
- the restrainer's capacity to act calmly;
- the age, gender, physiques and any known medical conditions of the pupil and the restrainer;
- the scope to involve a second adult to assist or supervise;
- the clothing being worn by the pupil and the restrainer, together with any jewellery or spectacles / hearing aid;
- any previous experience by the pupil of restraint and predictable reaction;
- the presence of any weapon.

### **Guidance: During an Incident**

In any application of positive handling, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation.

Help should be summoned from colleagues; other pupils should never be involved in a restraint.

The pupil should be approached calmly but firmly. Where possible, explain the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour.

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the principles which have been taught through Team Teach.

Restraint must not:

- involve hitting the pupil;
- involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil;
- restrict the pupil's breathing;
- involve putting the restrainer's full weight on the spine or abdominal area;
- involve contact with private areas.

During any incident, the restrainer should:

- offer verbal reassurance to the pupil;
- cause the minimal level of restriction of movement;
- reduce the danger of any accidental injury.

**Guidance: After an Incident**

Following an incident involving positive handling, a record should be made by the restrainer and any other adult who was present. If appropriate the pupil should also be requested to provide an account.

All records should be signed and dated and should include that of the Headteacher or senior member of staff on duty at the time.

The record should include:

- details of where and when the incident took place;
- circumstances and significant factors that led to the incident;
- the nature and duration of the positive handling used;
- the names of all staff and pupils who witnessed the incident;
- a description of any injuries sustained by the pupil or member of staff and any subsequent medical attention;
- a description of any action taken after the incident.

This report should be completed as soon as possible and not later than the end of the working day in which the incident took place.

Following an incident involving restraint, both the pupil and member(s) of staff involved should be given the opportunity to discuss it with an appropriate person who was not party to the incident.

The school should have established reporting procedures so that parents, senior staff and a responsible governor are advised of the incident.

Consideration should be given as to whether the restraint complied with this guidance and whether it raised any Child Protection issues.

**Positive handling – Some Dos and Don'ts**

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be aware of any feelings of anger;</li> <li>• summon help;</li> <li>• continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way;</li> <li>• provide a soft surface if possible;</li> <li>• be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil;</li> <li>• hold the pupil's arms by their sides;</li> <li>• when help is available, keep the pupil's legs together;</li> <li>• continue to hold on to the pupil once immobilised.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• try to manage on your own;</li> <li>• relax your hold the moment the struggle ceases;</li> <li>• stop talking even if the pupil does not reply;</li> <li>• straddle the pupil;</li> <li>• push arms up the back;</li> <li>• touch the pupil near the throat or head;</li> <li>• put pressure on joints.</li> </ul>



**Complaints**

The availability of a clear policy regarding Positive Handling and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school’s Complaints Policy. The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints but other governors will not be involved as a complaint may require further action on their part.

**Monitoring of Incidents**

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use positive handling, this will always be recorded and documented. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using positive handling.

This process will address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.

**Positive Handling Report**

<b>Name of Pupil</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Class:</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
<b>Restrained:</b>	
<b>Witnesses:</b>	
<b>Nature of pupil’s behaviour:</b>	
<b>Description of restraint:</b>	



<b>After the restraint:</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Follow up action:</b>	
<b>Headteacher signed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>