



**CASTLEFORD  
PARK JUNIOR ACADEMY**

# Positive Handling Policy

**Castleford Park Junior Academy  
Date Jan 2021  
Version 1**

*Review Date : Jan 2023*

# Castleford Park Junior Academy Positive Handling Policy

## Statement Policy and Safeguarding children

Castleford Park Junior Academy has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are our pupils. Our code of practice is detailed in our Child Protection Policy and our staff handbook and we have Standard Operating Procedures in place to safeguard our pupils in a range of situations. All staff including our volunteers and supply staff are made aware of our procedures.

At Park Junior the vast majority of our children behave well in lessons, on the playground and conduct themselves appropriately around school. However, we acknowledge the importance of clear guidelines for those few occasions where physical restraint may be necessary to maintain the safety of pupils and staff. Designated staff are 'team teach' trained to look after the pupils in their care and have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. This policy sets out our procedures regarding the use of force by staff to control or restrain pupils. The policy takes due regard of the following documentation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)
- Working together to safeguard children (2018)
- Safer Working Practises (2016)
- Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006
- The use of reasonable force - (advice for Head teachers, staff and Governing bodies (DFE 2013)
- The Criminal Law Act (1967)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Common Law
- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)

## Introduction

This policy sets out the framework for the use of reasonable force or positive handling, but it must be clearly understood that this should always be set within the school's overall behaviour management framework and is only used as a last resort under-pinned by sound risk assessment. Providing successful inclusion may necessitate physical restraint but only as one of the strategies available for the management of challenging behaviour. In adverse circumstances with regard to behaviour that is detrimental, which compromises the safety of the child, other children or an adult, positive handling may be used.

It is designed to help staff ensure that any actions that they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary. At Park Junior the term 'Positive handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil.

We encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence behaviour - taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Account is taken of an individual's special needs and strategies are put in place to ensure that children are supported in their emotional needs. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur. This is when risk assessments will be put in place for individual children who need this, in order to support them to be safe, successful and happy whilst at school.

### **Principles**

- The use of force should be avoided wherever possible
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required
- There are occasions when the use of physical intervention is appropriate
- When physical intervention is necessary, it must be used in ways that whenever possible maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned
- Incidents of physical intervention must be recorded and reported to the Headteacher

### **What the law says:**

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Powers of members of staff to use force:

1. A person to whom this section applies may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing a pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following:
  - a) Commit any offence
  - b) Cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself)
  - c) Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise
2. This section applies to a person who is, in relation to a pupil, a member of the staff of any school at which education is provided for the pupil.

This includes:

- i. support staff supervising pupils and lunchtime supervisors
- ii. any people to whom the Headteacher has given temporary authority to have control or charge of pupils such as paid staff whose job does not normally involve the supervising of pupils e.g. school secretary

In our school all the staff involved in the direct care and supervision of the children are authorised to use positive handling if appropriate i.e. headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors. Our staff are appropriately trained and given refresher training at regular intervals, to be able to use positive handling if it is absolutely necessary, whilst maintaining dignity and safety for the pupil.

This does not include volunteers or visitors to school.

## Reasonable Force

DFE advice (Use of Reasonable force 2013) states:

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be positively handled to prevent violence or injury to themselves or others.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means: using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and lead them to a place of safety. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Positive handling refers to situations where pupils may need to be held back physically or brought under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention; or when a pupil is attempting to hurt themselves or others in anger, or frustration.
6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

### When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes - to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.
- Schools **cannot** use force as a punishment - **it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment**
- Examples of occasions when reasonable force could be used can be found in the guidelines - Use of Reasonable Force (DFE 2013)

The power may be used where the pupil (including a pupil from another school) is on school premises or elsewhere in the lawful charge of the staff member - for example on a school visit.

## **Minimising the need for Physical intervention**

Risk assessments of all areas of school and for all pupils who have the possibility to need positive handling are in place and evaluated regularly, in order to minimise the possibility of need for physical intervention. In extreme circumstances, some pupils at our school may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour.

As a school we are committed to:

- Creating an environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require force arising.
- Approaches to teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings through our PSHCE, mental health and wellbeing and resilience programmes
- Ensuring that staff are aware of the need to de-escalate incidents if they arise and coaching all staff who may need this into using these strategies effectively and confidently.
- Only using force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.
- Creating risk assessments and positive handling plans for individual pupils as appropriate.

## **Deciding Whether to Use Force**

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a positive handling will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

At this school we only use positive handling when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a list of strategies that are having little impact, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. We expect staff to conduct a dynamic risk assessment and choose the safest alternative - also using their knowledge of the child and their individual needs, likes and dislikes. Staff are expected to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

Staff should only use force when:

- The potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force;
- The chances of achieving the desired result by other means are low, and;
- The risks associated with using force outweigh those of not using force.

Staff will be kept informed about and advised about how best to deal with pupils who present particular risks to themselves or others (as a result of SEN and/or disabilities

and/or other personal circumstances, such as domestic violence) by the Headteacher, SENCO and Inclusion Team. Wherever possible, pupils will be involved in designing their own best strategies for managing difficult situations, so that they are eventually able to take charge of managing their emotions for themselves and understand that staff's aim is always to help and support, whilst keeping them safe.

### **Using Reasonable Force – REACT UK Positive Handling is used at Park Junior Academy**

#### **DO...**

- Plan appropriate positive interventions, wherever possible, and involve parents, carers and colleagues so that actions are intuitive and effective for the individual.
- Be aware of pupils who have been physically restrained before.
- Stay calm - do not over-react and assess the situation before acting.
- Follow training and guidance provided by REACT UK
- Send for a second adult. This adult is called to allow for safe use of positive handling involving a two person hold and also allows for an extra eyewitness account to help evaluate events after they have taken place
- Ensure the safety of all other children (if necessary remove from the vicinity)
- Give possible choices that the child could use which could avoid positive handling - unless they are clearly already at crisis point and would not be able to hear, or respond to this. Try to avoid adding to sensory overload that may already be taking place, keeping the situation as calm and quiet as possible
- Keep calm yourself and use tactics that will help the child to calm further once they are in a safe place
- When in crisis, use as little language as possible with the pupil, only using empathetic responses such as "I am here to help and listen when you are ready."
- Use minimum restraint for minimum time until the situation is calm.
- Look for signs that the child is calming down (shoulders dropping, breathing returning to a normal level, complexion returning to an appropriate colour, less resistance) and then use diverting conversations to help them return to baseline
- Report the incident to the Headteacher and complete a Positive Handling Report Form and get a witness to complete a Positive Handling Witness Statement Form.
- A senior member of staff will also give all staff involved in positive handling the opportunity for a short break to return to baseline, before returning to work with other pupils, or the same pupil
- Remember your professional obligation to all pupils in your care.
- Consult your Line Manager, Professional Association or Trade Union if you have any concerns

#### **DO NOT...**

- Place yourself at risk
- Attempt to restrain a pupil when you have lost your temper.
- Use any form of restraint that is likely to injure a pupil, particularly by restricting breathing
- Allow the situation to get out of control
- Place yourself at risk of false allegations: avoid being alone with a pupil.

- Come into physical contact with a pupil in the context of discipline, unless you have made a conscious decision to control or restrain them and as such have worked through the above stages.

### **Help Protocols**

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and it is accepted. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

### **Well Chosen Words**

A well chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can actually wind them up. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

### **Recording Incidents**

Any incidents of positive handling using restraint will be recorded on a Positive Handling Report Form. Witnesses will also record the incident from their perspective. These forms will be kept in the Positive Handling File (located in Reflect) and will be uploaded onto CPOMS to help analyse patterns of behaviour and promote prevention and subsequent alternate strategies that may work better. The form must only be completed when the members of staff involved are calm and within 24 hrs of the incident. These forms must be kept for 10 years.

### **Reporting Incidents**

The Headteacher, or in her absence the Deputy or Inclusion Manager, will report to parents of any incidents where a member of staff had to restrain or control their child. The child's view will also be recorded, reporting their view of what happened and kept with the adult file. Where appropriate, parents will also be party to this conversation.

As appropriate and in consultation with the Headteacher, SENCO, teacher and parents contact will be made with other agencies in the authority e.g. Educational Psychologist, Behaviour support to discuss and implement appropriate strategies to support a child who returns to crisis point regularly.

### **Post Incident Support**

The Headteacher, Deputy, SENCO or Inclusion Manager will give emotional support to both the staff members and child by holding debriefing sessions after the crisis to reflect upon how the incident was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning. It is also important that any first aid or medical treatment is given should any injuries have occurred as a result of an incident. Any injuries should be reported in accordance with school procedures.

Following restraint, the child will be given time in 'chill' or an area that they regularly take time out and is familiar to them so that they have the opportunity to return back to baseline fully before going back into the main populous of the school. On average, it takes 90 minutes for the adrenaline to flow out of the child's bloodstream. The child will be given time to share their feelings, discuss the situation and consider how the situation could have been different if the right choices had been made. Relevant risk assessments and positive behaviour plan will be reviewed and shared with the parent and pupil post-incident.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually in conjunction with the school Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy and PSHCE Policies.

**Adopted - July 2014**

**Reviewed and amended September 2015**

**Reviewed and amended September 2016**

**Reviewed and amended September 2017**

**Reviewed and amended May 2018**

**Reviewed and amended Jan 2021**

Signed



Date: Jan 2021

**Miss K. Law Headteacher**

Signed



Date: Jan 2021

**Mrs L. Simpson Chair of Governors**