

# Park Junior Academy Positive Handling Policy



CASTLEFORD  
PARK JUNIOR ACADEMY

## Statement Policy and Safeguarding children

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 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:

- Working together to safeguard children (DFE - updated February 2017)
- Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006
- The use of reasonable force - (advice for Head teachers, staff and Governing bodies (DFE 2013))

## 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. Only in the event of failure of clearly defined protocols to bring control to the situation, or imminent danger to persons, should positive handling be considered.

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. It is designed to help staff ensure that any actions 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 make reference to the Team Teach approach:

'promote the least intrusive positive handling strategy and a continuum of gradual and graded techniques, with an emphasis and preference for the use of verbal, non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before positive handling strategies are utilised.' Team Teach 2012

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.

### **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:**

DFE advice (Use of Reasonable force 2013) states:

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

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 physical restraint if appropriate i.e. headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors. This does not include volunteers or visitors to school. This enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances.

### **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 restrained to prevent violence or injury.
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 to restrain them. 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. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil 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 other 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 a school visit.

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

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils at this 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 Social and emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL programme).
- Ensuring that staff are aware of the need to de-escalate incidents if they arise.
- 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 physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

At this school we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, 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 risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff 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 not 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.

**Using Reasonable Force** - The team teach approach is used at Park Junior Academy

**DO...**

- Plan appropriate positive interventions, wherever possible, and involve parents, carers and colleagues.
- Be aware of pupils who have been physically restrained before.
- Stay calm - do not over-react.
- Assess the situation before acting.
- **Follow TEAM TEACH procedures**
- Before touching the child the member of staff should advise the child calmly and repeatedly about what they are going to do and why, and how the child might change his/her behaviour in order that restraint would become unnecessary.
- Send for a second adult. This adult is called to reduce the risk of the member of staff or child suffering bodily harm and as a witness if allegations of assault are made later by the child
- Ensure the safety of all other children (if necessary remove from the vicinity)
- If possible keep talking to the child and give choices as to how they could behave in a manner that would avoid the need for restraint
- Keep calm yourself and use tactics that will help the child to calm (eg diverting conversations)
- Use minimum restraint for minimum time until the situation is calm.
- 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.
- Consult your Line Manager, Professional Association or trade Union if you have any concerns
- Remember your professional obligation to all pupils in your care.

## **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. Any witnesses to the incident will complete a Positive Handling Witness Form. These forms will be kept in the Positive Handling File (located in Reflect).

## **Reporting Incidents**

The Headteacher, or in her absence the Deputy, or the behaviour mentor, will report to parents of any incidents where a member of staff had to restrain or control their child.

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.

## **Post Incident Support**

The Headteacher, Deputy and/or SENCO 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 if any injuries have occurred as a result of an incident. Any injuries should be reported in accordance with school procedures.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed 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**

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_**

**Headteacher Date \_\_\_\_\_**

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_**

**Chair of Governors Date \_\_\_\_\_**

**Review September 2018**