John Burns Primary School

Positive Handling Policy

Spring 2024

Date adopted by Governing Body	Spring 2024
Signatory (Chair of Curriculum Committee)	
Date of Review	**Spring 2027**

Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils who may need to be positively handled in order to keep themselves/others safe. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following DfE guidance - Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (July 2013).

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 strategies outlined in the behaviour policy. 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 John Burns Primary School:

- Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where positive handling is necessary
- 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

Physical contact

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

Physical intervention

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

Positive handling

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

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

Parents and carers 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 school's Behaviour Policy.

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 acknowledgement 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 DfE guidance: Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (July 2013) stipulates that schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

Types of incidents

Incident 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 a 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 the corridor or in a way he or she might 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's delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which 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
- Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervention.

The form of physical intervention may involve staff doing the following:

- Physically interposing themselves between the pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Escorting a pupil
- Shepherding a pupil away
- Any such measures will be most effective in the context of overall ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.
- Whenever positive handling is used, staff will keep talking to the pupil.

Recording

Where positive handling has been used a Physical Intervention Record (PIR) Form of the incident always needs to be kept. After any incident, a copy of the PIR will be placed in the pupil's file and on CPOMs.

Action after the incident

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further if required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Child protection procedure
- Staff facing allegations or abuse procedure
- Staff or pupil disciplinary procedure
- School behaviour policy
- Exclusions procedure

Members of staff will be kept informed of any action taken. In case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek further advice from his/her professional association/union.

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy regarding positive handling and early involvement of parents and carers should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's complaints about staff procedure policy. The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints but other committee members will not be involved as a complaint may require further action on their part.

Monitoring of incidents

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