



‘Improving the quality of family life’

Positive Handling Policy

This policy is designed to be read in conjunction with other Snowflake Policies, specifically:

- Mission statement and values
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

“The term ‘positive handling’ describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. Positive handling is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment and deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion and de-escalation. Restraint is only a small part of the framework.”

Relevant legislation

The use of all forms of physical intervention and physical contact are governed by the criminal and civil law. The unwarranted or inappropriate use of force may constitute an assault. In addition, it may infringe the human rights of a child or young person.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- a. committing a criminal offence
- b. causing personal injury or damage to a property
- c. prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among the pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

As included in the DFE 2010 guidance on ‘The use of force to control or restrain pupils’ seclusion should only be considered in exceptional circumstances and it is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order. Therefore, at no time should the door be locked as to do so is unlawful and can amount to the false imprisonment of a pupil.

Government Advice Informing This Policy

Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2013)

- 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.
- 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 where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- 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.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control.
- 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.

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 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
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- stop a pupil behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson, causing distress to the pupils and/or a breakdown of order

Schools cannot use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Whole School

Through the use of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Verbal Behaviour (VB), Snowflake School actively encourages socially significant acceptable behaviours and reduces and replaces socially significant unacceptable behaviours. This is largely done through positive reinforcement. While this policy encompasses all at the school, every pupil has their own individual behaviour plan and risk assessment to enable their time at the school to be as positive and successful as possible.

The fundamental principle underlying our holistic approach to positive handling is to look at all the events surrounding a crisis situation and not just at the crisis itself. Every effort will be made to identify triggers and ascertain functions of behaviour. Where possible a variety of techniques will be used to de-escalate situations. Care of all involved will be at the forefront of all actions and support, and time for de-briefing will be made available. All

actions will be recorded, monitored and assessed to ensure best practice and constant improvement. Our school uses the Team Teach positive handling techniques when a child needs guiding, escorting, holding or restraining to ensure their welfare and the welfare of others is upheld. All staff receive initial training in this when they first start work at our school and on-going training is provided throughout the year/once a year. All who work within the school will be encouraged and trained to continually assess:

USE OF SPACE

It is essential that all space within the school building is used as effectively and safely as possible. Where triggers or difficulties are identified for any pupils, efforts will be made to adapt environments or make changes in order to promote a positive learning environment and reduce stress. Staff need to take into account the space around the pupil and if possible move to a suitable space.

DISTRACTIONS

Distractions can be an effective tool to prevent behaviour from spiralling. Working together as a team creates greater opportunities for creative thinking and progression of skills.

CALM STANCES, EXPRESSIONS AND POSTURE

It is essential that all those within the school are aware of the messages their body language is communicating. Situations can often be de-escalated by the adoption of non-threatening stances and movements. Facial expression and tone of voice are also taken into consideration. This is particularly important in an environment where more conventional communication methods can be challenging to individuals involved.

CAREFUL USE OF WORDS

Communication must be clear. Language used must be simple, concise and suited to the individual. Where certain words or phrases are identified as triggers, this information is communicated through individual behaviour plans and risk assessments. The roles of all involved are clearly defined to minimise unnecessary discussion and demands or requests from more than one source. Scripts may be used between staff members to quickly and concisely communicate vital information.

PHYSICAL REASSURANCE AND PROMPTS

Within training, all staff members are made aware of the law concerning physical contact and respect of personal space and dignity. While unnecessary physical contact is actively discouraged, physical reassurance and prompts may be used. Often by their use more critical situations and increased physical intervention can be avoided.

EFFECTIVE GUIDES AND ESCORTS

These may be used to safely move individuals from one area to another (only after a verbal request and for a very short distance).

HOLDS/RESTRAINT

As previously stated, the welfare of the child will always be of paramount consideration and, where holds are necessary, the minimum force for the minimum amount of time will be used. Some techniques may involve minimum discomfort (July 2002 Guidance for Restrictive Physical Intervention).

Team Teach Training System

Team Teach is a specialist research and training organisation which was founded over fifteen years ago. The overall aim of the organisation is to provide high quality training in the specialist field of managing aggressive and potentially violent behaviour. Team teach training provides a non-aversive approach to challenging behaviour.

Reporting and recording

The incident log is a bound book located in the **school office**. Details about the incident will be recorded as immediately after the incident as possible. Logs will be regularly monitored and assessed to ensure optimum success and best practice. Where injuries are sustained entries in the appropriate logs will be made and relevant people informed (parents, Head Teacher etc).

The report will include:

- the name(s) of the pupil(s) and staff members involved;
- when and where the incident took place;
- the name(s) of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident;
- antecedent;
- the reason that intervention was necessary;
- the strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention;
- what physical intervention was used;
- the pupil's response, and the outcome of the incident;
- any other action taken in the management of the incident.
- details of any injury suffered by the pupil/another pupil/member of staff, and
- any damage to property

Action after an Incident

The Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. It is the role of the school leadership team to support staff

who work with pupils with challenging behaviour. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedures:

- Review of Individual Behaviour Plan
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Social Services)
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedures
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff
- Risk assessment if necessary
- The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.
- In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

Staff

Staff will not participate in physical intervention or restraint without being trained to do so, through training from a qualified Team Teach Instructor, unless to avert serious injury or danger in the most exceptional circumstances (Duty of Care). Two members of staff could carry out a specific strategy if required. Staff have a duty of care (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991). Where a behaviour requiring intervention has occurred once, procedures, planning and assessment will take place to ensure that any further instances are dealt with efficiently and safely.

Staff will work together to build on their strengths and to identify their limitations. It is recognised, and supported, that 'changing face' (staff substitution) is a sign of strength and can often benefit all involved, particularly in providing 'choice points' (opportunities for change) for pupils.