



## *‘Improving the quality of family life’*

# Positive Handling Policy

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# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff working directly with learners at Snowflake School are supported to develop skills in de-escalation, risk / restraint reduction and positive handling.

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

- Mission statement and values
- Health and safety policy
- Behaviour policy
- Child protection policy
- Equal opportunities policy
- RPI Data Guidance

Definitions:

- Positive Handling – 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. Positive handling refers to a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies of which restraint is only a small part of the framework.
- Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) - Any action that involves physically intervening within a pupil which involves restricting their movement.

# 2. Relevant legislation

The use of all forms of positive handling, including physical intervention, 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:

- Committing a criminal offence,
- Causing personal injury or damage to a property,
- 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 trustees (July 2013)***

- The term ‘reasonable force’ covers a 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 circumstances mean 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 instructions to do so.
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school visit.
- Preventing a pupil leaving the classroom to allow 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.

## 3. Whole School Approach to Positive Handling

### 3.1 ABA / VB

Snowflake School applies Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Verbal Behaviour (VB) to actively encourage socially significant acceptable behaviours and reduce and replace 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, and not just at the crisis itself. Every effort is made to identify triggers and ascertain functions of behaviour where possibly a variety of techniques will be used to de-escalate situations. The 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.

## 3.2 Team Teach

Team Teach is a specialist research and training organisation which aims to equip everyone with the tools they need to understand and support behaviour as a form of communication, at work or in daily life, in a positive and respectful manner.

Staff at Snowflake School receive Level 2 Team Teach training within the first year of their employment. This training is bespoke and designed by Snowflake School's accredited Intermediate Trainers to best meet the needs of the school and pupils. The training covers theory, de-escalation, environmental considerations and physical interventions which range from personal safety techniques to more restrictive holds. Ongoing training is provided throughout the year to all staff, and on an ad hoc basis as per the needs of the staff and pupil(s). Level 2 accreditations are valid for 12 months, after which, staff are required to complete a formal refresher of both theory and practical elements of the Team Teach curriculum.

## 4. Staff Responsibilities

### 4.1 Senior Leaders

- Senior Leadership will ensure the delivery of quality positive handling training by accredited Intermediate Team Teach trainers.
- Employ and promote the professional development of the school's Intermediate Team Teach trainers.
- Ensure the purchase and maintenance of necessary equipment or Personal Protective Equipment required to meet the needs of Individual Positive Handling Plans (PHP). This includes but is not limited to: bean bags, crash mats, soft furnishings, protective headgear, arm guards or similar.
- Review and monitor the frequency and intensity of Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPIs) and incidents.

### 4.2 Middle Leaders

- Review and maintain pupil documentation as required (Positive Handling Plan, Behaviour Reduction Plan, Risk Assessment).
- Review and maintain staff documentation as required (Risk Assessment).
- Deliver staff training on the implementation of that outlined in pupil documentation.

### 4.3 Staff Working Directly with Pupils

- Staff will not participate in positive handling or physical intervention without being trained to do so, through training from a qualified Team Teach Intermediate Trainer, unless to avert serious injury or danger in the most exceptional circumstances (duty of care).
- Call for support during any instance of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) to ensure a witness is present, even if circumstances where only one staff member is intervening.
- Accurately report and record all instances of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI).

- Conduct own self-evaluation of skills and competencies regarding positive handling and request for additional training when required.
- Follow guidance regarding use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as protective padding, sleeves, hoods, gloves or other items in line with pupil Positive Handling Plans (PHP).

## 5. De-escalation

All who work within the school are encouraged and trained prioritise the use of non-restrictive methods of de-escalation, including:

- *Use of Space* – it is essential that all space within the school is used as effectively and safely as possible. Where triggers or difficulties are identified for a pupil, efforts are made to alter the environment to reduce stress. Staff need to consider the space around the pupil (circles of awareness) and if possible, move to a suitable space.
- *Distractions* – Distractions can be an effective tool to prevent behaviour from escalating and re-directing pupils to positive interactions.
- *Body Language* – Staff must continually reflect upon the messages their body language is communicating and adopt a calm stance with a neutral facial expression and tone of voice when supporting pupils. This is particularly important in an environment where more conventional communication methods can be challenging to individuals involved.
- *Communication* –
  - With pupils: Staff will communicate with pupils clearly, using simple and concise language or alternative methods of communication such as PECS, visual timetables, sign or other, as outlined in their behaviour plans and risk assessments.
  - With colleagues: Staff will use ‘help scripts’ to quickly and concisely communicate vital information and ensure collaboration towards a shared goal of calming the situation.
- *Physical Reassurance and Prompts* – Staff are supported to understand the positive impact of physical reassurance and prompts on early de-escalation to reduce the need for more restrictive interventions later or support safe transitions between locations if needed.
- *Positive Relationships* – Staff are encouraged to develop fun, positive relationships with the pupil(s) they work most closely with and to use these relationships advantageously. Staff are encouraged to utilise handovers (change of face’) to support de-escalation and redirection.

## 6. Restrictive Physical Intervention

At Snowflake School, any Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) is used only when reasonable, proportionate and necessary and always with the minimum force for the minimum amount of time.

Any Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) must only be used, when necessary, reasonable and proportionate, to either:

- Protect individuals from harm (either to themselves or others);

- Prevent property damage.
- Prevent a situation where a child may expose themselves to risk (e.g., running into a road).

Pupils who have previously required Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) have a Positive Handling Plan (PHP) which details the strategies and techniques that are effective to use with that pupil and in which situation these interventions are deemed necessary, reasonable and proportionate. Staff must read pupils' PHP before working with any pupil.

PHPs are reviewed at a minimum of once a term, or as needed, by ABA Class Lead or ABA Supervisor.

PHPs are shared with home when created and/ or altered. Parents/ carers can request the amount of communication received regarding use of RPI in line with the PHP.

If no Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) has been required to support a pupil, they will not have a Positive Handling Plan (PHP) and information regarding de-escalation and behaviour interventions will be included in their Behaviour Reduction Plans or Pupil PEN Portraits only.

If Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) is used for the first time, the incident is recorded in the bound incident book and a Positive Handling Plan (PHP) must be written by the ABA Class Lead or ABA Supervisor.

Whilst every effort is taken to reduce injury to pupil(s) and staff, the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) can occasionally result in unintended injuries including bruising or friction burns. When any injuries are observed, an incident report must be completed and communicated with home before the end of the school day that the incident occurred.

## 7. Reporting and Recording

All instances of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) must be recorded on an RPI data sheet. RPI data sheets are tracked in the RPI folder kept in the leadership office of both Primary and Secondary and all instances of RPI used must be summarised, graphed and filed weekly by the pupil's key tutor.

All instances of RPI must be stored and kept for 75 years.

All instances of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) which meet the below criteria must be recorded in the bound incident book, located in the leadership office of both Primary and Secondary:

- a) Intervention is not covered in the pupils Positive Handling Plan (PHP)
- b) Result in injury to pupil or staff members involved
- c) Result in property damage

Please see **Appendix A** for further details regarding whether an incident is recorded as RPI or on an incident report.

Both RPI data and incident reports must be regularly monitored 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.).

Details about the incident will be recorded as immediately after the incident as possible and must include:

- The name(s) of the pupil(s) and staff members involved in the incident.
- The time and location of the incident.
- The name(s) of any additional staff members or pupils that witnessed the incident.
- The reason that positive handling or any physical intervention was necessary.
- Information regarding non-physical strategies that were employed.
- What physical intervention(s) was/ were used.
- The name(s) of all staff physically intervening.
- The outcome of physical intervention.
- Details of any other action(s) taken to manage the incident.
- Details of any injury suffered by any pupil(s) or staff member(s) involved.
- Details of any damage to property

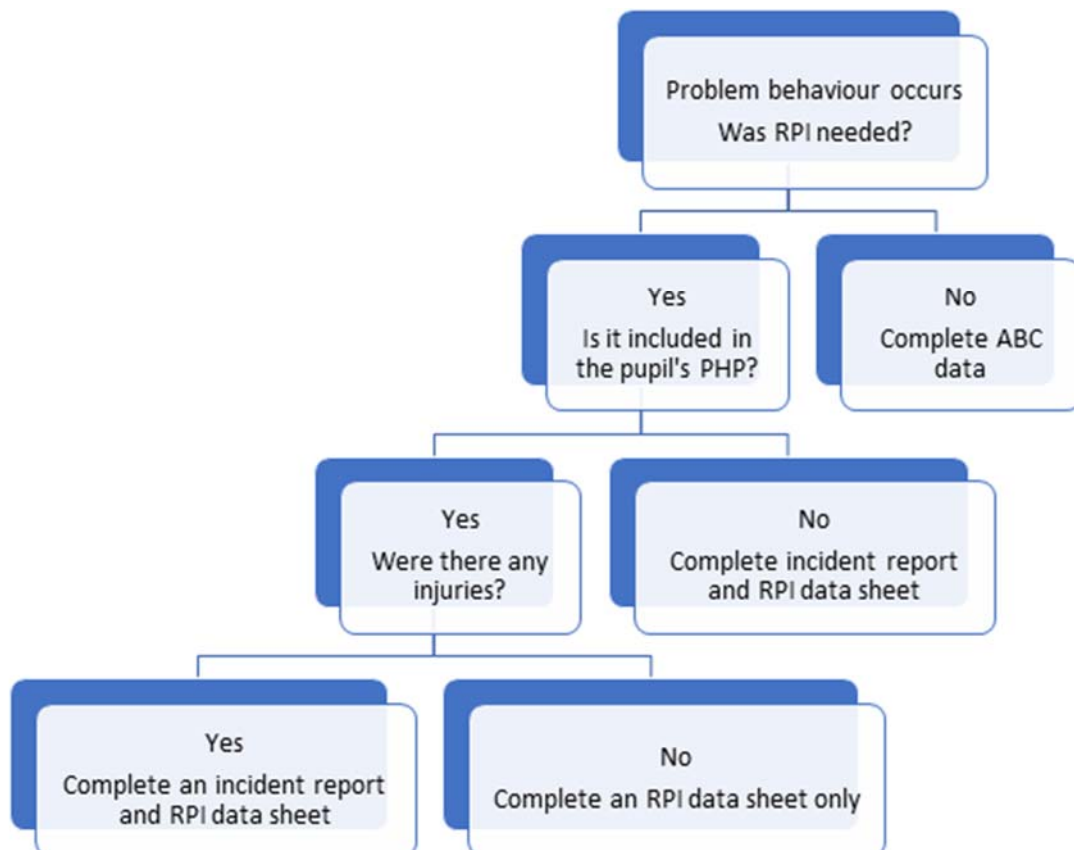
## 8. Actions Following an Incident

A member of the senior leadership group (headteacher or assistant head(s)) 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 support plan (BSP),
- Review of pupil / staff member risk assessment (RA),
- Review of pupil positive handling plan (PHP),
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by police and/ or social services),
- Staff or pupil disciplinary procedures,
- School Behaviour Policy,
- Exclusions Procedure in case of violence or assault against a member of staff,

The member(s) of staff involved in an incident will be kept informed of action(s) taken. In the event of any action concerning a member of staff, they will be advised to seek advice from their professional association/ union.

## Appendix A – RPI or Incident Reporting Flow Chart



- RPI = Restrictive Physical Intervention
- PHP = Positive Handling Plan
- ABC = 'Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence' - standard behaviour data collection



## Revision

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