



# Straits Primary School

## Policy on the Use of Positive Physical Intervention

### *Care and Control and the Use of Force*

This policy is based on guidance produced by the DfE “[The Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies - July 2013](#)”.

#### **Policy statement**

At Straits Primary School, we work to ensure each individual pupil is able to reach his or her potential. Every child is entitled to learn and every teacher is free to teach in an environment that is safe, secure and free from distraction. The guiding principles to achieve this are established in our behaviour management policy.

We are committed to providing the highest standards in protecting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people entrusted to our care. We recognise there is a need in line with the DfE “The Use of Reasonable Force, July 13” to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to pupils, staff and property. For the most part this is achieved through the fostering of good relationships, and the normal application of positive behaviour management to support and intervene. However, in exceptional or extreme circumstances this may involve the use of reasonable force.

It should be emphasised that if used at all, restraint (referred to in this document as Positive Physical Interventions - PPI) should be seen in the context of a further positive action of care and concern. In line with DfE “The Use of Reasonable Force, July 2013” it is used as a ‘last resort’ option and in the most extreme cases, other strategies will always have been attempted first. As best practice regarding PPI, this policy should be considered alongside other relevant school policies, especially those involving behaviour, health and safety and child protection.

#### **Objectives of this policy**

- To provide all members of our community (staff, governors, parents and pupils) with an understanding of care and control and the use of force and to emphasise that the use of PPI is:
  1. Part of a positive care and control approach to discipline and welfare.
  2. A last resort or a necessary expedient option to be used in extreme circumstance.
- To ensure that all members of staff or authorised persons who may have to positively handle pupils clearly understand the options and strategies open to them.
- To ensure all members of our community clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where use of force is necessary.
- To ensure that identified staff are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

#### **Staff training**

At Straits, The Headteacher and Deputy Head are trained and updated on a two-year cycle along with staff who may work with an identified pupil.

Training is provided by team teach - [www.teamteach.co.uk](http://www.teamteach.co.uk) or [Sycamore Short Stay School](#)

The headteacher keeps a written record of all trained staff as part of the school’s safeguarding documents.

#### **What is reasonable force?**

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.
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.

### **Who can use reasonable force?**

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.

### **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. Government guidance from the DFE stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

1. self-injuring
2. causing injury to others
3. committing a criminal offence
4. engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within school (this includes authorised out-of-school activities).

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.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

### **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;
- and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

### **Schools cannot:**

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Reasonable force has no legal definition but the degree of force must be proportional to the seriousness of the situation, behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent, and always be the minimum force needed. Force could not be justified for a trivial misdemeanour or a situation that could be resolved without it.

### **Good practice for managing pupil behaviour**

- Using a calm and measured approach.
- Give clear direction to the pupil.
- Seek assistance from other colleagues at as early a stage as possible.
- Try to defuse the situation orally and prevent escalation.
- Providing the disruptive pupil with a choice of locations to exit to.
- Giving clear directions.
- Allowing 'take-up' time thus allowing a 'face-saving' opportunity.
- Removing the audience, i.e. requesting that other pupils leave the room.

- Implementing 'help protocols' so that another member of staff takes over the strategic lead of the incident, if he/she feels it is appropriate to do so.

#### **If PPI is required then staff will:**

- In as calm a manner as possible, explain that the reason for intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe.
- Make it clear that PPI will stop as soon as the pupil calms and the risk assessment indicates it is no longer necessary.
- Attempt to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident.
- If it is not possible to control the extreme pupil without risk of injury to yourself or others, remove the other pupils who may be at risk and summon assistance.
- Support other staff who are intervening physically with a pupil, providing a presence, and to offer support and assistance should this be required.

#### **Application of force during specific incidents**

Methods that staff may use in appropriate circumstances where a risk assessment judgement supports this:

- Shepherding a pupil away by a light touch on the elbow or near the shoulder.
- "Guiding" – remembering this is the positive application of force to control a pupil and would be used in rare circumstances, e.g. if the pupil is in extreme danger and no other alternative is available, or where reasonable force is used to assist a pupils' movement.
- Holding – for security and to reduce anxiety where there is potential risk, even if the pupil is not yet out of control. The purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation.

When intervening, staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted as aggressive. All holds are devised to minimise the risk of injury. They should not cause pain. Where pupils are presenting with more challenging behaviour which may require more restrictive holds, it is important that these techniques have been delivered by appropriately trained staff members.

Staff may not carry out action that might reasonably be expected to injure by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the ability to breathe.
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil.
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint.
- Tripping a pupil.
- Holding or pulling the pupil by the ears or hair.

Other considerations for non-urgent situations where the risk to the people or property is not imminent:

- Consider carefully whether positive handling is the right course of action.
- Try to deal with the situation through other strategies before using force.
- Try to defuse and calm the situation to establish good order; the use of positive handling could lead to an escalation of the problem.
- Take into account the age, understanding, personal characteristics of the pupil.
- The use of positive handling to enforce compliance is likely to be increasingly inappropriate with older pupils.
- Never use force as a substitute for good behaviour management.
- In non-urgent situations force should only be used when all other methods have failed.

#### **Reporting and recording incidents**

Should an injury occur as a result of an incident at school, immediate steps will be taken to secure appropriate medical attention. This will be reported and recorded. All incidents that result in restraint (where a child has to be held) will be recorded in detail using the Bound and numbered book, within 24 hours of the restraint.

Following PPI it may be necessary to develop a Positive Handling or Personal Behaviour Plan (or review an existing plan accordingly). This will be led by the headteacher and SEND Leader. A copy of the Plan will be placed in the pupil's file.

The Bound Book will be reviewed by the headteacher, or a person with responsibility for Special Needs, termly to consider control measures and possible training or further training needs etc.

#### **Timescale for reporting and recording:**

1. The member of staff concerned will report the matter orally to the headteacher or a senior member of staff as soon as possible. When PPI has been used and pupils have been held, reports will be completed in a Bound numbered book and signed by the headteacher. If the headteacher has completed the PPI then the deputy head will review the report.
2. The headteacher or SEND Lead will inform parents/carers about the incident by the end of the school day. However, if parents/carers cannot be reached a letter will be sent to inform them of the incident and offer them the opportunity to discuss the matter.

### **Debriefing following serious incident**

Pupils and members of staff will be checked for any sign of injury and first aid will be administered if required. The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise/observe him/her. When the pupil regains complete composure, a senior member of staff and staff involved in the PPI will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain the reason for it.

All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff will provide support to the member of staff involved. If required, the school will contact the Local Authority or Sycamore Behaviour Support team for advice.

### **Other procedures concerning incidents**

If necessary and appropriate the Chair of Governing body will be informed/consulted. Help, support and reassurance will be given where appropriate to any persons involved. Where possible an attempt will be made to help the pupil modify their behaviour. Where possible, the pupil should apologise, this should be meaningful or appropriate. If this cannot be undertaken then other consequences/sanctions reparations and monitoring should take place.

### **Planning for incidents and meeting training needs**

If we are aware that a pupil is likely to require PPI on more than one occasion in a half term we will plan how to respond in line with best practice protocols and guidance. This can include involving the parents to ensure they are clear about what specific action we might need to take and obtaining medical advice if the child has any specific health needs. A risk assessment and a positive handling/personal behaviour plan will be drawn up, in consultation with all concerned. It will be regularly reviewed on a half-termly basis.

### **Complaints**

This policy is in accordance with the DfE “The Use of Reasonable Force July 2013”.” as such, those acting in accordance with it, providing they act in good faith, working within the authority guidelines, will be positively supported in their actions. Involving parents when an incident occurs, and sharing our clear policy about physical contact with pupils that staff adhere to will help avoid complaints from parents. Providing staff with approved training will also help.

All complaints will be recorded and followed up by the headteacher or their representative in the first instance. Where appropriate the Local Authority will be notified/kept informed. A complaint or dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation under disciplinary procedures or by the policy under Child Protection procedures.

### **Data Protection**

This Policy adheres to the principles under data protection law. For further information please review the School’s Data Protection Policy published on the School Website. This policy will be reviewed on a 2-year cycle.

### **Review**

This policy will be regularly monitored by the head teacher and Senior Leadership Team and reviewed by the governing body on a two yearly basis.

Signed by:

Chair of Full Governing Body: .....

Date: .....

Head teacher: .....

Date: .....

Agreed at the FGB Meeting on: .....