

Policy title	:	Positive Handling Policy
Date approved	:	September 2023
Review date*	:	September 2024

*Please note that should any further national guidance be issued by external agencies that are relevant to this policy, it will be updated accordingly prior to the review date shown above and re-circulated.

Introduction

Staff at Tollgate Primary School are trained to look after pupils in their care. Staff have a duty of care to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. Designated members of staff have been trained in positive handling strategies by Staff Safety Training LTD. Only members of staff whom have completed Positive Handling Training will intervene physically applying the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies in addition to following the schools Positive Handling Policy when necessary.

What is positive handling?

The term positive handling includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Under the umbrella term of positive handling comes '**physical restraint**'. This is used when force is applied to overcome active resistance. 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. The school takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors to the school. The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care. The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Physical restraint:

At Tollgate Primary School, physical restraint is only used when there is no realistic alternative. We expect staff to risk assess and choose the safest alternative to defuse a situation whereby a child is at risk of causing serious harm to themselves or others. At no point should physical restraint be applied without the careful consideration of alternative de-escalation strategies. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Physical restraint must only be used in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming him/herself or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property.
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing this.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint. These staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Physical restraint should never be used to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property.
- The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity.

Additionally, it is imperative for members of staff engaging in physical restraint to speak in a calm manner as a way of reassurance for the pupil.

Responding to unforeseen emergencies and risk assessments:

In the general day-to-day running of a school, unforeseen emergency situations take place and require staff to think on their feet. As a result of this and a precaution to ensure a situation whereby a child or others may be harmed due to extreme behaviours exhibited, it is the responsibility of senior leaders in collaboration with appropriate staff to complete a risk assessment and report and share with the staff who are responsible for the day to day support of the particular child. It is imperative for all pupils who exhibit **extreme** behaviour to have a risk assessment completed and shared with appropriate members of staff. This will include the following:

- **Identification of risk**
 - What risks does this behaviour pose?
 - Who is affected by the risk?
- **Assessment of risk**
 - In which situations does the risk usually occur?
 - How likely is the risk to arise?
 - If the risk arises, who is likely to be injured or hurt?
 - What kinds of injuries or harm are likely to occur?
 - How serious are the adverse outcomes?
- **Risk reduction**
 - Proactive interventions to prevent risk
 - Early interventions to prevent risk
 - Reactive interventions to manage risk

Additionally, all pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a '**Positive Handling Plan**'. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective should be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered along with the child's Educational Health care Plan (EHCP) and any other planning document relevant to the pupil. They should also take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.

Post Incident Debrief:

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of our school to offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other peoples' perspective. It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the need of all staff. As individuals we all vary in how much support we need after an unpleasant incident. A member of the senior leadership team will discuss the incident that took place in detail with all participants. Appropriate support will be arranged and implemented, additionally parents/ carers will be invited for a meeting with the Head Teacher and appropriate members of the senior leadership team.

Recording:

- All incidents of unacceptable behaviour should be recorded in detail and handed directly to an appropriate member of the senior leadership team.

- All serious incidents or incidents involving restraint will be recorded in the 'Serious incident book' which is kept in the Deputy Head teacher's office.

Within these recording strategies, all details must be recorded by witnesses within twenty-four hours and signed by at least two members of staff. It is paramount that the Head teacher is informed of all incidents that have taken place.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required.

Parental consent:

When there is concern about a child, parents will be invited to contribute to a risk assessment and Positive Handling Plan. Written parental agreement will form part of this. Parents will be informed of the school's policies. Parents will be informed following serious incidents.

Complaints and Allegations:

Any complaints will follow the school's complaints procedure.