



Hesleden Primary School

Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy

*Supporting a positive change in
behaviour*

September 2024

Introduction

The responsible person for the implementation of the policy is the Head Teacher together with associated Team Teach trained staff. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher and the governing body,

This policy takes cognisance of, and is informed by, 'The use of force to control or restrain pupils: guidance for schools in England', published in 2010, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, joint guidance issued by the DfES and DOH in 2002 and 2003, and the guidance issued by ADCS in 2013 to Local Authorities in their protocol on restrictive physical interventions.

The policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies and guidance relating to interaction between adults and pupils, e.g. Safeguarding Policy and Rights Respecting Policy.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff that come into contact with pupils and for students and volunteers working in school to explain the school's arrangements for supporting a positive change in behaviour. Its contents are available to parents on the school website.

Aim

A well-behaved school is one in which there is a climate where pupils feel safe, enjoy learning, engage enthusiastically in activities, can access the curriculum and achieve high standards. The staff at Hesleden Primary aim to promote positive relationships, trust and co-operation to secure an enjoyable learning environment where expectations are clear and conflict is minimised.

In implementing this policy, we must be clear that each child is valued and that it is the inappropriate behaviour that is not wanted, not the child.

Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working at Hesleden Primary has a right to:

- Recognitions of their unique identity;
- Be treated with respect and dignity;
- Learn and work in a safe environment;
- Be protected from harm, violence, assault (including spitting) and acts of verbal abuse

Pupils attending Hesleden Primary and their parents have a right to:

- Be encouraged to make choices concerning their education and their lives;
- Be aware that physical interventions should only be used in the pupil's best interests;
- Opportunities for learning which are appropriate to the pupils' interest and abilities;
- Individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection;
- Expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- Be informed about school 'rules', relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working at Hesleden Primary;
- Be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

Staff should ensure that pupils understand, as far as they are able, that there is an expectation of high standards of behaviour at all times.

Objectives

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the boundaries and support provided by staff. This protects the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that, in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to act in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required. At Hesleden Primary physical interventions are seen as only a small part of a holistic approach to meeting the many and varied needs of our pupils, including the need / right to be safe from harm (from ourselves and others).

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- 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 and
- Are provided with appropriate and regular training to deal with these difficult situations.

Minimising the need to use force

At Hesleden Primary School we constantly strive to create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of force. We have a total communication environment and staff use a range of strategies to support pupils in communicating effectively without the need to resort to challenging behaviour.

Pupils who have issues relating to sensory processing or other conditions that may result in increased anxiety levels, and therefore an increase in the likelihood of challenging behaviour, may have individualised support or programmes to help them to manage this.

The school uses Rights Respecting, Zones of Regulation and Restorative Approaches to help pupils to learn about feelings and managing conflict, where this is appropriate to their level of development.

The school curriculum and ethos promote independence, communication, choice and inclusion and pupils are given a myriad of opportunities for personal growth and to promote emotional well-being and the development of emotional intelligence. Hesleden Primary has a rights respecting ethos and bases everything it does on this.

All staff are trained in skills to help them diffuse situations before behaviour becomes challenging and how to de-escalate incidents should they arise. These alternative strategies will be used in preference to physical interventions and the use of force wherever possible and safe to do so. Reasonable force will only be used when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not intervening/using force.

Implications of the policy

As teaching and support staff work 'in loco parentis' and have a Duty of Care towards their pupils, they could be liable for any claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this policy. The use of Team Teach techniques is one of our health and safety control methods for reducing risk presented by pupil's challenging behaviour.

The application of any form of physical support/intervention inevitably carries an attached risk of unintended harm and this places staff and the school at risk of potential litigation. Staff have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. Staff need to be aware that they are responsible for:

- Assessing risks (dynamic risk assessment) related to individual circumstances which may arise in the course of their day-to-day duties, and

- Making judgements about when the use of force is necessary and the degree of force which may be regarded as necessary to manage a situation.

Staff are required to justify their decisions in writing through the recording and reporting procedures outlined later in this document.

The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 effective from September 2007, gives schools power to screen or search pupils for weapons. At Hesleden Primary School it is extremely unlikely that pupils would conceal weapons and therefore staff have not received any training in this area. Staff will not be requested to undertake searches but the Head Teacher may carry out a search if this is deemed to be safe and essential. As the power to search should only be used where it is judged to be safe, if the school decides that a search is necessary and the Head Teacher deems it to be unsafe for her to carry this out, then the police will be called.

Prevention and De-escalation

Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment. Good classroom organisation, clear boundaries that are consistently maintained and interesting lessons will be effective in preventing incidents with almost all pupils.

De-escalation techniques should be used wherever possible and appropriate to defuse a situation and prevent an incident from occurring – a non-confrontational, calm but assertive approach is generally most effective.

Diverting the pupil's attention and distracting them from the 'trigger' or third person intervening can also help to prevent incidents. These should all be used before resorting to restrictive physical interventions, unless safety is at risk.

Primary Prevention

This is achieved by:

- Avoiding situations and triggers known to provide challenging behaviour;
- Creating opportunities for communication, choice and achievement;
- Exploring pupils' preferences relating to the way/s in which they are managed;
- Developing staff expertise through a programme of Continuous Professional Development;
- The deployment of appropriate staffing numbers;
- The deployment of appropriately trained and competent staff.

Secondary Prevention

This involves the recognition of the early stages of behavioural sequence or pattern that is likely to develop into violence or aggression and employing 'diffusion' techniques to avert any further escalation.

Where there is clear documented evidence that particular sequences of behaviour escalate rapidly into violence, the use of a restrictive physical intervention (RPI) at an early stage in the sequence may, potentially, be justified if it is clear that:

- Primary intervention has not been effective, and
- The risks associated with **NOT** using RPI are greater than the risks of using RPI.

Types of incident

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- Self-injuring
- Causing injury to others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during teaching session or elsewhere within the school (this includes authorised out-of-school activities).

The incidents described in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Use of Reasonable Force to Control and Restrain Pupils fall into three broad categories:

1. Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
2. Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
3. Where the pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations which fall into one of the first two categories are:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil including spitting or licking
- Pupils are fighting
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations which fall into the third category are:

- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

Where a pupil's behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- A calming activity should be offered/made available to the pupil, including the option to withdraw from the task/activity
- A clear positive statement should be given to tell the pupil what it is that you want them to do – give positive instruction
- Positive reinforcement, praise and reward should be provided to the pupil for any attempt to calm down and/or behave appropriately, however small the effort
- Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible summon assistance.
- Physical intervention- positive handling uses Team Teach techniques to prevent a child harming herself or himself, others or property.

Problems are normal where children are learning and testing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Our success is not measured by the absence of problems, but by the way in which we deal with them.

Risk Assessment and deciding whether to use Restrictive Physical Interventions

It may be necessary to make a judgement about the relative risks and potential benefits arising from activities which might provoke challenging behaviours compared with the impact on the pupil's overall quality of life if such activities are not allowed.

A Risk Assessment will be carried out if it is foreseeable that a pupil's behaviour may pose a risk to staff or pupils. This may result in a Behaviour Support Plan being devised. This will be done in discussion with the staff team working with the pupil. The Head Teacher may also be involved at this stage. The Behaviour Support Plan will be shared with staff working with the pupil and stored on CPOMS.

All staff authorised to use physical intervention with pupils will receive training in Team Teach techniques as a risk reduction strategy and receive information about the risk to pupils of positional asphyxia. There are very clear protocols delivered during training to minimise the risk of harm to pupils and to ensure that appropriate safeguards are implemented.

Strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour and supporting pupils in crisis

All staff at Hesleden Primary will consistently use positive strategies to prevent the likelihood of incidents occurring, and to develop appropriate behaviour and good order – research shows that the way to improve behaviour is to praise and reward appropriate behaviour to increase the likelihood of it happening again. Alternative, positive behaviours are actively taught to replace inappropriate behaviour and every pupil has a target relating to this incorporated into their Behaviour Support Plan.

The Governors acknowledge the ethos and high expectations of good behaviour throughout the school that have led to many pupils with challenging behaviour developing coping skills and ultimately being able to manage their own behaviour within the inclusive setting at Hesleden Primary. It is also acknowledged that progress can be very slow and some pupils may take many years to develop socially acceptable behaviour. A small steps approach, with positive reinforcement consistently and enthusiastically employed, and where progress is carefully recorded, allows staff and parents/carers/others to acknowledge the progress that all pupils make in changing their behaviour.

Definitions

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. Positive handling at Hesleden Primary is seen as a proactive response to meet individual pupil needs and any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way that staff exercise their responsibilities and the range of behaviour change support strategies used.

1. Physical contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, e.g. in the care of pupils and in order to support their access to a broad and balanced curriculum. It would seem reasonable that young children do require opportunities for close contact such as cuddles, hugs and as long as this is within public view, sensitively carried out and age/person-appropriate, the Governors would fully support this approach. At all times, especially when assisting a pupil with their personal care and when teaching/practising personal independence skills, staff should use discretion to preserve the dignity of those pupils needing help or support (see Intimate Care Policy).

2. Physical Intervention (PI)

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the arm or shoulder where the pupil is compliant.

This technique cannot be emphasised enough and in the hands of a skilful practitioner many pupils can be deflected from a potentially volatile situation into a less confrontational situation i.e. it may be possible to 'diffuse' a situation by timely intervention.

3. Physical control/restraint/restrictive physical intervention (PRI)

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. **All such incidents must be recorded** on the Team Teach (Major Incident) record form and stored in the Bound Books in the Head Teacher's office. If anyone is injured a H&S accident/incident report form must also be completed. Records of incidents must be shown to the Head Teacher as soon as possible, and by the end of the school day at the latest. The pupil's parents will be informed of any significant incident concerning their child as soon as is practicable after the incident.

The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a restraint/RPI. Restraint is defined by Team Teach as the positive application of force by staff, in order to overcome rigorous resistance; completely directing, deciding and controlling a person's free movement. Child and parents' views are sought following the intervention following the Team Teach format.

Pupils

Where a pupil has sufficient understanding, their Behaviour Support Plan should be discussed with them and they should sign it. They may benefit from a simple symbolised version of the plan as an aide-memoir – the plan should be seen as supportive to/by the pupil. It may be beneficial to 'rehearse' the plan so that they are comfortable with what will happen if they need support. The above is the responsibility of the class teacher/HLTA.

Parents/carers/those with parental responsibility

When a Behaviour Support Plan is first drawn up the parents/carers/those with parental responsibility will be invited into school to discuss the plan, why there has been a need to devise a plan, and the techniques that may be used, including Restrictive Physical Interventions. Their views should be sought in relation to the plan. If parents/carers are not in agreement with the plan the Head Teacher will attempt to negotiate a solution. If a solution is not found it may be necessary to review the suitability of the continued attendance of the pupil at Hesleden Primary School. Parental permission will be sought to share the plan with other agencies involved with the pupil in order to encourage consistency of management, e.g. short-term break service/link family, after school club/Teaching Assistants. Subsequent reviews of the plan will be sent home for approval and the plan will also be formally reviewed at the time of the Annual Review each year where a child has an EHCP.

Planned and emergency physical interventions

A **planned physical intervention** is one that is described/outlined in the pupil's Behaviour Support Plan. This should cover most interventions, as possible scenarios will be identified through the Challenging Behaviour Risk Assessment and planned for when the Behaviour Support Plan is drawn up. These interventions may include the use of Team Teach techniques.

An **emergency physical intervention** may be necessary if a situation arises that was not foreseen or is uncharacteristic of the pupil. Members of staff retain their duty of care to pupils and any response, even in an emergency, must be **proportionate to the circumstances**. Staff should use the minimum

force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety, consistent with the training that they have received. Wherever possible assistance will be sought from another member of staff.

Following any such incident, a Behaviour Support Plan will be devised (or the existing plan amended) to support effective responses to any such situations which may arise in the future.

Using force

No legal definition of reasonable force exists however for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it within Hesleden Primary:

- Positive handling uses a **minimum** degree of force necessary for the **shortest period of time** to prevent a pupil harming themselves, others or property.
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be **proportionate** to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- Staff would be expected to follow the pupil's Behaviour Support Plan in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour.
- If this was unsuccessful and the situation continues to escalate staff would be expected to employ other Team Teach techniques that they have been trained in.

Any use of force by staff outside of the Team Teach training framework would need to be judged on whether it was reasonable, proportionate and necessary in the particular circumstances concerned.

All of the techniques taught take account of a young person's:

- Age
- Gender
- Level of physical, emotional and intellectual development
- Special needs
- Social context

They also provide a gradual, graded system of response.

Acceptable measures of physical interventions (PI)

- It is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident
- It is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent
- It is carried out as the minimum needed to achieve the desired result
- The age, understanding and gender of the pupil are taken into account
- It is likely to achieve the desired result

Where possible assistance should be sought from another member of staff before intervening.

This form of physical intervention may involve staff:

- Escorting a pupil
- Shepherding a pupil away
- Supportively holding a pupil to keep them or others safe until they have regained control of themselves or can be supported to an area to calm down.

Restrictive Physical Interventions

In some circumstances, trained staff may need to use more restrictive holds- Team Teach RPI techniques. Acceptable methods are taught as part of the training procedures made available to appropriate staff.

Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall positive and caring ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities, and the behaviour change support strategies used.

Staff may need to rotate roles and have a break if the incident is prolonged (over 10 minutes) – you should follow the pupil's Behaviour Support Plan at all times acting in the best interest of the child.

- It is acknowledged that with some disengagement techniques pupils may encounter some minimal discomfort when appropriate release techniques are used. However, this is very brief, transient and poses less of a risk than the behaviour they are employed in response to, e.g. biting, head butting.
- Most staff are trained in First Aid. Any of these may be called upon to implement First Aid or seek further guidance in the event of an injury or physical distress arising as a result of physical intervention.

Time out, withdrawal and Safe Space

Time out involves restricting the pupil's access to positive reinforcement as part of the behavioural programme in a room or area which they may freely leave. It is a specific behaviour management technique and does not necessarily mean time spent out of the class or group, but rather refers to a withdrawal of attention and/or things they find rewarding. (It could be as simple as turning away from a child who is attention seeking or positioning a child away from the class or group).

This withdrawal of attention could also be achieved by sending a pupil to another class or group or a quiet area.

Withdrawal involves removing the person from a situation which causes anxiety, high arousal levels, or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This can mean removing a child from the class/group to allow them time to calm down or to prevent a situation from escalating. They may need time away from staff and pupils (either on their own or in another class or group) in order to break the cycle/pattern of the behaviour or to reduce their level of anxiety or distress. This 'quiet time' could be time in the playground, a quiet room, the Safe Space, or sitting in an office supervised by the Head, Deputy or HLTA.

Recording of incidents

Where a Restrictive Physical Intervention has been used a record of the incident will be kept. Recording of incidents should be carried out in line with the flowchart for recording incidents and accidents. All incidents of the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions should be recorded on a RPI record and a record should be made in the school's Serious Incident Book (Bound Book). The Bound Book is a hard-backed book, with numbered pages, retained by the Head Teacher. Please ask the HT for support when completing forms for the first time. Appropriate documentation (RPI record) will be completed as soon as possible after the incident (within 24hours) normally prior to staff going off duty and be signed by all staff involved and the Head Teacher.

After the review of the incident, a copy of the details will be placed on the pupil's file as part of their educational record.

Reporting incidents

All incidents entered into the Bound Book will be reported to parents. This will most likely be a telephone call.

All incidents involving a Team Teach (TT) policy, involving a pupil being held prone or supine on the ground, or that lead to the suspension of a pupil will be reported to parents by the Head Teacher. An

email including the RPI record and any additional information will also be sent to the LA, Chair of Governors and Team Teach.

Where there is any concern over the appropriateness of a response, the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors or the CSA Team Teach Advisor may refer the incident to the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership for clarification and/or investigation.

Whilst physical interventions are intended to reduce risk, there is always risk when two or more people engage to use force to protect, release or restrain. Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the pupil and staff, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the pupil remains safe. Any such injury will be reported using H&S form and/or a skin map if necessary. Any injuries to pupils as a result of incidents involving restraint will be reported in line with locally agreed LADO procedures.

Monitoring Incidents

Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Head Teacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour may require the restrictive physical intervention/s and/or an adjustment to the provision made for them at the school.

Monitoring of incidents will take place on a regular basis and the results used to inform planning to meet the individual pupil and school needs. Any incidents involving the use of ground recovery holds are reported to Team Teach termly and also to the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection.

To safeguard pupils and ensure objectivity, and support the Head Teacher and the school, the School's Advisor and a school governor will also be involved in the monitoring of all incidents involving Restrictive Physical Intervention. The Head Teacher will also present a termly summary of incidents to the Governing Body in her termly report under 'Health and Safety'.

Positive Learning, Learning (PLL) and support following incidents

Physical interventions are not used in isolation and the school is committed to ensuring that as a result of incidents learning opportunities are created for children that allow them to 'own' and take responsibility for their behaviour at a level appropriate to their stage of development.

In addition, PLL procedures are in place to ensure that appropriate support is provided and recorded for staff and pupils, and that following an incident pupil/staff relationships are rebuilt and repaired to ensure that a positive learning environment is maintained. Pupils who may be distressed by events can be offered the following support:

- Quiet time taking part in calming activity
- Quiet time away from the incident/trigger
- Resuming their usual routine/previous activity as soon as possible, especially for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

PLL Time with a member of staff to 'discuss' the incident, using a simple debrief sheet or other alternative forms of communication. Staff should ensure that they are fully recovered from the incident before resuming their duties and colleagues are encouraged to seek and offer support where it is deemed necessary. Where staff have been involved in an incident involving Restrictive Physical Intervention they should have access to supervision and support as needed. Within the school, this will be made available/supported through the Head Teacher, Deputy or HLTA.

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. 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 Behaviour Support Plan
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Social Services)
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedures
- Suspension/Exclusions Procedure; in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff this may be considered
- The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken
 - In the case of any action concerning the member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to provide additional training or professional support for particular staff in relation to the management of incident where although the criteria for the application of the above procedures were not met, it is decided that the incident could have been managed more effectively.

Staff training

Training at some level will be available for **all** staff at Hesleden Primary. For most staff this is enhanced by Team Teach training in the use of positive handling and it is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure this training is kept up to date. No member of staff will be expected to use Team Teach techniques without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken in the event of an incident. Arrangements will be made clear as part of induction of staff and training will be provided as part of on-going staff development.

Whistleblowing

Whilst the training in TEAM TEACH provided to all staff encourages the use of help protocols and reflective practice, it is acknowledged that under some circumstances, physical intervention can be misapplied. Staff are reminded that part of their duty of care to pupils includes the requirement to report any such matters which cause them concern in relation to pupil management and welfare. Any such concerns, (short of immediate Child Protection concerns which should, of course, be passed to the DSL), should be raised with the Head Teacher, or with the Chair of Governors in order to allow concerns to be addressed and practice improved.

Reference documents

- DCSF, The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils – supersedes Circular 10/98 – <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/12187/ACFD89B.pdf>
- The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (screening and searching of pupils for weapons guidance for school staff), Department for Education and Skills 2007 – www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/schoolsecurity/
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 – Section 93 replaces section 550A of the Education Act 1996 – <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/en2006/06en40-f.htm>
- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties, Joint Guidance DfES and DoH, 2003 – www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/piguide
- Risk Assessment Pro Forma – www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=5334
- Guidance on the use of restrictive physical interventions for staff working with children who display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Joint Guidance DfES and DoH, 2002 – www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen.piguide
- The Children's Act 1989 <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/Ukpga19890041en1.htm>
- Physical Interventions: A Policy Framework, John Harris, et al, BILD, 2002