



POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Staff at Redland Green School are trained to look after the students in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent students from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a student seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. Any parent wishing to view this policy may do so on request.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The term "positive handling" includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses, which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a student. The term "physical restraint" is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as "restrictive physical interventions" in national Guidance (DfES (now DCSF)/Department of Health 2002). A clear and consistent Positive Handling Policy supports students who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.
- 1.2 When making physical contact with a student staff use their professional judgement; touching may be appropriate where a student is being congratulated or when in distress and needs comforting. Some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques or when administering first aid or physiotherapy. Physical contact with students becomes increasingly open to question as students reach and go through adolescence, and staff should be mindful of their actions being misconstrued.
- 1.3 Students with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 93 of the Education and Inspectors Act 2006 enables school staff to make physical contact with students when using such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:
 - a) Committing any offence (or, for a student under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older student)
 - b) Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the student themselves)
 - c) Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any students receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

The staff to which this power applies are defined in section 95 of the Act. They are:

- a) Any teacher who works at the school, and
- b) Any other person whom the Headteacher has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This:
 - i) Includes support staff whose job normally includes supervising pupils such as Teaching Assistants (TA), Learning Support Assistants (LSA), Learning Mentors and Lunchtime Supervisors
 - ii) Can include people to whom the Headteacher has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as paid members of staff whose job does not normally involve supervising pupils (for example catering or premises-related staff) and unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying on school-organised visits)

At Redland Green School the Headteacher has authorised all support staff employed by the school to have control or charge of pupils. This includes LSAs, Heads of House, Student Supervisors, Technicians, premises staff and administration staff.

- 1.4 The positive handling of students and the possible use of force also applies to students from another school who enter the school premises and to all students whilst they are off-site and still the responsibility of a member of staff, such as during a school trip. As such, staff must assess the risks posed by external learning spaces, too.
- 1.5 This policy details how we implement the guidance at this school. Further details and guidance can be found in the DfE document [Use of Reasonable Force](#) and in the RGS Behaviour for Learning Policy (Appendix 15). **It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.**

2 SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

2.1 The Leadership Team takes seriously its duty of care towards students, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the Leadership Team. This policy has a clear focus:

- 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

3 POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school's Behaviour for Learning Policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage students to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour.
- 3.2 Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk.
- 3.3 Students for whom intervening physically is part of an agreed, planned approach to best meeting their learning, social and emotional needs, will be encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute.
- 3.4 However if problems arise staff have an additional responsibility to support all students when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

4 ALTERNATIVES TO PHYSICAL CONTROLS

- 4.1 A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:
 - Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason
 - Give clear directions to the students to stop
 - Remind them about rules and likely outcomes
 - Remove an audience
 - Take vulnerable students to a safer place
 - Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons

- To guide or escort students away from the current situation
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help

5 HELP PROTOCOLS

- 5.1 The expectation at this school is that all staff should support each another. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group.
- 5.2 Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies.
- 5.3 Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted, so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

6 WELL CHOSEN WORDS

- 6.1 A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When students are becoming angry it is advisable to remain calm and avoid conflict.

7 THE LAST RESORT PRINCIPLE

- 7.1 At this school we only use physical restraint when there is no other realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point:

“If necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predicted future.”

Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – “The Control Of Children In The Public Care: Interpretation of The Children Act 1989” - London: H M S O

- 7.2 It does mean that we expect staff to judge the risk and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

8 PROACTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

- 8.1 It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of a student's individual risk assessment or Positive Handling Plan. Examples of this are where a student has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the student becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the student to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the student is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the students and that it reduces risk.
- 8.2 Before using force staff should, wherever practicable, intervene verbally to in a calm and measured manner to alleviate the situation.
- 8.3 The types of force that could be used include:
- a) Passive physical contact resulting from standing between students or blocking a student's path

- b) Active physical contact such as:
 - i) Leading a student by the hand or arm
 - ii) Ushering a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
 - iii) In more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive holds, consistent with the training provided by the school

9 REASONABLE AND PROPORTIONATE

9.1 **Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent and should not be expected to cause injury.** People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. The use of force should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate they will be supported.

9.2 When deciding whether it is appropriate to use force staff must consider any particular special educational need and/or disability that a student may have. Under the Equality Act 2010 schools must:

- a) Not treat a disabled student less favourably, for a reason relating to his or her disability, than someone to whom that reason does not apply, without justification; and
- b) To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage to students who are not disabled (known as the reasonable adjustments duty)

10 UNREASONABLE USE OF FORCE

10.1 It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should students be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs).

10.2 Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a student secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

10.3 It is unlawful to use force as a punishment

11 RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with students who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

11.2 Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this case the correct decision is to hold back from physical controls.

13 POSITIVE HANDLING PLANS

13.1 Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. Some students, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities may require a Positive Handling Plan if they have been identified as presenting a risk. The plan will have been

drawn up with the SENCo in consultation with the student's parents and any relevant external agencies. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past.

- 13.2 Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside any Statement of Special Educational Need or Education Health and Care Plan and any other relevant documents which relate to the student. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in any Pastoral Support Plan or IEP.
- 13.3 A student's Positive Handling Plan should designate named staff to be called to incidents involving that particular student. This does not necessarily mean waiting for that member of staff to arrive before taking action if the need for action is urgent. The designated member of staff should always be involved in post-incident follow-up.

14 THE POST INCIDENT SUPPORT STRUCTURE FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

- 14.1 Following a serious incident it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything that could inflame the situation during the recovery phase.
- 14.2 Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries that require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice.
- 14.3 Even when staff attempt to do everything right things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that students have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

15 COMPLAINTS

- 15.1 It is not uncommon for students to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. Students should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The Complaints Procedure applies equally to staff. We are an open establishment and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of students and staff alike. Further details are in Appendix 15 Use of Reasonable Force in the Behaviour for Learning policy.
- 15.2 Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health & Safety.

16 TRAINING

- 16.1 Teachers and anyone authorised by the Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors within rigorous guidelines.
- 16.2 The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. . For example, office staff may not require the same level of training in physical techniques as those working directly with the most challenging students. However all staff benefit from whole

school training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our students.

17 RECORDING

17.1 Whenever force is used to intervene with a student the incident must be recorded using the approved forms (Appendix 2) and passed directly to the Headteacher. The central incident log is held by the Headteacher.

17.2 All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record, which should be completed within 24hrs. Read through the school's recording form carefully. Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly. Names should be completed in full and all forms should be signed and dated. Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future. Serious incident reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed.

17.3 A copy of the current Positive Handling Policy is archived alongside the individual records each year.

17.4 After any recordable incident, parents should always be informed. Wherever possible, it is best to telephone parents as soon as possible after the incident before confirming details in writing. Parents will be sent a copy of this policy and information on post-incident support.

18 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

18.1 The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school's incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

19 FOLLOW UP

19.1 Following an incident consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, Behaviour Policy or this Positive Handling Policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual student, will follow the appropriate procedures.

20 OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

20.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Redland Green School Code of Conduct
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Exclusion Guidance
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- Child Protection Policy

Agreed by Staff	Agreed by Students	Agreed by Governors	Review Schedule	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed
08 JAN 2008	N/A	08 JAN 2008	Minimum of every 3 years but reviewed after each incident involving unplanned physical intervention	23 NOV 2011	18 JUN 2014		
Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed	Date Reviewed

APPENDIX 2

REDLAND GREEN SCHOOL			
RESTRAINT REPORT			
STUDENT'S NAME			
DATE RESTRAINT USED			
START TIME OF INCIDENT (beginning of de-escalation)		FINISH TIME (return of student to usual routines)	
LOCATION			
REASON FOR INTERVENTION			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Immediate danger of personal injury to student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Immediate danger of personal injury to another person
<input type="checkbox"/>	To avoid damage to property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absconding
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Disruption to other students
ANTECEDENT (description of events leading up to incident)			
DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES USED			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal advice and support	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reassurance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Humour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Distraction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Negotiation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify below)
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Calm talking
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Options offered
BEHAVIOUR (description of behaviour)			

NATURE AND DURATION OF POSITIVE HANDLING STRATEGY USED

<input type="checkbox"/> Standing	<input type="checkbox"/> Kneeling	<input type="checkbox"/> Sitting
<input type="checkbox"/> Wrap	<input type="checkbox"/> Single person escort	<input type="checkbox"/> Two person escort
<input type="checkbox"/> Rest position (prone)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	

DURATION OF INCIDENT	
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DESCRIPTION OF HANDLING STRATEGIES USED (staff involved and how held)

SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE TO PROPERTY (describe damage)

MEDICAL INTERVENTION (describe injuries and treatment)

REPORTED BY	
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DESIGNATION	
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FOLLOW-UP ACTION TO BE TAKEN

SIGNED	
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