

The Meadows Montessori Primary School

Policy for use of Positive Handling with Pupils

Introduction

The Meadows Montessori Primary School recognises that there is a need, reflected in common law, to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to its pupils, staff and property.

We are committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour, **and only use positive handling as a last resort** in line with the DFES advice. IF used at all it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.

This policy must be read and implemented in conjunction with the whole school behaviour policy and approach to behaviour management.

The Education Act 1996 (Section 550A) states it is lawful for teachers and other authorised staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from committing an offence, causing injury or damage or disrupting the good order and discipline of the school. Teachers are not contractually obliged to carry out restraint procedures and they are not contractually obliged to undertake training in any restraint procedures. This policy applies to all staff that are authorised to use positive handling.

All staff authorised to positively handle children and young people must be aware that they must not:

- Use corporal punishment
- Use pain to gain compliance
- Deprive the person of food or drink
- Require the person to wear inappropriate clothes
- Humiliate or degrade the child.

Our approach to best practice

The best practice regarding positive handling outlined below should be considered alongside other relevant policies in the school specifically those policies involving behaviour, bullying, safeguarding children and health and safety.

In line with Education At 1996 (Section 550A) in the following situations staff must judge whether or not positive handling would be reasonable or appropriate:

- Risk to the safety of staff, pupils or visitors or
- Where there is a risk of serious damage to property or
- Where a pupil's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline or

- Where a pupil is committing a criminal offence.

This judgement will take into account the circumstances of the incident. All staff should be aware that the use of positive handling in response to a clear or developing danger of injury will always be more justifiable than the use of force to prevent, damage or misbehaviour.

Staff will view positive handling of pupils as a last resort for the purposes of maintaining a safe environment. If pupils are behaving disruptively or anti-socially every strategy will be used to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation.

Staff will understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment that is calm and supportive especially when dealing with pupils who may have emotional and behavioural needs, which may increase their aggression.

All staff will understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child, which lie beneath the behaviour as well as to the behaviour itself.

Practice regarding specific incidents

All policies and practice regarding the supervision of pupils during the school will be appropriate to the identified needs and behaviours of the pupils, this combined with the whole school approach to behaviour should minimise the likelihood of requiring positive handling to an absolute minimum.

The physical action taken will take into consideration the age and competence of the child and will be the least detrimental alternative.

Staff intervening with children will seek assistance from other members of staff as early as possible, since single-handed intervention increases the risks of injury to both parties and does not provide a witness.

A member of staff recognising that a situation is escalating to a point demanding positive handling yet feeling unable to carry this out must, as part of their duty of care clearly tell the pupil(s) to stop the behaviour and seek help by any means available.

Staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a pupil will have a responsibility to provide a presence and to offer support and assistance should this be required.

Where possible, staff who have not been involved in the initial confrontation leading up to an incident may be in a better position to intervene or restrain the pupil if this proves necessary.

A pupil's behaviour may be adversely affected by the presence of an audience. Wherever possible, the audience will be removed, or if this is not possible, the pupil and member(s) of staff will withdraw to a quiet, but not completely private place (e.g. two

members of staff should be present or a door left open so that others are aware of the situation)

Staff will be aware of the need to tell the pupil being restrained, in a calm and gentle manner that the reason for the intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the pupil calms down, she/he be released.

A system will be place to enable a back up - to enable staff to call for help in emergencies. (To be discussed with staff)

Positive Handling

Examples of situations where positive handling maybe appropriate include

- Pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- Pupils are fighting
- Pupils are engaging in, or on the verge of, committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property.
- Pupil is causing, or at risk or causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- Pupil absconds from school or rooms (this only applies if pupil could be at risk if not kept in school or in a room)
- A pupil refusing to leave a classroom
- A pupil behaving such that the lesson is being seriously disrupted.

The following approaches are regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances:

- Holding for security and to reduce anxiety where there is a potential risk, even if the pupil is not yet out of control. This is best used when the pupil is anxious or confused. Its purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation. Staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted by the pupil as aggression.
- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path.
- Pushing if restricted to situations where reasonable force is used to resist a pupil's movement, rather than a forceful push that might cause the pupil to fall over.
- Escorting a pupil by the hand or arm.

Holds to be avoided

The following holds should not be used:

- Holding a pupil around the neck or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict a pupils ability to breathe
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping a pupil
- Holding a pupil by the hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground

Recording an incident

All incidents that results in non-routine interventions will be recorded in detail in the school incident book.

A written record will be made by the staff member involved in the incident.

Similarly notes will also be made any other members of staff involved. These notes will be signed and dated.

The record will be a form containing the following information:

- The name and job title of the member of staff who used reasonable force
- The name of the pupil involved
- When and where the incident took place
- Names of staff and pupils who witnessed the incident
- The reason the force was necessary
- Behaviour of the pupil which led up to the incident
- Any attempts to resolve the situation
- The degree of force used
- How it was applied
- How long it was used for
- The pupils response and the eventual outcome
- Details of any medical treatment required plus copy of an accident form which has also been completed.
- Details of follow-up including contact with the parents/carers of the pupil involved
- Details of follow-up involvement of other agencies - police, social services.

Pupil witnesses may also be asked to provide a written account if appropriate.

Copy of this entry will be kept on the pupil's file.

The school will report any injuries to pupils or staff in accordance with RIDDOR (HSE regulations 1995)

Pupils who are identified as likely to require positive handling as part of their behaviour management will require an Individual Behaviour Plan alongside their Individual Education plan. This is drawn up in response to the risk posed by the pupil's behaviour and is shared with all staff, parents / carers and the pupil if appropriate.

Debriefing Arrangements

The pupil and the member of staff will be checked for any sign of injury after an incident. First aid will be administered to any one who requires it, or medical treatment obtained.

The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise him/her. When the pupil regains complete composure, a senior member of staff will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain the reasons for its occurrence. The pupil will be given an opportunity to explain things from her / his point of view. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish the relationship between the pupil and the member of staff involved in the incident.

In cases where it is not possible to discuss the incident with the pupil on the same day as it happened, the debrief will take place as soon as possible when the pupil returns to school.

All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. Support will be provided by other staff.

The Head teacher will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity of any incidents where positive handling was used. She will initiate the recording process, if this is not already underway, and review each incident to ensure good practice was maintained at all times.

Training Needs of Staff

In cases where it is known that a pupil will require positive handling on occasions, the school will ensure that the appropriate training is provided.

Staff trained in positive handling techniques need to update their training on a regular basis and ensure that their training record is kept up to date.

Authorisation of staff to use positive handling

We recognise that positive handling will seldom be used and it is a last resort to maintaining a safe environment.

Best Practice will be monitored. Sessions to discuss and/or practice the use of techniques or to review any new information will be included as part of the schools normal schedule during staff meetings.

These meetings will be open to all staff, including non-teaching staff.

In the event of a complaint being received by the school in relation to the use of physical force by staff, the matter will be investigated using the schools Complaints Policy.

Arrangements for informing parents

Parents will be informed of the school's policy regarding positive handling in the following ways:

- A copy of this policy will be available to all parents if requested.

- A section about the schools legal obligations to maintain a safe environment and the possible use of positive handling (as a last resort) with pupils will be included in the school brochure.
- All parents will be informed after a non-planned incident where positive handling is used with a child.

Signed:

Date: