

Horniman Primary School



Positive Handling Policy

This policy was agreed by the governing body on:

(and supersedes all previous policies relating to this area)

Signed:	Resources Committee
Implemented/ Reviewed:	2019,2021, 2023
Review date:	June 2025
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Positive Handling Policy

Summary

This policy outlines what positive handling is, when it is necessary to use restraint and the school's restraint protocol.

Introduction

Our school Behaviour Policy is designed to promote a positive and calm environment in which pupils and staff are clear about what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. We encourage children to take responsibility and make positive behaviour choices; however, we recognise that sometimes children do make the wrong choices. On rare occasions this may result in a situation that requires some form of positive handling by staff.

What is positive handling?

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property.

The Legal Framework

Section 89 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 introduced a statutory power for teachers and certain other school staff to discipline pupils.

This is further defined in the DfE guidance 'Use of Reasonable Force' (advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013), which states that all staff have the power to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from: causing injury to his/herself or others; committing an offence; damaging property or prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline.

The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils to either control or restrain in order to prevent violence or injury.

At Horniman School, we also acknowledge our legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for children with a disability and/or special educational needs.

Our School's Approach to the Use of Positive handling

We aim to avoid the need for positive handling and regard this as a last resort. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy.

De-escalation Strategies

Before positive handling is used all strategies of behaviour modification and diffusion should be attempted. These might include:

- Verbal advice and support
- Giving space
- Reassurance
- Negotiation

- Limited choices
- Take up time
- Planned ignoring
- Supportive touch
- Transfer adult
- Repeating instructions calmly
- Offering the child, a quiet, safe place to calm down
- Use of distractions, e.g. a whistle to interrupt a fight
- Withdrawal of attention (audience)
- Techniques to diffuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation or use of humour
- Use of other sanctions outlined in the Behaviour Policy

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?

When alternative strategies have not been effective, positive handling is applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It never takes a form which could be seen as punishment.

Examples of situations that may require positive handling are:

- Preventing a child from attacking another child or member of staff
- Preventing a child from leaving a class where this would risk their safety or disrupt the behaviour of others
- Preventing a child trying to leave the school
- Removing a child behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- Preventing a child behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or school visit
- Restraining a child at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts
- Restraining a child causing damage by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects
- Stopping a fight
- Preventing a child from engaging in self-harming behaviour?

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate. However, in deciding what is a serious incident, staff should exercise their own professional judgement and act within our school's policy on behaviour. They should also consider the age, understanding and sex of the child.

At Horniman, we have staff members who have been specifically trained in the use of restraint and whenever possible would be involved in situations where positive handling was required. However, in the absence of trained staff or in an emergency, all staff can use reasonable force and restraint to maintain safety.

Once again it is stressed that positive handling is only used when all other strategies have failed to have the desired effect on a child's behaviour.

In the exceptional circumstances when positive handling becomes necessary, staff:

Should

- Tell the child what they are doing and why
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Use simple and clear language
- Be matter of fact, polite and calm at all times
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for them to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Use recognised safe restraints that staff have been trained in
- Relax the restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

Should Not

- Try to manage on their own, unless necessary
- Stop talking even if the pupil does not reply
- Act in temper
- Raise their voice
- Make threats
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Use positive handling as a punishment
- Touch the pupil in a way that could be viewed as sexually inappropriate conduct
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing, e.g. around the neck
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

Other Physical Contact

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a child is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when walking together around the school or on a visit
- When comforting a distressed pupil
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To give first aid.

Actions after an incident

Positive handling often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. A member of the Senior Leadership Team must be informed of any incident as soon as possible and takes responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised and individuals are sufficiently calm to be able to talk about the incident.

An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil and member of staff concerned. The debrief should include consideration of the circumstances that precipitated the incident and explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided. Any other individuals involved in the incident will be offered support.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it will probably be necessary to address the situation through the development or review of an individual behaviour plan, which may include a risk assessment, an anger management programme and possible involvement of external agencies. This will include a meeting with parents/carer to discuss the child's behaviour and form a positive handling plan. (Appendix 3)

All incidents will be recorded immediately on a Positive Handling Recording Form (Appendix 1) by the person involved in providing restraint. All sections of the report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record of the incident is available and any patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed. A copy is kept on Scholar Pack.

A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

Risk assessment

When it is likely that a child's behaviour may necessitate the use of positive handling as one of the reactive strategies, the inclusion lead will carry out a risk assessment (Appendix 2), devise a positive handling plan, agree this with the Headteacher, and share with parents/carers (Appendix 3)

Monitoring the use of Positive handling

Any incidents of positive handling within a school will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and reported to the School Governing Body on a termly basis

Concerns and Complaints

If staff follow the Positive Handling Policy, fully involve parents in planning for pupils with challenging behaviour, and always inform parents of any incident which has required positive handling, then complaints should be avoided.

However, when a parent makes a complaint about the use of positive handling by a member of the school staff, it must be taken seriously and addressed by the headteacher following the guidance concerning allegations about staff in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Further advice about making a complaint can be found in our Complaints Policy.

Training on Positive handling and the Use of Reasonable Force

We will provide annual staff-training to familiarise all school staff on:

- The use of reasonable force

- De-escalation techniques
- Risk assessments and individual behaviour plans.


Training will always be carried out in the context of an overarching approach to promoting positive behaviour in school in line with Horniman's Behaviour Policy.

Members of staff who have been trained in the use of positive handling will have their training updated as appropriate by an accredited provider.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Appendix 1: Positive Handling Recording Form

 <h2 style="text-align: center;">Record of Positive handling</h2>		
Child's name:		Date:
Time:	Location of Incident:	Report compiled by: Print: Signed:
Antecedent (events leading up to the incident)		
Behaviour (how did the pupil respond, describe what actually happened)		
Consequences (how did staff intervene, how did the pupil respond, how was the situation resolved)		
Names of those involved (staff and pupils)		
Names of witnesses (staff and pupils)		

What de-escalation techniques were used prior to positive handling? (tick below)		
<input type="checkbox"/> verbal advice and support	<input type="checkbox"/> choices/ limits/ consequences	<input type="checkbox"/> transfer adult
<input type="checkbox"/> calm talking	<input type="checkbox"/> distraction	<input type="checkbox"/> success reminder
<input type="checkbox"/> time out directed	<input type="checkbox"/> take up time	<input type="checkbox"/> other (please specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> time out offered	<input type="checkbox"/> negotiation	
<input type="checkbox"/> planned ignoring	<input type="checkbox"/> humour	
Why was the decision made to use positive handling?		
<input type="checkbox"/> to prevent the child from causing injury to him/herself		
<input type="checkbox"/> to prevent the child from causing injury to others		
<input type="checkbox"/> to prevent the child from causing damage to property		
<input type="checkbox"/> to prevent the child from causing serious disruption		
<input type="checkbox"/> to prevent the child from running away		
<input type="checkbox"/> other (please specify)		
Description of positive handling holds used (Please include approx. time span of any holds):		
Child's Views		
Report read and discussed with the child <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Child agrees with content <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
If no, what is the child's view? If yes, does the child have any comment?		
Signed:		Date:
Did the child suffer any injury as a result of this incident? Injury location and description/ medical assistance given:		
Did staff or others suffer any injuries as a result of this incident? Injury location and description/ medical assistance given:		
Was there any damage to property? Describe damage and location:		

Post- Incident Information

Was any post-incident support offered given to the child?	Was any post-incident support offered given to the member of staff/ other adult?
<input type="checkbox"/> De-brief with an adult	<input type="checkbox"/> De-brief with an colleague/ headteacher
<input type="checkbox"/> Offer declined by the child	<input type="checkbox"/> Offer declined by the adult
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
Parent(s) Views	
Signed:	Date:



Risk Assessment for Horniman Primary School

Mature of difficulties:

PLAYGROUND	CLASSROOM & AROUND SCHOOL	PE	SCHOOL VISITS
Identified risks	Identified risks	Identified risks	Identified risks
Action taken	Action taken	Action taken	Action taken

Signed: Role: Date completed:

Signed: Role: Review Date:

Behaviour Causing Concern	Target of Behaviour Who is it directed towards (self, other pupils, staff, property etc).	Likelihood of Behaviour V – very likely Evidence suggests more likely than not to occur. L – likely There is a possibility that the behaviour will occur again. U – unlikely The context has changed or can be changed to make it unlikely to happen again.	Seriousness of Behaviour A – Behaviour would cause physical injury – beyond first aid, serious distress, extensive damage, prolonged disruption. B – Injury requiring first aid, minor damage to property, some distress to self/others, brief disruption to normal school routines. C – No physical injury or damage to property; minor distress or disruption.
Swearing			
Verbal			
Kicking			
Hitting			
Biting			
Damaging property			
Running off			
Refusing to move			
Fighting			
Other – be specific			

Preventative Measures to consider Seating/position in classroom. Curriculum activities appropriately structured and supported Opportunity to have timeout to calm down. Pupil involved in planning and review. Parents involved in planning and review Individual Education Plan in place.	Opportunities to learn new social/emotional skills. Regular feedback about positive behaviour. Alternative activities available at break Pupil escorted at transition times Communicative function of behaviour understood Opportunities to teach new skills.
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Positive Handling Plan

Name _____ Date _____

Risk

high	medium	low
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Highlight precisely what might happen:

Slap	Punch	Bite	Pinch	Spit	Kick
Hair grab	Neck grab	Clothing grab	Body hold	Arm grab	Weapons/missiles
Other:					Absconding

Environments and Triggers

Describe the situations which have led to an unsafe situation in the past

-
-

Prevention

Describe any changes to routines, personnel or environment which might reduce the risk of this happening:

-
-

Diversions, distractions and de-escalation techniques

Describe interest, words. Objects etc. which may divert attention from an escalating crisis:

-
-

Highlight any strategies which have worked in the past or should be avoided:

Verbal advice and support	Take up time
Firm clear directions	Time out offered
Negotiation	Time out directed
Limited choices	Transfer adult
Distraction	Reminders about consequences
Diversion	Humour
Reassurance	Success reminders
Planned ignoring	Other
Supportive touch	
CALM talking/stance	

Physical Intervention

Highlight any strategies which have worked in the past or should be avoided unless absolutely necessary:

Guiding elbow towards safety	Standing double elbow (single person)
Turn gather and guide	Sitting double elbow (single person)
Help hug	Standing double elbow (two persons)
Cradle hug	Sitting double elbow (two persons)
Standing wrap	Figure of four (two persons)
Sitting wrap	Other

Positive listening and debrief

Describe any strategies which have worked in the past or should be avoided:

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Recording and Notifications Required

Parents/carers		Educational Psychologist	
Social worker		Doctor/nurse	
Other			

Signatures

Parent:

Teacher:

Review date: