

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY



VANTAGE ACADEMY TRUST

Date approved:

*Date for revision:

Responsibility: Directors

Approved by the Directors

Signature of Chair _____

*subject to any relevant changes in legislation or other appropriate guidelines



St James CE Primary School recognises that there are occasions when the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils is necessary. This policy is intended to raise staff awareness of the possibility of such occasions and assist staff in preparing and planning a response if such action is required.

Definitions:

Control = either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.

Restraint = to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

Reasonable = using no more force than is needed.

Objectives of using reasonable force:

- The key objective in using any form of force or restraint is to maintain the safety of pupils and staff
- Secondly, the use of force or restraint may be used to prevent serious breaches of school discipline.
- Thirdly the use of force or restraint may be used to prevent serious damage to property.

Minimising the need to use reasonable force:

All staff should work together to:

- Create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require using force.
- Use Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) approaches to teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings.
- De-escalate incidents as they arise.
- Only use force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

Staff authorised to use reasonable force:

All employees at St James CE Primary School are authorised by the Principal and Governors to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils should the need arise.

When reasonable force can be used:

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils:

- from hurting themselves or others
- from damaging property
- from causing disorder

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force may be used.

- To remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- To prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- To prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground
- To restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Force will never be used as a punishment - this is always unlawful.

Application of force

Only the minimum force necessary should be used. Listed below are examples of force that may be used but no form of restraint should be used that is likely to injure the pupil (particularly anything that could constrict breathing), other than in extreme emergencies and where there is no viable alternative.

As far as possible, staff should not use force unless, or until, another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.

The following are examples of 'force' that may be used in exceptional circumstances:

- Physical interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- In more extreme circumstances using restrictive holds ('Positive Handling')

Practical Considerations

Before intervening physically a teacher will, wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if he/she does not. The teacher should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and teachers should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish a pupil. A teacher should not intervene in an incident without help if he/she believes that there is the risk of personal injury. The age and level of understanding of the pupil and the severity of the incident are important factors to consider. Staff must always bear in mind their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with SEN.

Power to Search Pupils Without Consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force describes above the Principal and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following prohibited items:

- Knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property

Recording Incidents

All incidents which necessitate the use of force to control pupils must be recorded on the school form (appendix A) by the staff member/s involved as soon as possible and the Principal must always be given a copy. Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a senior colleague or a representative when compiling a report. A copy of the report should also be kept in the child's Assertive Mentoring File.

Parents will always be informed of such incidents on the same day.

Post-incident support

Serious incidents that require the use of force can be upsetting for all concerned and may result in injuries to the pupil or staff. Immediate action will be taken to ensure first aid or medical support is administered. It is also important that staff and pupils are given emotional support. This includes children who may have witnessed the incident. Class teachers will use their professional judgement in deciding how to respond, eg through Circle Time or individual support. Children will be reminded to use the Listening Service if they wish. The parents of the pupil involved will be included in discussions about further actions and support. An Individual Behaviour Plan will be set up if the child does not already have one. The plan will include strategies to prevent and deal with the recurrence of incidents requiring the use of force. The Principal will decide in consultation with the SENCO whether multi-agency partners need to be involved, eg CAMHS. The pupil will be required to recognise and repair the damage caused, whether emotional or physical, including to relationships with staff and pupils affected by the incident, and to develop their social and emotional skills. In some cases the decision may be taken to exclude the pupil.

Support and Training

Training in Team Teach techniques will be provided for the staff most likely to need to use force. Staff will be kept informed about pupils who may be at risk to themselves or others through the SEN records, Assertive Mentoring Files and through discussion with relevant staff members. Those children seen as presenting particular risk will have individual programmes drawn up which will include targets and strategies. They may include input from external services together with further suggested strategies. Parents will be kept informed of the pupil's needs and how we are trying to support the pupil. A Pastoral Support Programme may also have been drawn up, especially if the pupil is in danger of exclusion.

Staff members currently Team Teach Trained:

Lisa Harvey
Diane Stephenson
Jess Martin
Becky Hurst
Mike Smith

However ALL members of staff have a responsibility to support pupils who may need physical intervention.

Dealing with complaints and allegations

If a specific allegation of abuse are made by a pupil or parent against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the MANCHESTER LCSB PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST ADULT WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE will be followed. These procedures follow the guidance contained on Chapter 6, Appendix 5 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children. – A guide to inter agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* (WT 2006). Other complaints will be dealt with under the school's Complaints Procedure. If a complaint is made against a member of staff the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true- it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably. Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to "Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff" guidance were an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher.

Teachers will use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Policy is available to staff and Governors on the school website. Hard copies are available from the School Office. The Policy will be brought to the attention of all staff, parents and pupil in September each year. It will be reviewed every two years. The next review will take place in March 2019.

Appendix A

St James CE Primary School Record of Restraint			
Date of incident:		Time of incident:	
Where incident happened:		Pupil Name:	
Year Group:		Date of Birth:	
Name of member/s of staff involved:			
Adult Witness to restraint:			
Outline of event leading to restraint:			
Outline of incident of restraint:			
Outcome of event:			
Description of any injury sustained and any subsequent treatment:			
Date Parent informed:		Time Parent informed:	
Outline of parent/carer response:			

Signed:		Date:	
Signed:		Date:	
Brief Outline of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action:			