

GUIDANCE ON POSITIVE HANDLING FOR ADULTS WORKING AND CARING FOR CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS

RATIFYING COMMITTEE	Educational Standards & Achievement Committee
DATE RATIFIED	24/1/2018
NEXT REVIEW DATE	24/1/2020 In line with Warrington Borough Council updates

Guidance on Positive Handling for adults working with and caring for children in schools

MAY 2011

Contents

	Page No.
Introduction	3
What the law says	4
Effective practice for schools	5
Policy and procedures	5
Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities	6
Reducing the likelihood of situations arising where use of force may be required	7
Deciding if use of force would be appropriate	7
Risk assessments	8
Using force	9
Staff training	10
Statutory guidance on recording and reporting significant incidents	11
Reporting to parents	12
Post-incident support	13
Dealing with complaints and allegations regarding the use of force	13
Physical contact with pupils in other circumstances	14
Annex A: School policies – suggested framework	15
Annex B: Record of the Use of Reasonable Force	18
Annex C: Model Letter from School/Setting to Parents/Carers	22
Annex D: Example of an Individual Behaviour Plan	23

Introduction

1. The intention of these guidelines is to ensure that all educational settings provide a safe environment for children, staff and visitors. They are intended to protect children from the risk of abuse/harm and reduce the risk of inappropriate touching. They are also intended to help adults minimise the risk of being accused of improper conduct towards children and young people and to provide a supportive framework in which they can act with confidence.
2. All schools and settings should operate within a framework of positive handling, i.e. adopt a holistic approach involving a broad spectrum of policy, guidance, risk reduction strategies, management of the environment and deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour, diversion, defusion and de-escalation. The use of force (restraint) is only a small part of the framework.
3. Other specialist guidance documents which may be useful are *Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders* (Circ LEA/0242/2002) and *Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behaviour Difficulties* (Circ LEA/0264/2003).
4. Professionals need to know that their employment places upon them a duty of care which includes maintaining an acceptable level of safety. The standard of care required is that of a reasonable and prudent parent judged not in the context of his/her own home but in the circumstances of school life. There is a duty upon professionals to take some account of the individual needs of each child.
5. Professionals have a legal obligation to safeguard the welfare of the children in their care.
6. All school staff members have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property; and to maintain good order and discipline amongst pupils. But everyone would agree that force should be used only as a last resort.
7. The purpose of legislating on the use of force was to provide a clear and transparent power which enables staff to use reasonable force in specified circumstances. This document provides guidance on how the power should be exercised, particularly to:
 - a. help school staff to understand what the law means for them in practical terms;
 - b. provide advice on good practice;
 - c. ensure that staff are in the best possible position to rebut any false allegations made about the inappropriate use of force; and
 - d. protect pupils by reducing the risks that force may be used inappropriately.

8. Staff will be aware of sensitivities associated with any form of physical contact with pupils. This guidance also offers advice on physical contact other than the direct use of force.
9. This guidance is based on the national document *The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils: Guidance for Schools in England* from 2010 which supersedes other guidance.
10. This guidance is for use in schools and settings.
11. This guidance is aimed particularly at senior leaders such as head teachers but it is also relevant to all staff and school governors.

With effect from September 2010, governing bodies must have regard to paragraphs 44-53 on Recording and Reporting.

12. In this guidance, references to parents cover all those with parental responsibility for children and young people.

What the law says

13. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:
- a. committing a criminal offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
 - b. causing personal injury or damage to property; or
 - c. prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

The staff to which this power applies are:

- (i) any member of staff at the school;
 - (ii) any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This can also include people to whom the head has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits); and
 - (iii) it does not include any pupils
14. The power may be used where the pupil (including a pupil from another school) is on the school premises or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of the staff member (for example on a school visit).
15. School governing bodies must ensure that a procedure is in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff uses force on a pupil; and reporting each such incident to each parent of the pupil as soon as practicable after the incident. There is more detail about this in paragraphs 44-53.
16. There is no statutory definition of 'reasonable force'. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the circumstances of individual cases. Deciding on whether the use of force is justified will depend in part upon the context in which the misbehaviour takes place. The test is whether the force used is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Use of force could not be justified to prevent trivial misbehaviour. The circumstances where the use of force might be reasonable are further discussed at paragraphs 27-30 below.
17. The statutory power conferred by section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 is in addition to the common law power of any citizen in an emergency to use reasonable force in self-defence or to prevent another person from being injured or committing a criminal offence.
18. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. This is because it would fall within the definition of corporal punishment, abolished by section 548 of the Education Act 1996.

Effective practice for schools

Policy and procedures

19. All schools should incorporate an explicit policy on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils within their overall school behaviour policy. It is also good practice for governors, staff, recognised trade unions, pupils, those with parental responsibility and other partners within the school community to be consulted about the policy. However, even if the outcome of the consultation is that parents and pupils are not in favour of force being used, this would not prevent staff from using the power in any given situation. Neither would it prevent the school from adopting a policy that envisaged staff using reasonable force. Once the policy has been approved formally by the governing body it should be communicated to staff, pupils and parents. Annex A provides a framework for school policies.
20. Schools should never seek to inhibit the ability of staff to use this power by adopting a 'no contact' policy. The power to use force helps ensure pupil and school safety and the risk with a no-contact policy is that it might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil, or prevent the member of staff taking the action he or she needs to take in order to avoid a pupil causing injury to the member of staff or to other pupils.
21. A school's policy on the use of force should describe examples of:
 - a. the different approaches which should be used prior to force being used;
 - b. the circumstances which the school sees the use of force to restrain a pupil as reasonable (for example, to prevent them injuring somebody); and
 - c. the circumstances the school regards as justifying the use of force to require a pupil to comply with a reasonable instruction (for example, to leave the classroom).

All staff need to understand their powers and the options open to them. They must know what they are allowed to do under the school's behaviour policy.

Staff authorised to use force

22. All members of school staff are authorised by law to use force.
23. Head teachers can also decide whether to authorise for a limited time volunteers at the school although this should be in exceptional cases only. Such individuals should be given clear instruction on when the power can be used and on the school's policy and practice.
24. The head teacher or delegated senior member of staff is advised to do the following:
 - a. as part of a staff induction process, set out staff members' responsibilities in relation to the school policy on use of force; and
 - b. ensure that all authorised staff know that they have the power to use force.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

25. Schools should:

- a. involve all staff members with responsibility for supporting pupils with SEN, as well as the pupils' parents, in developing the school's policy and practice on the use of force. This will help ensure that appropriate account is taken of the needs of individual pupils with SEN or disabilities including 'fragile' pupils.
- b. Develop positive handling plans for individual pupils who, through a special need or disability, are assessed as being at greatest risk of needing restrictive physical interventions in consultation with the pupil and parents. Further advice on risk assessments is provided in paragraphs 31-33. Positive handling plans set out the techniques that should be used and those that should normally not. These plans should be compatible with a pupil's statement and properly documented in school records. Examples of positive handling plans and guidance for using these will be shared during Team-Teach training.
- c. As far as practicably possible, staff who come into contact with such pupils should be made aware of the relevant Pupil Profile of those individuals, particularly:
 - (i) situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventive strategies and what de-escalation techniques are most likely to work;
 - (ii) what is most likely to trigger a violent reaction, including relevant information relating to any previous incident requiring use of force;
 - (iii) if physical intervention is likely to be needed, any specific strategies and techniques that have been agreed by staff, parents and the pupil concerned; and
 - (iv) the agreed ways to support the pupil and member of staff following an incident
- d. Information from parents may be as valuable as information held by the school. Some of this information may be sensitive. Schools should seek express consent (preferably written) from the parent to inform appropriate staff. However, where consent is unreasonably withheld, the information may still be made available to staff who need it if it is in the best interests of the pupil concerned. The importance of providing such information will be a factor in decisions about giving temporary authorisation to parent volunteers and others to supervise pupils.
- e. Designate which members of staff should be called if an incident involving a particular pupil occurs. This does not necessarily mean waiting for them to arrive before taking action if the need for action is urgent. However, they should always be involved in post-incident follow-up.
- f. Teach pupils who are at risk how to communicate in times of crisis and strategies to use in a crisis (such as using personal communication passports and non-verbal signals to indicate the need to use a quiet area or cool-off base) and ensure staff are familiar with these strategies.

Reducing the likelihood of situations where the use of force may be required

26. There are a number of ways for schools to help reduce the possibility of force being needed:
 - a. Creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind;
 - b. Developing positive relationships between pupils and staff;
 - c. Adopting a whole-school approach to developing social and emotional skills, for example, the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme;
 - d. Taking a structured approach to professional development that helps staff to acquire the skills of positive behaviour management and managing conflict, as well as supporting each other during and after an incident;
 - e. Recognising that situations which trigger challenging behaviours are often foreseeable;
 - f. Effectively managing individual incidents. It is important to communicate calmly with the pupil, using non-threatening verbal and body language and ensuring the pupil can see a way out of a situation. Strategies might include, for example, going to a quiet room, away from bystanders or other pupils, so that the staff member can listen to concerns; or being joined by a particular member of staff well known to the pupil; and
 - g. Wherever practicable, warning a pupil that force may have to be used before using it.

Deciding if use of force would be appropriate

27. Force should be used as a protective measure and never as a disciplinary penalty. The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use should always depend on the circumstances of each case and – crucially in the case of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities – information about the individual concerned.
28. Decisions on whether the precise circumstances of an incident justify the use of force must be reasonable. Typically, such decisions have to be made quickly, with little time for reflection. Nevertheless, staff need to make the clearest possible judgement about:
 - a. the chances of achieving the desired result by other means. The lower the probability of achieving the desired result by other means, the more likely it is that using force may be justified;
 - b. the seriousness of the incident, assessed by the effect of the injury, damage or disorder which is likely to result if force is not used. The greater the potential for injury, damage or serious disorder, the more likely it is that using force may be justified; and

- c. the relative risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies. The smaller the risks associated with physical intervention compared with other strategies, the more likely it is that using force may be justified.
29. Examples of situations that particularly call for judgements of this kind include:
- a. a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
 - b. pupils are fighting, causing risk of injury to themselves or others;
 - c. a pupil is committing, or on the verge of committing, deliberate damage to property;
 - d. a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or object;
 - e. a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school other than at an authorised time. Refusal of a pupil to remain in a particular place is not enough on its own to justify use of force. It would only be justifiable where allowing a pupil to leave would:
 - (i) entail serious risks to the pupil's safety (taking into account age and understanding), to the safety of other pupils or staff, or of damage to property; or
 - (ii) lead to behaviour that prejudices good order and discipline, such as disrupting other classes;
 - f. a pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave a classroom;
 - g. a pupil is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson; or
 - h. a pupil is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or school visit.
30. In these examples, use of force is likely to be construed as reasonable (and therefore lawful) if it was clear that the behaviour was sufficiently dangerous or disruptive to warrant physical intervention of the degree applied and could not realistically be dealt with by any other means.

Risk assessments

31. Leadership teams should regularly assess the frequency and severity of incidents requiring use of force that are likely to occur in their school. Historical patterns usually provide a good starting point. Schools may also wish to take account of the outcomes of multi-agency assessments carried out for particular pupils. These assessments will help to inform decisions about staff training (see paragraphs 39-42 below).
32. Schools/settings may also need to make individual risk assessments where it is known that force is more likely to be necessary to restrain a particular pupil, such as a pupil whose SEN and/or disability is associated with extreme behaviour. An individual risk assessment is also essential for pupils whose SEN and/or disabilities are associated with:
- a. communication impairments that make them less responsive to verbal communication;
 - b. physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments;
 - c. conditions that make them fragile, such as haemophilia, brittle bone syndrome or epilepsy; or

- d. dependence on equipment such as wheelchairs, breathing or feeding tubes.
33. It may not always be appropriate for a member of staff to intervene in an incident without help, unless it is an emergency. Schools should have communication systems that enable a member of staff to summon rapid assistance when necessary. Help may be needed in dealing with a situation involving an older pupil, a large pupil, more than one pupil or if the member of staff believes he or she (or other pupils) may be at risk of injury. In these circumstances he or she should take steps to remove other pupils who might be at risk and summon assistance from other staff who are authorised to use force, or where necessary, phone the police.

Using force

34. Before using force, staff should engage the pupil in a calm and measured tone, making clear that their behaviour is unacceptable and setting out how the pupil could choose to change their behaviour. Staff should not give the impression of acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish a pupil, and should make it clear that they only intend to use physical intervention as a last resort to ensure that the situation is addressed as safely as possible. The use of force must always be proportionate to the level of risk and should always be reduced at the earliest possible time.
35. There are occasions when the behaviour of a young person can become dangerous and a physical intervention is needed. There are two different purposes – to control pupils and to restrain them. By control we mean passive physical contact (eg standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path) or active physical contact (eg leading a pupil by the hand or arm, or ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back). Control can also mean more forceful action. Restraint means the use of restraint techniques and is usually used in more extreme circumstances, such as when two pupils are involved in a fight and refuse to separate without physical intervention. This can involve using appropriate restrictive holds, which may require specific expertise or training. **Parental consent is not required to restrain a pupil.**
36. Where a pupil is engaged in an activity that presents a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury to the pupil, or to others, any member of staff would be justified in taking any action, including the use of reasonable force that could reasonably be seen as necessary to alleviate or reduce those risks. Such situations could include preventing a pupil running off the pavement onto a busy road or preventing a pupil from hitting someone with a dangerous object such as a glass bottle or hammer. Staff should always consider their own safety and that of others in deciding how to act in such situations.
37. Staff should avoid acting in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury.
38. Staff should always avoid touching or restraining a pupil in a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct.

Staff training

39. Schools/settings should consider for their staff suitable accredited training where trainers can be expected to have achieved a given level of expertise. The local authority recommends trainers approved by Team Teach.

There are a number of trainers based in schools in Warrington who organise training courses regularly and who will deliver training to meet a school's needs.

40. Like other forms of professional development, decisions about training in physical intervention are best made by individual schools/settings in the light of their particular needs and circumstances. It is good practice for schools to set out their approach to relevant training in their policy on use of force. While key staff may be trained as a priority, most schools now consider that all staff have a responsibility for pupil behaviour.
41. It is recommended that at least two members of staff are trained including a senior person. However, it should not be assumed that trained members of staff should be solely responsible for dealing with all incidents where physical intervention or restraint is required.
42. **A school policy cannot lawfully prevent teachers or other staff whose job includes responsibility for pupils from using reasonable force.** The absence of accredited training does not preclude a member of staff from using reasonable force where needed.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

43. There will be particular training needs for staff working closely with pupils with SEN or disabilities. Risk assessments will help inform decisions about staff training. They will also inform the circumstances in which schools would temporarily authorise staff or volunteers to have control or charge of such pupils. Training decisions should take account of the needs of staff working with children who have particular difficulties with physical intervention, for example, those with autistic spectrum conditions.

Statutory guidance for school governing bodies on recording and reporting significant incidents

Governing bodies must have regard to this section of the guidance

44. The governing body must ensure that a procedure is in place, and is followed by staff, for recording and reporting to parents, significant incidents where a member of staff has used force on a pupil. The record must be made as soon as practicable after the incident.
45. The school's procedure for recording and reporting incidents should make clear who is responsible for deciding whether an incident is significant or not. The head teacher will normally be part of any such process. The procedure should also set out the timescale within which the report should be made, bearing in mind that the duty is to make the report as soon as is practicable. The person who makes the report to the parent need not be the person who compiled the report.
46. While ultimately only a court of law could decide what is 'significant' in a particular case, in deciding whether or not an incident must be reported, schools should take into account:
 - a. An incident where unreasonable use of force is used on a pupil would always be a significant incident
 - b. Any incident where substantial force has been used (eg physically pushing a pupil out of a room) would be significant
 - c. The use of a restraint technique is significant
 - d. An incident where a child was very distressed (though clearly not over reacting) would be significant.
47. In determining whether incidents are significant, schools should consider:
 - a. the pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time
 - b. the degree of force used and whether it was proportionate in relation to the behaviour
 - c. the effect on the pupil or member of staff.
48. School staff should also bear in mind the age of the child, any special educational need or disability or other social factors which might be relevant.
49. Sometimes an incident might not be considered significant in itself, but it forms part of a pattern of repeated behaviour. In this case, although there is no legal requirement to record such incidents, schools are advised to let parents know about them.
50. The recommended model recording form is provided in Annex B.
51. The school's procedure for recording and reporting should provide that the member of staff involved in the incident compiles the record. The procedure should also ensure that the member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding checks the record and that the school provides the member of staff involved in the incident with a copy of the final version. It is important that this information is treated in confidence.
52. All accounts of the same incident should be recorded, including those of the pupil or pupils involved. Parents should not be given a copy of the

incident record as a matter of course, but they should be told when and where the incident took place, why it was decided that force had to be used, the strategies used to try to avoid having to use force, what force was used, whether there were any injuries and what follow-up action (support and/or disciplinary) was being taken in relation to their child. Ordinarily, the names of those involved in the incident should not be disclosed in the report. However, the pupil may give this information to the parent or the parent can request the information from the school. The school should deal with these requests in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. It is advisable that the school's procedure for making a record following such incidents is contained within its policy on the use of force. The record is likely to form part of the pupil's educational record which is open to inspection by parents.

53. The local authority no longer keeps copies of incidents involving restraint.

Reporting to parents

54. The law requires that each parent is informed of significant incident where force has been used on their child. In this case 'parent' has the meaning given by section 576 of the Education Act 1996, and so will include people having day-to-day care of the child and the local authority where a child is the subject of a care order. Section 576 also deems the local authority as a 'parent' in the case of children who are looked after under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

The requirement is to notify 'each' parent. Where a child has a mother and father who both have parental responsibility and where the child is the subject of a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989, or being accommodated under section 20 of that act, the requirement will be to report the incident to the child's mother, father and Targeted Services.

55. The exception of reporting to parents is where to do so is likely to result in significant harm to the pupil. The Secretary of State's view is that in this case, significant harm is where a child is chastised inappropriately and/or excessively. In cases such as this, the incident should be reported to Targeted Services.
56. Ideally it is best to telephone parents as soon as possible after the incident before confirming details in writing. It is also good practice for parents to be given a copy of the school's policy on the use of force and information on post-incident support at the same time.
57. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures.
58. It is good practice for governors to monitor incidents where force has been used. Head teachers have an important role in reporting such incidents to the governing body.

59. Summary of procedures following reasonable force:
- 1 Inform a member of SMT
 - 2 Complete form *Record of Use of Reasonable Force*
 - 3 Inform parent via a letter and a telephone call where possible
 - 4 Record incident in Serious Incident book
 - 5 Follow up parent response

Post-incident support

60. Serious incidents involving use of force may result in injuries to the pupil or to staff. Immediate action should be taken to provide first aid for any injuries and to access medical help for any injuries that go beyond first aid. These incidents can be upsetting to all concerned, so it is also important to ensure that staff and pupils are given emotional support.
61. The letter to parents informing them about the use of force can also be used to engage them in discussing the incident and for setting out a suggested future course of action. It is good practice for parents to be involved in agreeing appropriate support arrangements. It is advisable to agree an individual behaviour plan with parents of pupils whose behaviour is associated with SEN and/or disabilities. Such plans would include strategies to prevent and deal with any recurrence of behaviour that could lead to the use of force. Behaviour plans are discussed on Team-Teach training. Annex D provides a model format.
62. Schools should also:
- a. ensure that relevant multi-agency partners are kept informed
 - b. hold the pupil to account where their poor behaviour has resulted in force being used, so that he or she recognises and repairs the harm caused or which might have been caused. The consequences of this behaviour may involve the use of sanctions which need to be considered in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. As well as disciplining the pupil, this may involve giving them the opportunity to repair the relationships with staff and pupils involved in the incident as well as developing their social and emotional skills
 - c. help the pupil and staff develop strategies to avoid repeating crisis points in future and inform relevant staff about these plans and their roles
 - d. ensure that staff and pupils affected by an incident have continuing support for as long as necessary in respect of:
 - (i) physical consequences
 - (ii) support to deal with any emotional stress or loss of confidence; and
 - (iii) opportunity to analyse, reflect and learn from the incident.

Dealing with complaints and allegations regarding the use of force

63. Schools need to make clear that parents and pupils have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff, including any use of force.

64. Reporting an incident fully to those with parental responsibility following the incident should minimise the chances of a complaint about use of force but it cannot prevent all complaints or allegations that force has been use inappropriately.
65. The degree to which the school's behaviour policy has been followed will be at the core of any investigation.

Individual members of staff and the law

66. If a member of staff uses reasonable force as defined in this guidance, they will have a robust defence against any false allegations of unreasonable or unlawful conduct which form the basis of a complaint or legal action.
67. However, if a staff member uses unreasonable force they would not be acting within the scope of their employment duties and they may subsequently face civil or criminal proceedings and/or disciplinary action as a result.
68. Teachers have a duty of care and, while a child is under their care, are regarded as being in place of the parent ("in loco parentis"). It follows that the potential has always existed for a teacher to face an action for assault or negligence where his or her use of force or failure to use force has led to a child being injured or harmed. The introduction of a specific statutory power to use force has not created this situation, but does provide school staff with a more robust defence against unfounded allegations.

Physical contact with pupils in other circumstances

69. There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary. For example, some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching. Young children and those with SEN may need staff to provide physical prompts or help. Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is being congratulated or praised, or where the pupil is in distress and needs comforting. School staff will use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support.
70. There may be some pupils for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some pupils may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of sensory issues, their cultural background or because they have been abused. It is important that staff who may come into contact with these pupils or groups of pupils should have the relevant information and that the school has a system for informing them. Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence, and staff should bear in mind that well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

Annex A: Ravenbank School policy framework

Situations involving decisions about whether to use force may occur in our school. Both using force and deciding not to can entail significant risks for pupils and staff. Establishing a clear school policy on the use of force by staff is an important part of minimising these risks.

Ravenbank school has developed a policy tailored to its particular circumstances. This has been done in consultation with governors, staff, parents and pupils.

Ravenbank School policy on the use of force by staff to control or restrain pupils

Objectives

- the key objective is maintaining the safety of pupils and staff
- preventing serious breaches of school discipline
- preventing serious damage to property

Minimising the need to use force

At Ravenbank School we will:

- create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising 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 if they do arise
- only using force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force
- devise risk assessments and positive handling plans for individual pupils.
- use the school's red triangle system to alert the nominated member of staff when a problem occurs.

Staff authorised to use force

At Ravenbank School:

- On permanent authorisation, all teachers and staff Mrs Sweeney has authorised to have control or charge of pupils automatically have the statutory power to use force.
- On temporary authorisation:
 - staff whose jobs do not normally involve supervising pupils and volunteers working with pupils will be in charge of pupils at the class teachers direction but do not have power to use force and should refer to the class teacher if an incident occurs.

Termly meetings will be held with parent volunteers to inform and reinforce our Positive Handling policy.

At Ravenbank School the following members of staff have been trained by Team-Teach in positive handling:

- Mrs.Catherine Bretherton (Jan 2011)
- Mrs.Charlotte Stanley (Jan 2011)
- Mrs Sue Fitzgibbon (Nov 2012)

- Mrs Lyn Marston (Nov 2012)

The training lasts for two years.

Deciding whether to use force

At Ravenbank staff should only use force when:

- the potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force
- the chances of achieving the desired result by other means are low
- the risks associated with not using force outweigh those of using force.

It should also be made clear:

- staff who have been trained in positive handling will disseminate the information to all school staff at a staff meeting.
- staff should minimise the highest risks by calling the police if a pupil suspected of having a weapon seems likely to resist a search.

Using force

At Ravenbank we will only use the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired result. This should include:

- advise giving a clear oral warning to the pupil that force may have to be used; and
- staff, as far as possible, should not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.

Staff training

- Mrs Sweeney will nominate staff members to be trained in the use of force to restrain a pupil.
- Staff will be trained by attending Team–Teach sessions.
- The rest of the staff will receive feedback and guidance at a staff meeting.
- Staff will be reminded annually and the procedure will be brought to the attention of new staff.

Recording incidents

A report should normally be completed as soon as practically possible after the incident by person/s involved in the incident or, if not practical, by a senior member of staff.

A copy should be kept in the school in the school's Serious Incident book.

Reporting incidents to parents

Initially parents will be informed by telephone of the incident. This will be followed up by a letter from the head teacher inviting parents into school to discuss the incident and how the situation will be monitored.

Post-incident support

Arrangements will be made to support staff and pupils involved in incidents, including meeting immediate physical needs and rebuilding relationships, and ensuring that lessons are learned from the incident.

Complaints and allegations

Complaints and allegations of misconduct arising from incidents will be referred to the local authority policy for managing allegations against staff if a member of staff has used unreasonable force or not applied the school policy correctly.

Monitoring and review

This policy has been adopted by the Safeguarding committee and will be reviewed annually.

Further information

Please refer to the DFE guidance and Warrington Local Authority positive handling policy 2012.

Annex B: Record of the use of reasonable force

This report should normally be completed as soon as practically possible after the incident by person/s involved in incident or, if not practical, by a senior member of staff.

A copy should be kept in the school in the school's Serious Incident book.

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

Name of Pupil: _____

Registration Group/Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____
circle

Child in Care Y/N Please

Ethnicity: _____

Date & Time of Incident: _____

Place: _____

Reporting Staff: _____

Staff Witnesses: _____

Child Witnesses: _____

RECORD OF INCIDENT

Reason why Reasonable Force was thought necessary:

Was the child concerned liable to injury? Yes/No Details:

Were other children liable to injury? Yes/No Details:

Were staff liable to injury? Yes/No Details:

Was property about to be damaged? Yes/No Details:

Was property actually damaged? Yes/No Details:

Was good order prejudiced? Yes/No Details:

Other Reason:

Concise details of how the incident began, nature of pupil behaviour, the use of techniques other than physical control to defuse the situation, and measures taken to avoid harm to the pupil.

Description of physical intervention/control/restraint used, including the degree of force used, how that was applied, and for how long:

Record of any injuries to pupils/staff:

Record of any damage to property:

Measures taken to ensure that the pupil was calmed after the incident:

Signature:

.....

Time: am/pm
Date:

Designation:
.....

Signatures of adult witnesses

.....
.....

NB If necessary please use additional pages which should be numbered

**ACTION TAKEN BY HEADTEACHER/DEPUTY
HEADTEACHER/SENIOR MANAGER**

Name: _____

Incident Book Completed: Yes/No

Signed by Headteacher: Yes/No

Details of how and when parents were informed:

Incident discussed with pupil Yes/No

Date: _____

Other Professionals informed: Yes/No

Details:

Personal injury form completed for Staff/Pupil: Yes/No

Support offered to member of staff: Yes/No

Details:

Support requested by member of staff: Yes/No

Details:

Action Log (any other actions taken/follow up from other professionals etc)

Is a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) necessary?
(This would only be the case if unreasonable force was used or the member of staff has not applied the school policy correctly)

Date: _____

Summary of Actions/Reports

Annex C: Model letter from school to parents

Date -----

Dear Parent/Carer

Today ----- behaviour became extremely challenging and as such posed a health and safety risk to themselves, other children and/or staff. Staff supported ----- by following their agreed Individual Behaviour Plan to reduce risk and help him/her to calm down and regain control of themselves.

As part of their Individual Behaviour Plan and Positive Handling Plan it was necessary to use Positive Handling Interventions to hold them safely.

----- has been checked by the school nurse and/or school staff with a First Aid qualification.

Should you wish to discuss the incident or how it was managed please contact school on ----- and the Headteacher, deputy Headteacher will be happy to talk to you about it.

Please sign and return the slip below to school as soon as possible. Thank you.

Please be assured that your son/daughter's health and safety is our highest priority and we will do all we can to safeguard their welfare whilst managing to the best of our ability such challenging behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher

✂.....

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AND POSITIVE HANDLING

I confirm that I have received a letter about my son/daughter being held during an incident.

Please tick the following boxes as appropriate:

- I wish to come into school to discuss this further
- I would like someone from school to ring me to discuss this further
- I am happy about the way in which my son's/daughter's behaviour is managed at school

Signed -----

Parent/Carer of-----

Date -----

Annex D: Example of an individual behaviour plan/positive handling plan

(Adapted from Team-Teach example)

Name:

Class:

SEN stage:

Date plan started:

Triggers

(Common situations that have led to problems in the past)

- Changes in routine
- Unfamiliar adults
- Any direct requests/directions
- Facing up to consequences of his behaviour
- He becomes obsessed with other children, problems arise when he is challenged about this
- Attachment – problems when separating from family
- Feeling that he has been treated unfairly
- When he is over stimulated and can't bring his behaviour down

Risks

(What is he likely to do?) (*Tick as appropriate*) Low Medium High

Slap	Punch	Bite	Pinch	Spit	Kick	Hair/body grab	Weapons/missiles	Destruction of property
------	-------	------	-------	------	------	----------------	------------------	-------------------------

Modifications to the environment/routines (what can we do to prevent problems from arising?)

- Full time provision in S1 Class
- Higher staff ratio 1 to 3
- Team Teach trained support staff
- Provision of additional midday supervision
- Access to visual strategies eg visual timetables etc
- Warning of change
- Opportunity to opt out of stressful situations eg PE/play times etc
- Access to quiet place outside class/hiding place where he can opt to go if stressed/angry
- Access to calm room, adapted so it is safe. Where he can cool down/throw soft play if he is angry
- Develop use of "Go box" to help him to calm himself or to be used as a distraction
- Individualised behaviour system with linked rewards and sanctions allowing for small step success
- The teaching of Social skills targeted through IEPs
- Links with home through link book/phone call to give consistent approach
- Sharing plan with all school staff to ensure consistent approach across school
- Complete Risk Assessment

Preferred de-escalation strategies (what tends to calm things down?)

- Give him time to calm down
- Provide a go box with tactile materials etc, that he can opt to use
- Ignore low level stuff
- Introduce new face not connected with incident
- Distract where possible with new activities
- Adult remaining calm, restrict language used, wait until he talks to you
- Make a deal from two choices

(Tick as appropriate)

Distraction	Negotiation	Planned ignoring
Reassurance	Minimal touch	Verbal advice/support
Withdrawal	Choices offered	Other – see above
Involve a new person	Reminders of success	
Humour	Withdrawal offered	

Plan to support behaviour management

Focus	Measures to be employed
<u>Pro-active Interventions to Support risks</u> – What we can do before incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Discuss with all adults working with (name of child/young person) – including MDA consistent approaches eg minimal touch, lack of confrontation etc ✓ Calm room identified and made safe with soft play equipment etc ✓ Change where he comes into/goes home from school to use S1 entrance ✓ Staff to use calm voice, speak slowly, quietly, use less language, reassure ✓ Communicate with (name of child/young person), you talk I'll listen, we'll sort it out, let's make a deal etc ✓ Distract him with another activity or topic ✓ Allow him to opt out of stressful situations eg PE, playtime supported by a member of staff
<u>Early interventions to manage risks</u> What we do during incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ State what you want him to do clearly and calmly ✓ Remove children from class situation if necessary ✓ Give option of go box/place to enable him to get out of the situation. ✓ Change of face/distraction ✓ Don't attempt to discuss incident while he is agitated. ✓ Remove furniture/objects ✓ Staff to use help card to call for assistance before situation escalates ✓ Staff to ensure voice and posture calm and assertive. ✓ Guide away from situation if possible
<u>Reactive interventions to respond to adverse reactions</u> What do we do if the situation gets worse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do not confront (name of child/young person), remove other children from dangerous situations ✓ Staff to call for assistance from S1/S2/S3 HEAD/DEPUTY, use help cards ✓ Remove (name of child/young person) from situation and take to calm room using the most appropriate Team Teach hold: Caring c hold to remove from situation (2 people, one

Focus	Measures to be employed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on each arm) Half shield to remove to another place (1 person) Sitting single elbow to restrain if necessary (2 person) ✓ Staff to wait outside calm room if necessary and monitor until he is calm ✓ Allow time to work/play alone if needed, communicate when he is ready ✓ Incident recorded on LA form and returned to office ✓ Mum to be informed via link book/logged phone call
<p><u>What we do after the situation</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allow time to discuss the incident with ??? when he is calm, discussion other people's feelings etc ✓ Build follow up work into circle time/social skills sessions as appropriate ✓ Develop his acceptance of sanctions (needs to be gradual and linked to event) ✓ Ensure appropriate records completed ✓ Review behaviour plan following each incident with staff involved ✓ Set up Pastoral Support Programme with targets monitored fortnightly ✓ Discussion with HT/DEPUTY HEAD regarding next steps ✓ Option of exclusion if situation cannot be resolved

People involved:

Date:

Parent's signature:

Date: