



**Hindhayes Infant School**

**Positive Handling Policy**

**September 2024**

At Hindhayes, we believe success is based on the partnerships between pupils, staff and the parent community. We endeavour to enrich and develop each child to be a successful individual that will become an active community citizen of the future.

Approved on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction**

In Hindhayes Infant School we believe that pupils need to be safe, know how to behave and know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. For a very small minority of pupils only will the use of physical intervention be needed, and, on such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used.

The majority of children behave well and conform to the expectations of our school. We have responsibility to operate an effective relationship policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class, and individual pupils.

All the school staff need to feel able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours might be communicating. They need to know what the options open to them are, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

**What is reasonable force?**

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means 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.
5. Restraint means 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.
6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

**Who can use reasonable force?**

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

**When can reasonable force be used?**

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them. 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 can and cannot be used.

**Schools can use reasonable force to:**

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

**Schools cannot:**

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

**Power to search pupils without consent**

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers 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.

### **Acceptable forms of intervention in Hindhayes Infant School.**

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil 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 going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
- 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; and
- To give first aid.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the pupil's age and level of understanding;
- the pupil's individual characteristics and history;
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present).

### **Developing a positive handling plan in Hindhayes Infant School**

If a pupil is identified, for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This Plan will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing. The plan will include:

- reasonable adjustments for disabled children or children with SEND or identified barriers.
- involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- a risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- a record needs to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- managing the pupil, strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention is to be used
- identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil
- ensuring a system to summon additional support
- identifying training needs

(\* A school may also need to take medical advice about the safest way to hold a child with specific medical needs).

### **Guidance and training for staff**

Schools need to take their own decisions about staff training. The headteacher should consider whether members of staff require any additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities and should consider the needs of the pupils when doing so.

- awareness for governors, staff and parents,
- behaviour management for all staff
- managing conflict in challenging situations – all staff