



Dream Believe Achieve

Positive Handling Policy

Signed by Chair of Governors

Kerry Scott

Date ratified by Governors

07/12/2022

Date to be reviewed by Governors

07/12/2023

Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

Belmont Park School has a duty of care and responsibility to their pupils and staff. This will involve all staff having to handle pupils to prevent them harming themselves others, damaging property and absconding and to comfort them when distressed.

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within Belmont Park School. The policy is intended to explain the school's arrangements for physical intervention. Its contents are available to parents and pupils.

The policy has been developed in response to the recommendations of Use of Reasonable Force July 2013 - Circular 10/98 "The use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils", issued following the enactment of Section 550A of the 1996 Education Act.

It also follows the DFES Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for staff working with Children and Adults who display Extreme Behaviours in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders 2002 and Liverpool's LEA policy on the use of Physical Interventions with Children and Young People.

The person responsible for the implementation of the policy to the Head teacher. The Headteacher and the Governing Body will review the policy annually.

Values and Underpinning Principles of the Policy

Belmont Park School believes that good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the safety and well being of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure all staff in this school:

- (i) Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- (ii) Are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

Individual members of staff cannot be required to use restrictive physical intervention without training. Following training they are required to do so to ensure the safety of pupils and others, including themselves. In exceptional and temporary circumstances some staff may have a valid medical reason not to undertake certain forms of physical intervention. The Headteacher/SLT must be informed of this in writing.

Such intervention must be in the paramount interests of the child and/or used to prevent behaviour that is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline in the school.

The application of any form of physical control places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances provided in the policy. Staff therefore have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Physical intervention (P.I) will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff, good or property are at risk. In some instances P.I will be a "First resort strategy" where there is an imminent health and safety risk.

Definitions

Physical contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils e.g. in games or P.E. Staff at Belmont Park School are allowed to, if deemed appropriate, to have physical contact with pupils as below:

Contingent touch

- Holding hand, hand on shoulder etc where a pupil is clearly distressed.
- Returning a therapeutic hug when initiated by a child.
- Sitting side by side in close proximity eg. on a sofa in the Reception Area.

Even in these circumstances a second adult should be present whenever possible or staff should position themselves in a public area.

Note: Some pupils do not like any form of touch and their wishes will be respected. Staff should refer to PSP for the individual concerned.

Physical Intervention (Guidance/Escort)

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

Restrictive Physical Intervention (Significant Incident)

This will involve the use of physical intervention reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or risk of significant damage to property. All such incidents will be recorded in the Physical Intervention log book and discussed with a senior member of staff.

Underpinning Principles

Everyone attending or working in Belmont Park School has a right to:

- The recognition of their unique identity.
- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Learn, work and play in a safe environment.
- Be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending Belmont Park School and their parents have a right to:

- Individual consideration of pupil needs by staff who have a responsibility for their care and protection.
- Expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies.
- Be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school.
- Be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

Belmont Park School will do all they can to ensure that pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in school.

Parents have committed themselves through the Home-School Agreement to ensure the good behaviour of their child and that (s)he understands and follows the school's Behaviour Policy.

Staff Authorised to Use Restrictive Physical Intervention

By reason of their conditions of service, the Headteacher can authorise all staff to use restrictive physical intervention.

Untrained staff should not "take the lead. But can assist a trained member of staff in a restrictive physical intervention (However, duty of care implies in emergency all staff irrespective of training have a duty to intervene for example, two pupils fighting).

The head teacher is responsible for making clear to who such authorisation has been given, in what circumstances and settings they may use appropriate force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. The Headteacher will ensure that those authorised are aware of and understand what the authorisation entails.

Those who the Head teacher has not authorised will be told what steps to take in case of an incident where physical intervention is needed, for example to contact an authorised member of staff.

Supply staff will not be authorised to use physical intervention unless they are familiar with this school's policy, have undertaken training and/or have been authorised to do so by the Headteacher.

All staff employed at Belmont Park School are authorised by head and governors to use restrictive physical intervention (However, duty of care implies, in an emergency all staff irrespective of training have a duty to intervene for example two pupils fighting).

Staff employed at Belmont Park School are authorised by the head and governors to use restrictive physical intervention, unless in exceptional circumstances where valid medical reasons have been given in writing.

Staff from Authority and Other Allied Services Working Within the School

Educational support services and Health service staff working in schools will have their own policies regarding physical intervention. Such staff will, whilst on the school premises, be expected to be aware of and operate within the policy of this school.

No outside professional involved in the school staff will be expected or authorised to use restrictive physical intervention unless they have completed the relevant training and their names appear within Section 5 of this policy.

The school will ensure that all visiting professionals have access to this and other relevant school policies. Visitors have a responsibility to read these and act accordingly.

Training

Training for all staff will be made available and will be the responsibility of the Headteacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use restrictive physical intervention without appropriate training. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will provided as part of on-going staff development.

All staff undertake two days Team Teach training when they join the staff. After that, all staff participate in one day refresher course every two years. This is monitored and arranged by the SENCO.

Preventative and pro-active strategies to deal with challenging behaviour

Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour.

Staff working with pupils experiencing a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties, severe learning difficulties and those pupils on the autistic spectrum, are aware that these difficulties may mean that in some instances pupils will not be in control of their behaviour.

The school's "named person" (the SENCO/Headteacher) under the 2001 Code of Practice (SEN) will ensure that all staff are aware of the needs of individuals who are at risk of exhibiting poor behaviour and strategies to avoid or deal with this.

For the most part, inappropriate behaviour is addressed through implementation of our Behaviour Management procedure which promotes pupil choice and holds the child accountable for their own actions. Most children respond quickly to this consistent and predictable approach. All children respond most of the time but there will be occasions when a child makes poor choices which might endanger themselves or others.

Those pupils who continue to struggles to manage their behaviour can be helped to develop self-control through the use of appropriate behaviour strategies and by staff consistently using positive approaches to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. All staff should be aware of these strategies and approaches to be used, as determined by risk assessments. Good communication between staff is essential particularly at breaks/lunchtimes where less structured situations can allow behavioural issues to surface.

Staff working as a team will create:

- A calm secure atmosphere throughout the school and use consistent approaches.
- Opportunities for pupils to earn praise/rewards. It is important to praise good behaviour as often as possible especially from a pupil who often misbehaves. It is especially important to notice and reward behaviour that matches the targets of any individual behaviour plans developed for pupils.

- Opportunities to identify problem behaviour or triggers in order to avoid creating further difficulties i.e. by anticipating behaviour before it occurs.
- Awareness of pupil behaviour so that attention seeking behaviour is seen but ignored where it is safe to do so.
- Opportunities for discussion with the pupil where discussion can take place in order to set targets designed to deal with the difficult or attention seeking behaviour.
- Opportunities for discussion for explanation of the actions/sanctions to the pupil.
- Potential for staff to be rotated to lessen strain on staff – some members of staff may be more able to deal with behaviours that others may find upsetting.
- Opportunities for regular contact with parents/carers to share plans and spread the strategies. Parents/carers must be involved in a behaviour programme, which has indicated that Physical Intervention may be needed and informed if the physical intervention of their child has taken place.
- Liaise with outside agencies for support and involvement in the programme to ensure that joined up approaches are in place.

Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property buildings or the environment. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and requires intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident.

- Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with a direction to the pupil to refrain.
- Further verbal reprimand stating:
 - That this is the second request for compliance
 - An explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable.
 - An explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies if possible summon assistance.
- Physical intervention, Reasonable force using the minimum degree of force necessary to prevent a child harming him or herself others or property.

Movement of a pupil will be necessary to avoid escalation of situation and when a pupil is engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere (this includes authorised out of school activities).

Escalating Situations

The 1996 Education Act (Section 550A) and Guidelines to 10/98 “The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils” stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during teaching session or elsewhere (this includes authorised out of school activities);
- Injuring others
- Causing damage to property, including that belonging to the pupil.

Committing a criminal offence (even if the pupil is below the age of criminal responsibility)

Types of Incidents Where Physical Intervention May be Required

The incidents described in Use of reasonable force July 2013 – Circular 10/98 and DfES 2002 fall into three broad strategies.

- (a) Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
- (b) Where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property.
- (c) Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline;

Examples of situation, which fall into one of the first two categories are:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil;
- Pupils are fighting;
- A pupil is engaged in or is on the very of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property.
- A pupil causing, or it is at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident by rough play, or by mis-use of dangerous material or objects:
- A pupil is running in a corridor or in a classroom in a way which he or she might cause an accident or injury to himself, herself or others:
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave (NB. This will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)

Examples of situations which fall into the third category, are:

- A pupil refuses to follow an instruction to leave the classroom.
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Therapeutic Physical Containment

In addition to the three categories described above, our work with children who experience emotional difficulties can necessitate a need for a child to be held for therapeutic reasons, to provide them with a sense of containment and emotional security. Children who require this help are children who seem somewhat out of control. It is as though their feelings, thoughts, and impulses spill over in ways that create anxiety and tension for themselves and in those round them. Often their behaviour is chaotic.

At Belmont Park School we consider containment to be a therapeutic tool, this means that we, as adults, need to create structure through which we temporarily relieve the child or her/his anxieties and prevent him/her from harming him/her or others.

A child who is upset, or even a child who is having a tantrum, may be calmed by physically holding them. Thus it may be reassuring to a crying child when the adult sits quietly with their arm around the child's shoulders. A frightened child may be comforted by being held firmly. An upset child may

be reassured that she/he is not falling apart by being held in a firm, non-punitive or no – nonsense way.

At Belmont Park School we recognise the emotional harm that can happen to a traumatised child whose needs to be physically held to feel contained is not met. If a child is identified that needs physical containment in order for them to regulate their emotions and behaviour then a Positive Handling Plan will be developed to ensure that the intervention used is in the best interest of the child.

Sanctions and Rewards as an Alternative to Physical Intervention

A system of positive rewards and incentives has been developed in Belmont Park School to encourage appropriate behaviour: Examples of these are:

- Praise and Encouragement.
- Points to acknowledge good behavioural/attitude and effort
- Choice of activities
- Appropriate edible rewards
- Certificates
- Privileges

Further sanctions may be necessary. The following may be utilised:

- Loss of lunchtime activities
- Any expectation that the child will make amends by attending after school detention.
- Expectance that the pupil will (clear up a mess, repair damage where possible and take responsibility for their actions).
- Catch up work during break times.
- Exclusion from off-site activities if a senior teacher considers a child's behaviour to be too risky to travel safely.
- Time spent in the seclusion room.

Acceptable Measures of Physical Intervention

The use of any degree of force can be deemed reasonable if:

- It is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident.
- It is in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is intended to prevent.
- It is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result;
- It is likely to achieve the desired result;

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervening.

Physical Intervention will stop if the child:

- Has difficulty in breathing
- Vomits
- Has a fit or seizure
- Experiences swelling or change of hue of skin
- Is calm

Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall nurturing ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

Wherever physical intervention is used a named member of staff will talk to the pupil in a reassuring and positive manner unless risk assessment has indicated that this is likely to inflame the situation.

Staff will assess if the pupil's behaviour can be better addressed in an area away from the classroom e.g. on the 'Blue Chairs' or outside on the playground.

Pupils will be asked to go voluntarily to an identified area. If a pupil refuses to comply with this request the pupil will be escorted using one of the recognised techniques. If it is deemed necessary, because of the pupils' behaviour, articles which the pupil is/may use to harm himself, other or property may be removed from either the pupil's person or the vicinity eg. chairs which may be used as a weapon, spectacles, watches, jewellery etc which may cause injury to the pupil when being restrained, shoes, pens etc if pupil is damaging property or attempting to harm himself or others.

Children will not be routinely taken to the floor, however there may be circumstances where a controlled descent to the floor is required for Health and Safety purposes. In the event of such every attempt will be made to return the pupil in a seated chair or standing position as soon as physically possible.

Unplanned Physical Intervention will trigger a risk assessment that may lead to a Positive Handling Plan being developed.

Planned Physical Intervention and Risk Assessment

- Planned physical intervention will arise from risk assessments that the school will carry out on all pupils.
- Such assessments will be written. Risk Assessments should be signed by school, parents/guardians and (where appropriate) pupil.
- Implemented only by named staff.

Unacceptable Measures of Physical Intervention

Belmont Park School is aware of acceptable and unacceptable measures of physical intervention as outlined to DoH/DfES "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" (July 2002).

- Physical punishment
- Making a pupil wear distinctive clothing
- Restriction to breathing circulation
- Pressure of joints

Recording

Staff at Belmont Park School record all incidents daily in the Physical Intervention Log – bound and numbered book located in the Heads office. The senior teachers discuss these records and end of the month which is analysed for any patterns of problem areas/triggers e.g certain lessons peers, staff, etc.

Information required for an incident:

The name of the pupil(s)

The date, time, and place of incident

A brief description of the incident and any actions taken

- Antecedent –Trigger and how the incident developed
- De-escalation techniques used – Attempts made to calm the situation.
- De-brief –Strategies implemented to resolve incident
- Sanctions for inappropriate behaviour
- Detail of escort (if implemented).
- Medical details

Where physical intervention has been used to manage a pupil, a witness where possible will record the incident in progress. This record will be made in the Physical Intervention Log – a bound and numbered book located in the Headteacher’s office. Once a log has been made it should be given to the Head (or Deputy in the Head’s absence) to be monitored and signed as an accurate record.

Belmont Park will review records regularly to ensure that:

- Records are being appropriately kept
- The patterns of behaviour in individual pupils or at particular times of the day/certain lessons are being identified and problems addressed.
- That training issues arising from the above are being identified and addressed.

All reports of any physical intervention must be recorded on the day of the incident. There is an expectation for the report to be fully completed within 48 hours.

Action after an Incident

The Head teacher or Deputy Head will ensure that each serious incident is reviewed and investigated further as required.

In the case of unplanned intervention a meeting will be held to draw up a Physical Intervention Plan/Positive Handling Plan.

If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure as follows.

- School Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations to other agencies such as Social Services)
- Staff or Disciplinary Procedure

The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.

In the case of action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

Where staff have been involved in an incident involving physical intervention they should have access to debrief/supervision and a comfort break. Within the school, this will be made available through the Head teacher/SLT or Educational Psychologist.

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Any complaints received by the Head teacher from parents, staff or any other persons regarding alleged ill treatment of pupils or injuries received by a pupil during the course of physical intervention must be investigated fully by the Headteacher using the complaints procedure laid down by Waltham Forest LA.

The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints.

Monitoring of Incidents

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use physical intervention, this will always be recorded and documented.

Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher and Governors to the needs of any pupil whose behaviour dictates repeated use of Physical Intervention.

It is advised that the people noted above carry out monitoring.

This process will also address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging that require further training..

Support

Belmont Park School is committed to providing regular professional development on behaviour strategies/management for all staff in order to maintain the ethos of the school, its values and the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

Staff who have been involved in difficult incidents will be offered the full support of the Head teacher and SLT talking through the incident. In this follow up work senior managers and staff will look for “lessons to be learnt” and alter procedures or develop training as the result of these insights.

Staff at Belmont Park School also have weekly access to Supervision from the Educational Psychologist (E.P) to support their emotional well being.

Children who have been subject to physical intervention will be given the opportunity to discuss the incident with a member of staff at the first reasonable opportunity following the incident. Such discussions will offer pupils and school fresh opportunities to work together and to renew relationships that may be strained by the incident. Pupils will be informed of ways in which their behaviour could change in order to prevent a repetition of the incident.

It is particularly important that this is done properly to increase the chances of pupils learning from the experience.

An appropriate member of staff will counsel pupils who have witnessed an incident of Physical Intervention and who are distressed.

Parents Consultation

Parents should be informed of the policy and its practical implications for pupils. They should be asked for their comments and the full policy made available to them on request and on the school website. Parents who request that individual pupils be exempt from physical intervention should be informed that it is the policy of the school and that there are no expectations on health and safety grounds.