



OAKLANDS
SCHOOL

Use of Positive Handling Policy

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Reviewed by	Phil Chivers, Headteacher
Approved by	Dr Julie Smith, Chair of Governors

USE OF POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

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Context

Oaklands School is a co-educational, independent SEN day school in Hungerford, West Berkshire, established for pupils aged 5 – 16 years with special and individual needs. We offer places to children with an EHCP in place, via Reading, West Berkshire and Wiltshire Local Authorities.

Our special school offers a warm and friendly environment for learning, with specialist support for pupils with unique learning profiles and aspires to deliver an outstanding integrated model of education, therapy, and therapeutic care to pupils. Pupils at Oaklands School include pupils with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC); Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties (SLCN); Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); Sensory Processing Needs; Global Development Delay (GDD). Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH) may compound difficulties in some instances but will not be the primary area of need.

Typically, pupils at Oaklands School have a rate of acquisition and/or degree of retention of knowledge and educational skills across all National Curriculum Core Subjects significantly below age related expectations (ARE). Many pupils might have been out of education for periods of time and might have experienced trauma in their lives.

Reasonable force is used in line with our Team Teach practise. The principles of reasonable, proportionate and necessary are at the core of our everyday practices.

At Oaklands School, we are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of bullying or harassment so that all pupils can develop their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat each other and members of staff with courtesy and cooperation so that they can learn in a relaxed and orderly atmosphere and to follow The Oaklands Way.

Oaklands School fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This policy is a whole school policy and applies to all pupils from Year1 to Year 11. Care and consideration will be given to the age of the child when following the guidance in this policy.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the school including governors.

This policy has been written using advice taken from Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies DfE 2013. The school acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND). Equality Act 2010, SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years 2015.

Consultation on use of Reasonable Force and Restraint in Schools

The DfE has been asking for schools' views on how reasonable force and restraint are currently used in schools. Responses will be used to inform future amendments to the current guidance.

<https://schoolclerk.co.uk/2023/02/17/new-consultation-on-use-of-reasonable-force-and-restraint-inschools-friday-17-february-2023/>

For the Purposes of this Policy Document

- Reasonable force is defined as using no more force than is needed in the circumstances (reasonable, proportionate and necessary).
- Physical restraint is defined as the positive application of force to protect/prevent a pupil from

causing injury to themselves or others or seriously damaging property. It is necessary in more extreme cases, for example to stop a physical fight.

- Injury means ‘significant injury;’ this would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others, by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self - poisoning.

Who can use Reasonable Force?

- Under the direction of the Team Teach and Behaviour Leads, all members of Oaklands school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- The decision about whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.
- All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention using Team Teach. The qualification lasts 12 months and staff are trained on a rolling programme.
- New staff, who have not yet received training in physical intervention should only support trained staff by observing, using scripted language and, in some cases, timing holds for reporting purposes, unless there is imminent danger, and no other staff are available to support.

When can Reasonable Force be used?

Reasonable force can be used:

- to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property e.g smashing a window or the intent to do this.
- to remove a dysregulated child from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so, if it not possible to move the whole class to a safe space first.
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit, where the pupil or other people are in danger.
- to prevent a pupil leaving the classroom, where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or others safety
- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground.
- to support a pupil at risk of harming themselves.

Reasonable force should be a last resort, Team Teach uses 95% scripted language and risk reduction, and any holds should be for a minimal time necessary.

When can Reasonable Force not be used?

- Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency provided they follow the guidelines in this policy.
- Staff should reflect that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider

audience of professional colleagues.

- In any application of positive handling, the minimum reasonable force should be used, for the minimum time required to regulate a situation.
- Whenever possible, help should be summoned from colleagues via a radio.
- Pupils should never be involved in carrying out restraint.
- Reasonable Force cannot be used as a form of punishment.
- Professional judgement should be used in circumstances where the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed.

What to do When Reasonable Force is Needed

- Approach the pupil in a calm stance.
- Use scripted language throughout any behavioural incident.
- A calm and measured approach is required by staff throughout.

Method of Positive Handling

The method of positive handling employed must use methods taught in Team Teach training, using the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following. Oaklands staff are expected to complete levels 1 and 2, in this respect.

- Restraint must not:
- involve hurting the pupil.
- involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil.
- restrict the pupil's breathing.
- involve contact with sexually sensitive areas.
- involve locking the pupil in a room.
- Any ground holds.

NB: It is illegal to lock a pupil in a room, whether by themselves or with staff.

During any incident, the person restraining should:

- offer verbal reassurance to the pupil.
- cause the minimum level of restriction of movement.
- reduce the danger of any accidental injury.
- end the restraint if there are any signs of physical distress in the pupil such as sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting.

Positive Handling can be:

- Partial: restricting and preventing a particular movement (kicking, punching etc.).
- Total: as in the case of immobilisation of a harmful action.

Positive Handling can take several forms and may involve staff:

- physically interposing between pupils.
- blocking a pupil's path.
- using learnt 1 person and 2 person holds.
- guiding a pupil by the hand or arm, away from harm.

Actions

- Summon help immediately, by radio, in the first instance. A pupil can be sent to get another adult.
- Ensure a free passage of air through airways.
- Be aware of your own feelings and try to stay calm.
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way.
- Provide a soft surface if possible.
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil that could cause injury.
- Monitor the pupil's respiration, circulation, and state of consciousness.

But do not:

- Try to manage on your own.
- Straddle the pupil.
- Push their arms up their back.
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head.
- Put pressure on joints or on arterial pressure points (inside of upper arm, groin, neck).
- Use of facedown holds.

Recording Incidents

- Minor or everyday use of reasonable force does not need to be recorded. For example, very young children running off in the playground and being guided back to their activity by the teacher or assistant.
- All more serious incidents involving the use of positive handling (Team Teach) must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), recorded on MyConcern and shared with the Team Teach team.

Informing Parents and Carers

Where a member of staff has had to positively handle a pupil (the use of Team Teach), the parent will be informed on the day and the event is documented on MyConcern and circulated to the Team Teach team, who will review the incident. A debrief may take place if appropriate.

What Happens if a Pupil Complains When Force is used on Them?

- All complaints about the use of force should be recorded and thoroughly, speedily, and appropriately investigated by the DSL or Deputy DSLs under the direction of the headteacher.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force to

prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action. Therefore, the recording of positive handling incidents is crucial.

- When a complaint is made 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.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored:

- through the analysis of records, including the Senior Leadership Team's bi-weekly report to the LAB.
- reading of records of events by the Team Teach team.
- discussion with staff and where appropriate.
- discussion with pupils.

All incidents of positive handling will be reported to the School Board on a bi-weekly basis and discussed in the LAB meetings, which are 6 times per school year, with formal monitoring visits from the Chair and the CQS Committee Chair.

The policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and the Team Teach team and verified by the Governing Board.