



# Positive Handling Policy

November 2019

Review date: November 2020

## **Positive Handling Policy**

### **AIMS OF THIS POLICY**

At Lowerplace Primary School our aim is to provide clear guidance to school staff, parents, governors, children and all other stakeholders on the use of physical contact. We want them to be able to meet the needs of the children with confidence, whilst safeguarding themselves and those in their care. Physical contact is necessary and justifiable when it meets the needs of the pupil.

Physical contact can take many forms:

- A handshake is acceptable in many cultures
- Some people may touch an elbow to guide a pupil
- A pat on the back as a greeting or to comfort
- The teaching of physical skills e.g. swimming, gymnastics
- Various forms of therapy
- Administration of first aid
- Team Teach techniques for de-escalation and positive handling of children

It has to be stressed that, at all times, staff need to maintain a professional distance and take greater care with physical interventions with children, which can be open to misinterpretation. All staff have taken part in Basic Introduction to Safeguarding Children and work within the Local Authority Guidance for Safer Working Practice (updated May 2017).

The Children's Act 2004 supplemented the 1989 Act and reinforced the message that all organisations working with children have a duty in helping safeguard and promote the welfare of children. *The Children Act 2004* places a duty on key partners to cooperate in the safeguarding of children. Risk Assessments and Positive Handling Plans will be shared with all key partners, who will cooperate to provide consistent approaches to meet the needs of individual children. *Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006* describes the circumstances in which teachers and others, authorised by the Headteacher, may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. *Section 95* defines the staff to which this power applies.

### **MINIMISING THE NEED**

We aim to reduce the requirement for use of force by creating a calm, orderly and supportive environment. Staff are encouraged to always offer and accept help. A new face is often an opportunity to divert an incident away from a crisis, thus reducing the need for any physical intervention to be used.

Staff work within the guidelines in the **Behaviour Policy** to develop effective working relationships with the children to promote positive relationships, which ensures better outcomes. Through the positive relationships staff are able to recognise the early changes in the pupil's behaviour:

- Distress
- Agitation
- Anxiety
- Increasing anger/aggression

Because of our positive relationships with pupils, staff are able to recognise the difference between their normal behaviour and a possible developing crisis. Early intervention is essential;

staff should use positive behaviour management strategies as a proactive response to de-escalate, diffuse and divert in order to prevent crisis behaviours.

Staff recognise that all children have individual needs; some have Education, Health and Care Plans (ECHPs). Staff have a working knowledge of individual plans and support the children by following them, particularly in the case of those with a Positive Handling Plan.

Trained staff only use restrictive physical intervention where risks involved using a restrictive physical intervention are outweighed by the risk in not using a restrictive physical intervention.

## **STAFF TRAINING AND GUIDANCE**

Training needs are assessed in relation to foreseeable risk. Staff whose work places them at enhanced risk of allegations, or those likely to be exposed to risk of harm from the behaviour of children, are provided with training according to the identified needs. This school provides a set number of staff with Team Teach training, which is recommended by the Local Authority and accredited by British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD). The training includes theory on at least:

- De-escalation
- Causes of challenging behaviour
- Preventative strategies
- Positive behaviour management
- Risk Assessment
- Behaviour support planning
- De-brief following incidents

Lowerplace Primary School acknowledges that physical techniques are only part of a whole school setting approach to behaviour management. A list of the trained staff is held in the office and training is reviewed every two years. Only these staff are allowed to physically restrain pupils in accordance with Team Teach techniques.

## **TAKING CARE WITH TOUCH**

*The Children Act 1989*, and subsequent amendments, makes clear that the paramount consideration in any decision should be the best interests of the child concerned. Paramount in this context means that it should be the first thing we think about and take precedence over other considerations. Physical contact should always be about meeting the needs of the child. Actions that are ambiguous are open to misinterpretation. Staff should always think before making physical contact. In making decisions about the use of physical contact, staff should consider how their actions could be misconstrued. They should be clear about why their actions are in the best interest of the child concerned. They should remember that some children welcome physical contact; others do not. Knowledge of individual pupils is crucial, particularly in the case of those with Positive Handling Plans.

## **RECORDING INCIDENTS**

- Parents are to be informed the same day.
- The member of staff who initiated the restrictive physical intervention should log the incident on CPOMs within 24 hours of the incident. Staff may wish to jot down their thoughts in the immediate aftermath of the incident in the Team Teach Recording Book, which is held in the school office.

- A record of communication to parents/carers to inform of incident – this will usually be a phone call, should be included on CPOMs.

### **FURTHER ACTIONS**

Consideration needs to be taken as to whether the child would require a Positive Handling Plan based on the incident details. The family may be offered support through an Early Help Assessment (EHA) with the Inclusion Team.

### **COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS**

Complaints and allegations will be investigated in accordance with school Complaints Policy.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The use of physical intervention in our school will be monitored in order to help our staff learn from experience, promote well being of pupils in our care and provide a basis for appropriate support and school organisation. Monitoring will help us to determine what specialist help is needed for pupils. Information on trends and emerging problems will be shared within our school. Monitoring information will be reported on a regular basis to school governors by the Headteacher.

### **Review**

Headteacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy to be reviewed: November 2020