

Statement from Hope Learning Community

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'.

All members of staff have the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property and to maintain good order and discipline at the school or among pupils.

When considering using reasonable force staff should, in considering the risks, carefully recognise any specific vulnerabilities of the pupil, including SEND, mental health needs or medical conditions.

[Behaviour in schools guidance DfE 2022](#)

Use of reasonable force DfE 2013

Trustees are aware that the needs of the pupils in our schools evolve continually. To enable every school to meet these needs trustees support the use of physical intervention training within the trust.

Each School will

- operate within the framework established by DfE guidance (see above)
- have a clearly defined core of staff that carry out continuous observation and monitoring to enable situational analysis and bespoke training where necessary.

Monitoring arrangements

- overseen by the Head of each school
- monitored half termly by the CEO.



Learning
Respect
Compassion
Responsibility

Southview School, College & The View
Here after referred to as "Southview School"

Physical Intervention and the Safe and Positive Handling of Pupils Policy

Positive handling forms part of the classroom management procedures and is always used as a last resort. There is a clear distinction between 'guiding'/'supported movement' and 'restraint', and staff are trained and skilled in a range of de-escalation techniques. In a special school where the vast majority of the cohort are wheelchair users, and all children have some physical difficulties, staff must consider carefully the implications of a physical intervention as this may cause physical harm to an individual child; where this is potentially the case, a risk assessment will form part of the Behaviour Management Policy.

The school is clear that, unless there are extreme and exceptional circumstances, we will not use 'physical restraint' to hold a child against their will in a physical hold. As a matter of course, the school will employ 'positive handling' techniques to either move or guide children. The overriding priority is to keep children safe and free from harm. The school will therefore use positive handling techniques to guide and assist children on the rare occasions it is necessary.

The school recognises that an 'off the shelf' approach to positive handling is not the best approach. To this end, the school has commissioned the services, via the Hope Trust, of a fully accredited trainer;

Accredited SAFE Instructor / Highfield Qualification – Elite Level 3 / Accredited Programme in PMVA trainer for Health and Social Care / Level 4 Certificate in Education & Training, who has worked with all teachers and learning leads on appropriate physical interventions and positive handling techniques. This is annual training which will be refreshed each year. There will also be refresher training throughout the year as well as specific advice where this is appropriate.

OVERVIEW

Southview School is a specialist Physical and Neurological Impairment (PNI) school supporting pupils and students aged 3 – 19 who have profound physical and learning difficulties. Excellence and independence will develop through the core values of respect, responsibility learning and compassion. Southview is a school which values diversity, respects cultural, religious and gender difference, celebrates British values and inclusivity for all social groups and abilities.

We intend to do this by:

Maintaining and developing high quality education and care on site for those pupils requiring specialist support on a daily basis.

Providing enjoyable and stimulating teaching and learning where pupils can achieve to the best of their abilities.

Equipping all staff – teachers, teaching assistants and others through a programme of continuing staff development.

Involving pupils at all times in the development and monitoring of their personal management plans, education plans, and behaviour plans as appropriate.

Working together with parents and carers and involving the wider community in the work of the school as opportunities arise.

Using the expertise of all the staff within the school, in consultation with the local authority's specialist teams, in supporting pupils with PNI in mainstream settings across the County.

Utilising and developing the existing skills of the staff to support communication aids to support the assessment, access and confidence of pupils throughout the school who have significant speech and communication difficulties.

By setting up close links with the neighbourhood special and mainstream schools to maximise opportunities for all pupils in the community.

The school recognises that using equipment (such as wheelchairs) to manage challenging behaviour potentially constitutes restraint, and will seek to minimise these incidents, and report on these incidents appropriately.

The key objectives for the policy are:

- to maintain the safety of pupils and staff;
- to prevent serious breaches of school discipline and;
- to prevent serious damage to property.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing any offence;
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself); or
- 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.

This power extends to pupils from other schools on our school premises and to pupils in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff elsewhere – for example on a school visit.

MINIMISING THE NEED TO USE FORCE

Staff should try to communicate calmly with a pupil, using non-threatening verbal and body language and ensuring that the pupil can see a way out of the situation. Staff have been trained in de-escalation techniques. Taking the pupil away from other pupils, in some cases, reduces the need to 'act up to the audience'. In our situation, it is sometimes advisable to

move the group away from the unfolding incident to ensure their safety and that of the pupil in distress. Wherever practicable, warn the pupil that a physical intervention may have to be used before you use it, for example; 'I need to stop you banging your head I am going to move you from the wall'.

Where instances of inappropriate behaviour are seen, pupils will have an individual behaviour management plan, which will outline consistent approaches and support.

STAFF AUTHORISED TO USE POSITIVE HANDLING

The staff to which this applies are defined in section 95 of the Act. They are:

- Any teacher who works at the school, and
- Any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This includes support staff such as teaching assistants, learning support assistants, learning mentors and lunchtime supervisors.

This can also include people to whom the Head Teacher has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as paid members of staff whose job does not involve supervising pupils and unpaid volunteers.

Teachers and staff with permanent authorisation will be communicated to by the Head Teacher as to who has temporary authorisation.

DECIDING WHETHER TO USE POSITIVE HANDLING

Often there is little time to consider, but if you have time to think, the main factors are:

- How serious is the incident – what is the likely effect of injury, damage or disorder if you use positive handling or don't?
- What are the chances of achieving the desired results by other means? With many pupils, and in the vast majority of cases, distraction may be a better initial strategy.
- What are the relative risks to the pupil, to you and to others associated with positive handling.

'REASONABLE FORCE'

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable force; that will always depend on the precise circumstances of individual cases. To be judged lawful, the force used would need to be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

TYPES OF POSITIVE HANDLING AND APPROPRIATE TRAINING

This is not an exhaustive list, however, types of positive handling may include:

- Passive physical contact resulting from standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path;
- Active physical contact such as:–
 - Leading a pupil by the hand or arm.

- Guiding a pupil, perhaps with an arm around the shoulder or upper arm.
- Assisting a pupil back into their wheelchair, or other piece of equipment.
- Moving a pupil in their wheelchair to a place of safety.
- In more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive holds which will require specific positive training which staff have undertaken.

Where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury, any member of staff would be justified in taking any necessary action – for example, preventing a pupil from hitting someone with a dangerous object, or putting themselves in a dangerous position, for example near a road. Staff should make every effort to avoid acting in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, although in the most extreme circumstances this may not be possible.

RECORDING & REPORTING INCIDENTS

All incidents of positive handling must be recorded. The school has a 'Bound and Numbered' book to record such incidents. Although the book refers to 'significant incident / restraint' reporting, the school use this book to record incidents of positive handling. If an incident is considered to be restraint it will be clearly highlighted in pink to make a clear distinction between 'restraint' and positive handling. An entry will also be made in CPOMS.

COMPLAINTS & ALLEGATIONS

Parents and pupils have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff. This might include the use of positive handling. If a specific allegation is made against a member of staff then the school will follow the appropriate protocols, or under the school's complaints procedure.

Reviewed November 2025
Next Review: November 2026