Five Spires Academy

Positive Handling Policy

September 2025

Date- September 2025

Review- September 2026

Review Framework:
The policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance)

Five Spires Academy

Positive Handling Policy

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1. Introduction

Legal Framework Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 and DFEE Circular 10/98 allow teachers, and other members of staff at a school who are authorised (see Appendix 2) by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in circumstances where the pupil may need to be prevented from engaging in behaviours which are likely to cause injury to themselves, others or damage to property. The guidance extends this to maintaining good order and discipline, for both on-site and off- site activities.

Positive handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful or in an emergency situation. There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (e.g. physical assault) being committed. Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement.

All teachers have a professional 'duty of care' within their job description which is underwritten by paragraph 58.7 of School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2002. Together with the legislative framework this enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances listed as points 1, 2 and 3 in the Procedures section.

Staff at Five Spires Academy are trained to look after pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the academy's Positive Handling Policy.

Only staff trained in the pre-emotive and responsive positive handling strategy techniques of physical restraint (positive handling) will use physical intervention techniques with children when necessary.

The term positive handling includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

The academy takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors to the academy.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables an academy's staff to use such force as is reasonable. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force.

2. Positive Handling Training

The Positive Handling Training is recognised by the Local Authority and fully accredited in the UK. Staff undergo a one day course led by qualified trainers with a single day refresher course undertaken every two years.
Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible.

3. Before using physical controls

We take effective action to reduce risk by:

- Showing care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning.
- Giving clear directions for pupils to stop
- Reminding them about rules and likely outcomes
- Removing an audience or taking vulnerable pupils to a safe place
- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons
- Using positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured
- Ensuring that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

4. Restraint

At this academy we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. We expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces rather than increases risk. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming itself or another person.
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing this.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint. These staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Physical restraint should not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property.
- The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity.

In addition, whilst or before intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance
e.g. “I am doing this to keep you safe.”

5. Responding to unforeseen emergencies

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and the academy recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet.

An unforeseen event may require an emergency response. After that event, staff have a duty to plan ahead and prepare a risk assessment.

6. Risk Assessment

Risk assessments are required for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong.

When considering a pupil's behaviour, staff will think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

7. Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective should be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered along with the child's Statement of SEN and any other planning document relevant to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.

8. Post Incident Debrief

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of the academy to offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other peoples' perspective.

It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the need of all staff. As individuals we all vary in how much support we need after an unpleasant incident. Generally, a member of senior staff would expect to talk to staff and children involved (if appropriate) in any incidents involving violence. If members of staff need time to rest or compose themselves, then the head teacher or deputy will make arrangements for the class/group to be supported.

9. Recording

- All incidents of unacceptable behaviour should be recorded.
- All serious incidents or incidents involving restraint will be recorded on the appropriate form ***(see Appendix 2)***

Within these recording strategies, all details must be recorded by witnesses within twenty four hours and signed by at least two members of staff. The Head Teacher needs to be informed as soon as possible.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required.

11. Parents

When there is concern about a child, parents will be invited to contribute to a risk assessment and Positive Handling plan. Written parental agreement will form part of this. Parents will be informed of the academy's policies. Parents will be informed following serious incidents.

12. Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints will follow the academy's complaints procedure.

Academy behaviour, child protection, bullying policies etc. will all be incorporated into the care package which is used to address each child's needs.

APPENDIX 1

POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN

Name of child …… **DOB**…… **Year group** ……

Date plan started ……. **Date plan discontinued** ……

Effective strategies previously used:

Strategies not recommended:

Physical techniques used effectively:

Physical techniques used which proved ineffective or problematic

Date	Anticipated risk	Strategy to use	Effectiveness

APPENDIX 2

FIVE SPIRES ACADEMY PRIMARY ACADEMY

RESTRAINT OF PUPILS – INCIDENT REPORT

DATE OF INCIDENT :	TIME OF INCIDENT :
NAME (s) OF STAFF INVOLVED :	
NAME (s) OF PUPIL(s) INVOLVED :	
NAME (s) OF OTHER STAFF/PUPILS WHO WITNESSED INCIDENT :	
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT : *(Please be objective and factual, outlining how the incident began and progressed, details of pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, steps taken to defuse/calm the situation, degree of force used, how applied, and for how long.) Please continue on a separate sheet, if necessary.*	
REASON THAT RESTRAINT WAS NECESSARY : To prevent	
PUPIL'S RESPONSE & OUTCOME OF INCIDENT :	

DETAILS OF ANY INJURY SUFFERED BY THE PUPIL, ANOTHER PUPIL, OR MEMBER OF STAFF, OR ANY DAMAGE TO PROPERTY :

SIGNED …….. DATE ……..