



Meadows First School



Positive Physical Intervention Policy

Date: March 2025

Date of review: March 2028

Head Teacher: L Satchwell

Chair of Governors: J Barrow

Policy Statement

This policy is based on Use of reasonable force (DFE 2013).

At Meadows First School & Nursery we work to ensure each individual pupil is able to reach his or her potential. Every child is entitled to learn and every teacher is free to teach in an environment that is safe, secure and free from distraction. The guiding principles to achieve this should be established in the settings policy on positive behaviour management. Staff of Meadows First School & Nursery are committed to providing the highest standards in protecting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people entrusted to its care. We recognise there is a need in line with the Use of reasonable force (DFE 2013) guidance to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to pupils, staff and property. For the most part this is achieved through the fostering of good relationships, and the normal application of positive behaviour management to support and intervene. However, in exceptional or extreme circumstances this may involve the use of reasonable force. It should be emphasised that if used at all, restraint (referred to in this document as Positive Physical Interventions (PPI)) should be seen in the context of a further positive action of care and concern. In line with Use of reasonable force (DFE 2013) guidance, it is used as a 'last resort' option and in the most extreme cases, other strategies will always have been attempted first. As best practice regarding PPI this policy should be considered alongside other relevant school policies, especially those involving behaviour, health and safety and child protection.

We are a Rights Respecting school. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children's rights. All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children.

What is 'Reasonable Force'?

Taken directly from: **'Use of reasonable force, DfE guidance'(see appendix)'**

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

Who can use reasonable force?

As stated in the 'Use of reasonable force, DfE guidance'(see appendix), all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

When can you use reasonable force?

In line with the 'Use of reasonable force, DfE guidance'(see appendix), teachers and other persons authorised by the Headteacher to have charge of pupils, may use reasonable force to prevent pupils:

- Damaging property.
- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have persistently refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- Reasonable force must not be used as a punishment.

Objectives of this Policy

To ensure that all members of staff or authorised persons who may have to positively handle pupils clearly understand the options and strategies open to them.

Identified staff in school, through regular Team-Teach training, possess the skills to adopt effective strategies to defuse potential instances of conflict or aggression. Addressing situations in their infancy can be invaluable in managing potentially extreme behaviours. Therefore, school will implement a number of de-escalation strategies first to avoid the need for reasonable force. These measures may include:

- Communication/verbal advice and support Staff need to be aware of their tone of voice, body posture and eye contact. This is important as communication needs to be non-threatening, calm and assured. Staff should attend to a student when they are showing signs of agitation/distress/anger and support/advise them according to the situation and child.
- Relationship – in this school we focus on building strong relationships with our staff so children have an attuned adult to support. Therefore, if they begin to become dysregulated, we would ensure an appropriate adult supports that child, whom they have a relationship with.
- Distraction/redirection – is the action of diverting the students to something in which they are interested in.
- Reassurance – is about supporting, comforting and encouraging a student.
- Planned ignoring – at times, behaviour can be ignored to good effect. The skill is knowing when to ignore and when to intervene.
- Space – this is to allow a student 'space' on their own; to move to a different environment with time to regulate.
- Withdrawal – removing the student from the situation, to a safe space where they can be supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities.
- Try to remove the pupil from the peer audience.

- Humour - staff should make sure humour is used in the right context for the particular student.
- Calm talking stance – staff should endeavour to maintain a calm, confident and objective approach.
- Make it clear that PPI will stop as soon as the pupil calms and the risk assessment indicates it is no longer necessary.
- Negotiation/being objective – the ability to listen and talk to students and come to an agreement by setting limits and offering options.
- Change of face – Use of an alternative adult to help de-escalate the situation.
- Success reminder – remind the student of a previous occasion when they successfully managed a situation of a similar nature.
- A consistent daily routine with use of visuals if appropriate.
- Consider removal of the other pupils who may be at risk.
- Wherever possible early support from colleagues will be sought. Single handed intervention increases the risk of injury to both parties and does not provide the person intervening with the support of a colleague acting as a critical friend.

Application of Force during Specific Incidents

Methods that staff **may use** in appropriate circumstances where a risk assessment judgement supports this:

- Guiding a pupil away by a light touch on the elbow or near the shoulder
- “Escorting” – remembering this is the positive application of force to control a pupil and would be used in rare circumstances, e.g. if the pupil is in extreme danger and no other alternative is available, or where reasonable force is used to assist a pupil’s movement.
- Holding – for security and to reduce anxiety where there is potential risk, even if the pupil is not yet out of control. The purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation.
- When intervening, staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted as aggressive. All holds are devised to minimise the risk of injury. They should not cause pain.
- Where pupils are presenting with more challenging behaviour which may require more restrictive holds, it is important that these techniques have been delivered by appropriately qualified Team Teach instructors in line with Team Teach protocols.

Staff ***may not*** carry out action that might reasonably be expected to injure by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the ability to breathe.
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil.
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint.
- Tripping a pupil.
- Holding or pulling the pupil by the hair.

Other considerations for ***non-urgent*** situations where the risk to the people or property is not imminent:

- Consider carefully whether positive handling is the right course of action
- Try to deal with the situation through other strategies before using force.
- Try to defuse and calm the situation to establish good order; the use of positive handling could lead to an escalation of the problem.

- Take into account the age, understanding, personal characteristics of the pupil.
- Never use force as a substitute for good behaviour management.
- In non-urgent situations force should only be used when all other methods have failed.

Reporting and Recording Incidents

Should an injury occur as a result of an incident at school, immediate steps will be taken to secure appropriate medical attention. This will be reported and recorded in accordance with the first aid policy.

All incidents that result in restraint (where a child has to be held) will be reported to the Headteacher or a senior member of staff as soon as possible and then recorded in detail using the Bound and Numbered book within 24 hours. A Risk Reduction Plan needs to be put in place and reviewed accordingly. The bound and numbered book will be periodically monitored and reviewed by SLT. It will also be recorded on the school MIS system under conduct. A staff member will inform parents/carers about the incident

Debriefing Following Serious Incident

Pupils and members of staff will be checked for any sign of injury and first aid will be administered if required.

The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise/observe him/her. Time will be given to repair the relationship in line with our relational policy. If appropriate a discussion will be had with the child around different strategies they could use if the situation arises again. However, if this is likely to re-escalate the situation, this will not happen.

All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. A senior member of staff will provide support to the member of staff involved.

Other Procedures Concerning Incidents

If necessary and appropriate the Chair of Governing body, will be informed/consulted.

Help, support and reassurance will be given where appropriate to any persons involved.

Planning for Incidents and Meeting Training Needs

If we are aware that a pupil is likely to require PPI on more than one occasion in a half term we will plan how to respond in line with Team Teach protocols and guidance and ensure trained staff are available to support the pupil.

Primary prevention is achieved through effective behaviour management training to develop 'staff expertise in working with students who present challenging behaviours. Each pupil who present challenging behaviour has his own Risk Reduction Plan (RRP) which outline the level of risk depending upon the activity or behaviour. All staff are familiar with the RRP. RRP's should include:

- any known medical conditions, e.g., diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, etc
- Trigger Areas – common places/times known to lead to Positive Handling
- Trigger Behaviours – behaviours/situations known to lead to Positive Handling. Such information will enable staff to be aware of environmental factors and the potential hazards that may be prevalent; if there is a physical stimulus that is provoking the

student's responses that can be removed and whether the physical boundaries provide sufficient security

- Is the student known to assault staff, peers or damage property → Preferred Supportive Strategies - effective supportive strategies known to defuse situations or behaviours.
- Preferred Positive Handling Strategies - effective responses/holds
- Success Criteria – what strategies can be developed to avoid holding situations?
- Recording in the Incidents Involving Physical Intervention Book
- Evaluation/de-brief – Resolution Meeting, etc
- Names/signatures of all involved.

In cases where it is known that a pupil will require PPI appropriate training will be provided (accessed through the Positive Behaviour Team Ltd.).

Physical Contact with Pupils in other Circumstances

Staff must be sensitive to matters relating to culture and gender issues and any known individual characteristics or special circumstances relating to pupils.

Young children and children with SEND may need staff to provide physical prompts to help.

Physical contact must always be age appropriate and done openly.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper and necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- When comforting a distressed pupil
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To give first aid

Children with additional needs

Reasonable adjustments will be made for children with additional needs on an individual basis.

Complaints

This policy is in accordance with the DfE Reasonable force in schools guidance. Those acting in accordance with it, providing they act in good faith and working within this policy, will be positively supported in their actions.

Involving parents when an incident occurs, and having our clear policy about physical contact with pupils that staff adhere to will help avoid complaints from parents. Providing staff with approved training will also help.

All complaints will be recorded and followed up by the Headteacher or their representative in the first instance. Where appropriate the Authority will be notified/kept informed.

A complaint or dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation under disciplinary procedures or by the Policy under Child Protection procedures.

Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to the “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff” guidance where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.

Review This policy will be regularly monitored by the Headteacher and Governing body, and in addition updated as required.

See document for further guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools#full-publication-update-history>