



KING'S OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

February 2026

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Policy approved by: TLC

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This policy links to our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy which is a statutory policy and is reviewed annually.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Positive Handling Policy Definitions

Definitions

Restrictive Physical Intervention

Application by a member of staff of a school of some degree of reasonable force in relation to a pupil for the purpose of preventing him/her from doing any of the following:-

- Committing an offence.

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

Physical Intervention

A last resort physical emergency response to an individual in crisis displaying risk behaviour posing an imminent or immediate risk of harm to self or others. Physical interventions include disengagement and/or restrictive holding skills that are reasonable and proportionate to the level of risk behaviour presented.

Appropriate Touch

If a child is known to need touch at the school and the caregiver pre-empt touch as likely and necessary, the school will proactively meet with the pupil and the caregiver, in addition to any relevant professionals, to agree a plan on how the touch will be carried out under what circumstances. This ensures the pupil remains aware of what appropriate and inappropriate touch is.

Physical contact between pupils and staff members should be about meeting the needs of the child. We recognise that safe touch is an important part of child development. Safe touch is defined as physical contact that if otherwise avoided would be potentially emotionally or physically damaging for the pupil. There are circumstances when physical contact will be necessary to de-escalate a situation and for the safety of all pupils and staff. All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that no pupil feels threatened or unsafe at our school as a result of inappropriate touch and must be aware of the boundaries involving physical contact. The following are potential examples of instances of safe touch which may occur between staff and pupils - this list is not designed to be exhaustive:

- Comforting an upset or distressed pupil,
- Congratulating or praising a pupil,
- Holding the hand of a pupil to guide them, such as when crossing a road,
- Giving first aid to a pupil,
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or OT sessions, administering medicine, or when using musical instruments.
- Appropriate support for early years pupils in meeting their needs,
- Supporting a pupil to make appropriate behavioural choices,
- Providing intimate care e.g. changing a nappy,

- Support for pupils with sensory needs e.g. compression.

In order to prevent any allegations of inappropriate physical contact, if a staff member finds themselves in a position whereby their physical contact with a pupil could be misinterpreted or the pupil had an adverse reaction to it, they should report this to the headteacher immediately. The same reporting process applies if another member of staff suspects or witnesses inappropriate physical contact. Any concerns about the headteacher should be referred to the Chair of Governors by emailing the Clerk - clerk@kop.rbksch.org.

Introduction

This policy has been prepared for the guidance and support of all staff (including adults providing support in school) and adheres to DfE guidance and the latest Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) version.

At King's Oak Primary School, relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual trust and respect. Such relationships are the firm foundation of communicating expectations regarding individual learning targets as well as managing all behaviours.

We have a comprehensive Behaviour Policy that has been developed by all staff and shared with children, parents and governors. It includes guidance on how staff should manage behaviour.

We recognise that there will be circumstances that may make it necessary, exceptionally, for responsible adults in schools to use positive handling strategies to manage extreme behaviour. It is expected that, in those circumstances, interventions are made within the framework of agreed policy.

At King's Oak Primary School, physical intervention will never be used as a substitute to good behavioural management or as a punishment.

This policy outlines key principles, approaches, procedures and arrangements which make the use of these interventions as safe and secure as possible for all children, young people and staff. Emphasis is expected to be placed on the importance of de-escalation and opportunities for learning from incidents that will help in the prevention of incidents in the future.

In line with good practice, our policy:

- Encourages the development of self-worth
- Sets high expectations of behaviour for all within the organisation
- Promotes a positive ethos within a safe and secure environment
- Fosters mutual respect amongst staff and pupils
- Plans approaches to managing inappropriate behaviour
- Includes monitoring practices to enable effectiveness of policy to be evaluated

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils, specifically the school's staff handbook, Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

The policy will be reviewed annually.

Purpose of the policy

Good professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in school respond to positive behaviour management practised by the staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff.

It is acknowledged that, in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of positive handling may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff at King's Oak Primary School: ● Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where positive handling is necessary. ● Are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur.

This policy will ensure that all staff:

- Are aware of what is expected of them, their contribution to the ethos of the school as well as their contribution to the management of pupils' behaviour.
- Understand that the application of any form of positive handling places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for positive handling.
- Understand that Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.
- Understand that Positive Handling will only take place when de-escalation techniques have failed.
- Are explicitly informed during the induction process of their responsibilities in relation to this policy and the school's ethos and practice regarding behaviour management, de-escalation and the use of force.
- Are aware of support and training available to them to augment existing awareness, knowledge and competencies relating to the management of behaviour.

Reasonable Force

All school staff members have a legal power under Section 93 of the Education Act 2006 to use force which is necessary, reasonable and proportionate to prevent pupils:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility)
 - Injuring themselves or others
 - Causing damage to property (including own property)
 - Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

The staff to which this power applies are:

- Under extreme circumstances any member of staff at the school
- Any other person whom the Head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils.

Physical Handling

The main reason for using physical handling is to bring a dangerous situation under rapid control in order to keep people safe.

Before using physical handling, staff should engage the pupil in a calm and measured tone, making clear that their behaviour is unacceptable and setting out how the pupil could choose to change their behaviour. Other de-escalation techniques should be tried for example distraction, reduced language, provide choices, reminder of expectations, consequences and rewards, talking calmly and emotion coaching.

Staff should not give the impression of acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish a pupil, and should make it clear that they only intend to use physical intervention as a last resort to ensure that the situation is addressed as safely as possible.

The use of physical handling must always be proportionate to the level of risk and should always be reduced at the earliest possible time.

Whenever they do so, staff should be clear about why it is necessary and any actions taken should be reasonable and proportionate and should be in the pupil's best interest.

It is ALWAYS unlawful to use force as a punishment.

When to use physical handling

The judgement on whether to use physical handling and what type of physical handling to use should always depend on the circumstances of each case and, crucially in the case of pupils with additional and/or complex needs/disabilities, information about the individuals concerned.

If the threatening person is someone other than a pupil, then physical handling should only be used as a means of defending oneself as permitted under common law and should be reasonable and proportionate.

King's Oak Primary School considers that force should only be used as a last resort

when:

- The potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering the use of physical intervention.
- The chances of achieving the desired result by other means (such as de-escalation) are low.
- The risks associated with not using force outweigh those of using force.
- All other attempts to defuse a situation have broken down and then only with the minimum amount of reasonable force for the shortest possible time.

Behaviour Management Plans

A behaviour management plan will be created for all children where it is known that the child is more likely to be at risk of physical handling due to behaviours that may threaten his/her own safety, the safety of others, or may lead to the destruction of property.

A behaviour management plan will be created following a period of assessment, when possible triggers to behaviours are investigated and strategies to de-escalate behaviour have been trialled.

The behaviour management plan will take account of the age of the child, the activity they are involved in and whether they have SEND or additional needs.

Behaviour management plans will be created in consultation with a pupil's parents/carers and all relevant professionals e.g. Speech and Language Therapist, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist.

Any planned use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) should be compatible with a pupil's EHCP and properly documented in school records and behaviour care plan.

Using Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

King's Oak Primary School recognises that a pupil may, on occasion, be unable to control his/her own actions to such an extent that his/her behaviour meets the agreed criteria for the set procedures for a restrictive physical intervention to be implemented.

Staff should use existing systems to request support from a member of the SLT if a restrictive physical intervention is likely to be necessary. Staff should consider whether it is appropriate for the rest of the class to be removed to another place.

Reporting Incidents

All significant incidents where physical restraint has been used must be reported and records with details of circumstances and key people will be completed using Arbor.

The Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will review the frequency and severity of any incidents requiring restraint. The Headteacher will present a termly summary of incidents that have involved the use of force to the Governing Body.

All accounts of the same incident should be recorded, including those of the pupil or pupils involved. It is important that this information is treated in confidence.

Records of such incidents will be retained by the school until the member of staff involved has reached normal retirement age or for 10 years from the date of any incident if that is longer.

Informing parents/ carers of positive handling

Parents/carers should be informed by telephone initially or in person of any positive handling.

The exception to this is if it is likely that reporting an incident to a parent will result in significant harm to the pupil, e.g. where a child would be chastised inappropriately and/or excessively, then the incident should be reported to SPA.

In the case of Looked After Children (LAC) or Child protection (CP) the allocated social worker should be informed.

Post Incident Support

For pupils

Pupils are provided with support and learning opportunities which allow them to reflect on, take responsibility for, and learn from their behaviour at a level appropriate to their stage of development. These opportunities enable pupils and staff to build or rebuild positive relationships. Wherever possible this should take place within 24 hours.

Support may take the form of some quiet time, a walk around the playground with a member of staff, a discussion with a member of staff or other appropriate strategies. Pupils will be monitored at appropriate intervals after an incident.

For staff

Staff are provided with support, guidance and time in which to informally or formally debrief, if required.

Through the employee helpline, staff have access to counselling if they feel it is necessary - (Phone: +44 800 243458).

Within school, support will be made available through colleagues and the SLT, e.g. a short break and/or a time for debriefing.

In some situations individuals may need immediate support. In some circumstances where support is not immediately available it may be necessary to provide the support later. All staff should feel comfortable with seeking this support.

Complaints and Allegations

Any member of staff or parent/carer who feels that physical intervention has been misapplied, either within school by school staff/ parents or outside of school, should take their concerns to the headteacher in the first instance (see Whistleblowing Policy and Complaints Procedure). The headteacher will investigate all such concerns according to policy and procedures.

Links with other policies

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Behaviour Policy

SEND Policy

Intimate Care Policy

Complaints Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Staff Handbook and Code of Conduct