

MEVAGISSEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Positive Handling (Team Teach) POLICY

Adopted by the Governing Body

Review date: September 2023

Introduction

The policy and advice set out in the document provide a framework of principle within which staff judgements should be made and specific incidents addressed. The guidelines are designed to:

- Provide, together with the DFE joint guidance, a framework within which schools/settings can develop their own policies;
- Promote coherent, consistent and co-ordinated approach across different schools/settings and, where appropriate, with other agencies;
- Form a basis for monitoring the implementation of policies within the Directorate;
- Provide advice to schools/settings on how to monitor and evaluate their own use of restrictive physical interventions (positive handling) so that practice is improved both locally and across the Local Authority.

A member of staff who has used appropriate physical intervention will have a reasonable defence to any legal action against them, if:

- The purpose of the physical intervention was to avert an immediate danger of injury to any person, or an immediate danger to the property of any person ("person" includes the pupil), or to prevent the committing of a criminal offence, or where a young person's conduct leads to behaviour that prejudices good order and discipline.

AND

- No more force was used than was reasonably necessary in the circumstances.

Working Principles

- Where physical intervention is a likelihood, a plan should be devised.
- Physical intervention should be a last resort and only undertaken when all other means of gaining order have failed
- Staff should not place themselves at risk of being the subject of a false allegation. To minimise risk avoid being alone with any child/young person.
- Schools/settings which adopt these guidelines should set them in the context of other policies; these being whole school/setting positive behaviour management, child protection, health and safety and disciplinary procedures.

- Schools/settings should carry out an individual risk assessment on children/young people who are more likely to require physical intervention and for staff who manage children/young people with challenging behaviour.

Physical Contact With Children

The following guiding principles are suggested:

- The level and type of physical contact should reflect the educational and social needs of the child/young person; eg physical contact is likely to occur in some PE and drama activities as well as for the children/young people who require a personal assistance programme;
- Specific consideration should be given to the needs of children/young people in schools/settings who may have suffered abuse and/or neglect. Physical contact should not respond or lead to expectations or anxieties of any form. This information should be in mind when planning programmes to be implemented. This applies to children/young people who require a personal assistance programme.
- In responding to a child/young person who indicates a need for physical contact/comfort, due consideration should be given to these guidelines;
- There should be no general expectations of privacy for the physical expression of affection or comfort in any circumstances. **Staff must not be alone with a child/young person in such a situation.**

Guidelines for Good Practice

Context

DFE Guidance- Use of reasonable force in schools June 2013 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:

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

Mevagissey Primary School Team Teach staff:

Mevagissey Primary School has the following members of staff who have had the following training:

Jo Bailey – Class Teacher Team Teach

Tiede Gibson – Teaching Assistant – Team Teach

Natalie Hartley – Teaching Assistant – Team Teach

Jackie Welch - TA - Trauma Informed Schools

Lauren Rees – Deputy Head – Trauma Informed Schools

Suzanne Le-Doux-Lucas – Sendco

Safe Handling Principles

- The principles of safe handling are based on twin assumptions:
- A situation is about to exist in which people or property will be in serious danger of assault, injury or damage;
- All efforts to avoid the need for physical intervention has been taken.

The physical restraint of a child/young person must be considered as a **last resort** attempt to cope with the particular situation.

Risk Evaluation

Any physical intervention involves a degree of risk: the assessment of the level of risk is a calculation that must be made before deciding to intervene. Think clearly and carefully before acting.

Methods

Any physical intervention employed must involve the minimum force necessary for the minimum amount of time and must meet the following criteria:

- Handling must not involve deliberately or inadvertently striking the child/young person;
- Handling must not involve 'punitive' acts; ie deliberately inflicting pain on the child/young person (for example, cannot involve joint locks or finger holds);
- Handling must not restrict the child/young person's breathing (for example, must not involve throat or neck holds or pressing the child/young person's face into soft furnishings);
- An adult must avoid touching the genital area, the buttocks or the breasts of the child/young person;
- Handling must avoid the adult putting weight upon the child/young person's head, spine or abdominal area.

Recording Events and Actions

Governing bodies/schools/settings should establish arrangements to ensure that all incidents of restraint are logged by the member(s) of staff involved as soon as possible after the event. This should take the form of a special 'log book' or file which has numbered and bound pages. Cornwall Team-Teach have published a log book and this is available through Cornwall's Team-Teach training. The information should also be included in the child/young person's file.

Level or severity of incident	Level of reporting required	
	School/Setting Incident Log Book	Copy of Incident Log sent to Headteacher and Sendco
1) Incident dealt with using/following existing IBP, IBMP, Care Plan or Individual Safety Plan and was resolved	No (note frequency & duration in IBP, IBMP, CP ISP)	No

without distress to child/young person and member(s) of staff		
2) Incident required action in addition to existing IBP, IBMP or Care Plan but was resolved without distress to child or young person.	Yes	No
Incident was not planned for and action undertaken led to: 3a) no apparent injury or distress to child/young person and member(s) of staff	Yes	No
3b) no apparent injuries but need to identify and analyse trends and patterns	Yes	No
3c) significant level of force during restraint was required or duration of restraint exceeded 15 minutes which may be justified	Yes	Yes (If judgement is finely balanced)
3d) Injury or distress to child and/or member(s) of staff	Yes	Yes
3e) other agencies being involved eg police, ambulance	Yes	Yes If residential setting – (Ofsted regulation 30(1) schedule 5 notification)
4) Incident led to Ground or Prone holds being used	Yes	Yes

All incidents 3c,3d,3e & 4 above must be reported to the Headteacher, the DSL and Governor with Safeguarding responsibility. This information should be reviewed along with all other statistical returns and may form the basis of a request for further Local Authority support.

Witness Statements

Immediately after the incident has been resolved, the Headteacher should be verbally appraised of the situation.

When taking a witness statement from another child/young person, contact Children, Young People and Families Personnel before proceeding. The following points should be considered:

- Avoiding the risk of collusion;
- Having a quiet place in which to record the statement;
- The language skills of a child/young person witness.

Management Considerations

All incidents involving physical intervention of a child/young person must be reported to the DSL and the Headteacher as soon possible and they should receive a report as soon as practicable thereafter. All senior staff involved must record details of their involvement of every stage, together with details of all follow-up action.

Annex A- Safe touch Principals

Introduction

Children need to learn who they are and how they fit into the world. The quality of the child's relationships with significant adults is key to their healthy development and emotional health and wellbeing.

Research shows clearly that healthy pro-social brain development requires access to safe touch as one of the means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, sad or angry child.

It is essential for all children to learn the difference between safe and unsafe touch and to experience having their strongest emotions contained, validated, accepted and soothed by a significant adult.

If children are behaving in unacceptable, threatening, dangerous, aggressive or out of control ways, they have not yet learned how their strongest emotional reactions can be contained, channelled and communicated safely.

In recognition of this, under agreed and supervised conditions, specially trained staff will consider using safe touch as one of the means available to them for:

- Calming a distressed child
- Contain an angry child
- Affirm or encourage an anxious child or a child with low self-esteem.

Mevagissey Primary School is adopting an informed, evidence based decision to allow safe touch in special cases as a developmentally appropriate intervention that will aid healthy growth and learning.

Safe touch used to calm, soothe and regulate a child's emotions is a needed developmental experience. The brain does not develop self-soothing neuronal pathways until this safe emotional regulation has been experienced.

Where children have had insufficient experience of safe touch and calming regulation this may be a priority to help the brain to develop access to thinking, judging and evaluating mechanisms. Safe touch is one of the key ways of regulating children's emotions but it is a strategy that fully trained staff will use only under supervision and in line with a whole school Policy on Positive Handling.

Other means of calming, soothing and containing children's strong emotions include:

- Slowing one's pace
- Lowering the voice
- Breathing more deeply
- Initially matching the pitch and volume of the child's emotional display and then regulating it down talking slowly, firmly and quietly in an unhurried and unflustered way
- Providing clear predictable consistently held boundaries

2. Definition

The developmentally appropriate and therapeutic use of safe touch is defined by situations in which abstinence would actually be inhumane, unkind and potentially psychologically or neuro-biologically damaging. Examples include the empirically backed beneficial use of touch in the comforting of a child who is in an acute state of distress and/or out of control. Not to reach out to the child in such circumstances could be re-traumatising and damaging, confirming or inviting anti-social behaviour patterns.

Abstinence in the face of intense grief, stress and/or rage reactions can lead to a state of hyper arousal in which toxic levels of stress chemicals are released in the body and brain. The severely damaging long term effects of this state have been intensively researched worldwide and are well documented.

In addition, gentle safe holding in line with the school policy on Positive Handling (Team Teach) is appropriate if a child:

- Is hurting him/herself or others, or is likely to hurt him/herself or others
- Is damaging property
- Is incensed and out of control, so that all verbal attempts to engage him/her have failed

3. Appropriate and Inappropriate Touch

Our policy rests on the belief that each staff member must appreciate the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch and will need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the difference, acknowledging both the damaging and unnecessary uses of touch in an educational context. Touch is not to be used as an ill thought out or impulsive act of futile reassurance or as a means to ensure compliance.

All staff should ensure the following guidelines are adhered to:

- Policy should be easily accessible for parents and carers on the school website
- Staff members should agree the use of safe touch in discussion with the Leadership Team and its use regularly reviewed.
- 2 Adult rule. No adult should use touch when alone with a child.
- Use brief, gentle contact on open or clothed parts of the body: hands, arms, and shoulders.

4. Unsafe Touch

At no point and under any circumstances should staff members use touch to satisfy their own need for physical contact or reassurance. Staff need to show awareness of touch that is invasive or which could be confusing, traumatising or experienced as eroticising in any way what so ever.

Staff must always be particularly sensitive to pupils who are demonstrating that they are not comfortable with touch even if it appears to be appropriate to the member of staff. It is vital for a member of staff to think about what they represent to a particular child. A child's history may also influence who represents a 'safe' adult to them.

Additionally, some children may be used to experiencing different levels or types of touch as part of their cultural upbringing. Should any such touch be used it would be deemed as the most serious breach of the Code of Ethics warranting the highest level of disciplinary action.