



The Robert Napier School

Positive Handling Policy

July 2016

## **Rationale**

This policy is based upon the original DfE Circular 10/98 and subsequent advice issued including 'Policy and Guidance for Schools on the Use of Positive Handling (March 2003 ECALS) document and 'The use of reasonable force July 2013'

The Robert Napier School is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour, and only use positive handling as a last resort in line with DCSF advice. If used at all, it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to students and staff.

Staff will view positive handling of students as a last resort for the purposes of maintaining a safe environment. If students are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every strategy will be used to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation.

Staff will understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment that is calm and supportive, especially when dealing with pupils who may have emotional and behavioural needs, which may increase their aggression.

All staff will understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child, which lie beneath the behaviour as well as to the behaviour itself.

*With reference to the DFE document 'The use of reasonable for force' July 2013,*

*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.*

*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.*

*'Reasonable in the circumstances means using no more force than is needed.*

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

At The Robert Napier School there may be children with challenging behavioural difficulties, who present behaviours that may necessitate the use of restrictive physical intervention to prevent injury to themselves, staff and pupils, damage to property, or the breakdown of a safe and enjoyable learning environment.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all staff who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for positive handling. The policy is available to parents on request.

## **PURPOSE**

The aim of this policy is to ensure a safe and happy environment, where everybody in the school community feels safe and respected.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To provide a safe learning environment.
- To provide a framework in which all staff who come into contact with pupils are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the context of positive handling
- To support the school's Child Protection, Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies

## **THE LAW**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a statutory right for school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence or engaging in conduct that could be an offence
- causing injury to themselves or others
- damaging property
- prejudicing good order and discipline at the school

The power applies where the pupil is on school premises or any other place where s/he is in the lawful control or charge of the school staff member. This means that the power extends to school trips.

## **DEFINITIONS OF POSITIVE HANDLING**

Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself/ herself, others or property.

The objectives of positive handling adopted by The Robert Napier School are: to promote the least intrusive positive handling strategy and a continuum of gradual and graded techniques, with an emphasis and preference for the use of verbal, non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before positive handling strategies are utilised; to enable services to develop acceptable and authorised responses to disruptive, disturbing, angry and aggressive behaviours in a manner that maintains positive relationships and provides safety for all; to reduce the number of serious incidents involving physical controls in all settings and

to emphasise the importance of exhausting behaviour management strategies in the first instance; to increase the awareness of staff concerning the importance of recording and reporting, monitoring and evaluating, all incidents involving positive handling; to provide a process of repair and reflection for both staff and pupils.

In schools, force is generally used for two different purposes – to control pupils and to restrain them.

- Control can mean either passive physical contact (e.g. standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path) or active physical contact (e.g. leading a pupil by the hand or arm, or ushering a pupil away by placing a hand on their shoulder).
- When members of staff use "restraint" they physically prevent a pupil from continuing what they were doing after they have been told to stop. The use of restraint techniques is usually used in more extreme circumstances, such as when two pupils are involved in a fight and physical intervention is needed to separate them.

There is no statutory definition of 'reasonable force'. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the circumstances of individual cases.

Deciding on whether the use of force is justified will depend in part upon the context in which the behaviour takes place. The test is whether the force used is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Use of force could not be justified to prevent trivial misbehaviour.

In this school, staff have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management/ de-escalation strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

De-escalation strategies include:

- Verbal advice and support
- Choices/consequences
- Using diversion & diffusion e.g. engaging the child in a discussion about a favoured topic
- Using negotiation
- Time out offered
- Re-assurance
- Planned ignoring
- Humour

### **AUTHORISED STAFF**

All staff in the school are authorised to use physical contact & physical interventions and staff trained in positive handling will be authorised to use physical control/restraint as a last resort when alternative strategies have failed.

Staff have a duty to inform the Senior Management team of any injuries which affect their ability to handle children.

## **TRAINING**

- Training will be made available for the SLT, ELT and colleagues who are more likely to encounter the type of challenging behaviour which may require physical intervention
- No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training.
- The Robert Napier School will review this Positive Handling Policy at least once every two years.
- Training will be delivered on a needs based approach and procedures are in place to monitor incidents.

## **TYPES OF INCIDENT**

Incidents fall into three broad categories: -

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations, which fall within these categories, are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing damage or vandalism to property;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by misusing dangerous materials or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school.
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson, causing distress to the pupils and/or a breakdown of order

## **RECORDING**

Where physical control or restraint has been used a record of the incident will be kept. This record should be made in the Positive Handling Incident file kept by the Heads Secretary.

A statement needs to be completed as soon as possible after the incident.

Parents will be informed.

A Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form will be completed and returned to the Authority in situations where injury has occurred to either members of staff or pupils.

Staff and children will be given basic first aid treatment for any injuries that require treatment. Where staff and pupils have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force they should have access to emotional support.

Any injuries to staff must be recorded on an accident form. There may be a management investigation carried out if deemed necessary.

### **ACTION AFTER AN INCIDENT**

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedures:

- Review and update of pupil risk assessment and positive handling plan.
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Social Services)
- Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure if appropriate
- The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.
- In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

### **Power to search pupils without consent**

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited item”

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.