



Positive Handling Policy

Introduction.

From time to time there are children in school with severe behavioural difficulties who present behaviour that may necessitate the use of restrictive physical interventions to prevent injury, damage to property, or the breakdown of discipline. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 clarifies the position about use of restrictive physical interventions by teachers and others authorised by the headteacher to control or restrain pupils. Teachers and other authorised school staff are reminded that use of physical force must be reasonable and comply with:

- DfEE Circular 10/98, "Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 : the use of force to control or restrain pupils"
- DfES letter dated 24 April 2001 to Chief Education Officers in England, "Positive handling strategies for pupils with severe behavioural difficulties"
- Joint DfES/DH guidance issued July 2002, "The use of restrictive physical interventions for staff working with children and adults who display extreme behaviour in association with learning disability and/or autistic spectrum disorder" Local authority policies
- Local Authority guidance and training
- School discipline and behaviour policies.

At St. Columba's Catholic Primary School staff who have an up to date qualification from the Local Authority's approved trainer 'Team Teach' are authorised by the Headteacher to use restrictive physical intervention. As far as possible all staff who deal directly with pupils, Teachers, and Teaching Assistants will be trained in the use of restrictive physical intervention.

School Expectations

The use of restrictive physical interventions must always be considered within the wider context of other measures. These include establishing and maintaining good relationships with children and using diversion, diffusion and negotiation to respond to difficult situations. Use of physical force that is unwarranted, excessive or punitive is not acceptable. Failure to comply with this principle, when considering or using physical force, will be dealt with under school disciplinary procedures.



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

The school considers the use of restrictive physical interventions as appropriate in the last resort to prevent a child injuring themselves or others, or causing serious damage to property.

Reasonable interventions under these circumstances would be the choice of the least invasive but effective strategy from those outlined in the Team Teach program.

The use of methods of restraint not approved in the Team Teach program particularly if these involve excessive force or cause injury to the pupil is forbidden and may lead to disciplinary action against the member of staff responsible.

Positive Behaviour Management

All staff must adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to build self-esteem. The school will work in partnership with those who know the child to help:

- find out why this child behaves as he or she does
- understand the factors that influence this child's behaviour
- identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing

This approach will help to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It should reduce the incidence of extreme behaviours and make sure that the use of physical force is rare.

School staff must refer to the school's Behaviour Policy when developing and implementing Positive Handling Plans. All behaviour management plans should be formally agreed and ratified before implementing them in school. Plans should be formally recorded in accordance with school procedures and set out the action taken to:

- meet the pupil's needs
- encourage the pupil to make positive choices and develop self-control
- support the pupil in difficult situations
- safely manage crises if and when they occur

Children who exhibit challenging behaviour will have an Individual Education Plan aimed at improving their ability to manage their emotions. This will be



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

devised by the class teacher with support from the SENCO, others who know the child well, and where appropriate, the school's Behaviour Support Teacher. The plan will be presented to the child's parents for approval before adoption.

When a child is likely to exhibit violent behaviour an additional Behaviour Management Plan will be devised aimed at de-escalating any incidents that might occur without resort to physical intervention. Once again all those who know the child well will contribute to devising the plan and parents will be invited to discuss and ratify the measures outlined.

Risk Assessment and Planning For Use Of Restrictive Physical Interventions

The school acknowledges that some children behave in ways that make it necessary to consider the use of restrictive physical intervention as part of a Positive Handling Plan. This generally occurs when there is a risk of the pupil injuring themselves or others or causing damage to property. All identified behaviours necessitating use of physical intervention will be formally risk assessed using the Local Authority's procedure for this process. The resulting risk management strategy will be compatible with a positive behaviour management approach. A Positive Handling Plan will be developed following the principles of Team-Teach and in consultation with the school's SENCO. The plan will be shared with the pupils parents/carers. All staff coming into contact with the pupil will have a copy of the positive handling plan and one will be lodged in the class Observational Diary for the use of visiting staff. Planned use of physical intervention will be in keeping with the pupil's statement and/or his or her individual education plan. It will also be properly documented within school records.

All staff must be aware of the distinction between physical contact or touch, used appropriately in everyday situations to support, encourage, guide or comfort a pupil, and the use of force to restrict movement or to disengage from pupils whose behaviour presents a clear risk of injury.

Use of restrictive physical interventions in unforeseen and emergency situations

The school acknowledges that, on occasion, staff may find themselves in unforeseen or emergency situations when they have no option but to use reasonable force to manage a crisis. It is recommended that:



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

- before using force - staff attempt to use diversion or diffusion to manage the situation
- when using force - staff must use techniques and methods with which they are familiar, confident and are permitted by the school
- in exceptional circumstances (where permitted techniques are ineffective or staff are unfamiliar with the action they should take) – staff shall manage the situation as best they can to comply with Section 550A of the Education Act 1996
- Staff must always report and record use of physical force that occurs in unforeseen or emergency situations using the Team-Teach 'Serious Incident Record and the school's behaviour incident form both available from the Headteacher.

Post-incident support

Incidents that require use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and result in injuries to the child or staff. After incidents have subsided, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries by qualified staff. Children will have the support of a teacher, TA, or Mentor with whom they have a good relationship and their parents will be contacted. Staff involved in an incident will be given recovery time and personal support. They will not be expected to go straight back into class. Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require other than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures. The Headteacher will take action to report any injuries to staff or pupils in accordance with school procedures.

Reporting And Recording Use Of Restrictive Physical Interventions

After incidents in which physical intervention is used, staff should complete a Team-teach Serious Incident report. All incidents requiring the use of physical intervention must be thoroughly and systematically documented within school records. The school should take action to ensure that parents are informed about these incidents as soon as possible.



Monitoring Use Of Restrictive Physical Interventions

Use of physical intervention in school will be monitored in order to help staff learn from experience, promote the well being of children in their care, and provide a basis for appropriate support. Monitoring will help the school to determine what specialist help is needed for children and to assess the appropriateness of the child's placement at the school. Information on trends and emerging problems will be shared within the school and monitoring information will be reported on an annual basis to school governors.

Responding To Complaints

The use of restrictive physical intervention can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force. In the event of a complaint being received by the school in relation to use of force by staff, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff. Revised guidance about such procedures, prepared jointly by the National Employers Organisation for School Teachers and the six teacher unions, was published in September 2002. The document "Education Staff and Child Protection : Staff Facing an Allegation of Abuse" can be accessed electronically at <http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/conditions/education/allegations/index.html> . Guidance about dealing with allegations is also contained in DfEE circular 10/95 "Protecting Children from Abuse – The role of the Education Service". The school will only take action to suspend staff subject to such allegations after careful consideration of whether this is the appropriate course of action and following consultation with the KMBC Safeguarding Officer.

Staff Training

The school has a program of continuous professional development which includes the Team-Teach scheme for training in physical intervention methods. Following the initial sessions staff receive regular three-year refresher courses. This training is intended to help staff to link meeting children's needs with positive behaviour management. Training provided is accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD).