



**COASTAL ACADEMIES TRUST**



**POSITIVE HANDLING  
POLICY**

**Signed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Agreed :**                      **November 2016**

**To be reviewed:**      **September 2018**

# POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

## Rationale

There may be times when it becomes necessary for staff to use, as a last resort, physical contact and restraint in dealing with students in their care. This document outlines the Trust's policy in respect of this, and forms an integral part of the behaviour management policy.

## Purpose

In respect of physical intervention, school policy should aim to enhance the welfare of all members of the school community by:

- Protecting staff and students from physical harm;
- Promoting self-controlled and socially responsible behaviour amongst students through the establishment of clear boundaries for physical contact in the school;
- Promoting staff awareness of the principles of control and restraint, in the management of physically threatening situations;
- Promoting staff self-confidence and professional competence in responding appropriately to challenging behaviour;
- Defusing staff anxiety about accusations of improper conduct towards a student;
  - Protect staff and students from malicious accusations.

## Guidelines

There may be some circumstances when physical intervention may be considered. The law allows for the use of "reasonable and proportionate force", but there is no legal definition of this phrase. In determining what is reasonable and proportionate, the following factors need to be taken into account:

- The circumstances of the incident warrant the use of force. The use of force to prevent a student from committing a minor misdemeanour cannot be justified, neither can the use of force because of irritation on the part of the member of staff
- Any use of force must be the minimum required to achieve the desired result
- When force is applied, it should be done in a manner that attempts to reduce aggression, rather than provoke a further reaction
- The number of staff involved should be a minimum required to achieve the desired result
- Where the use of force is in self-defence, or if the action taken was what was honestly and instinctively felt to be necessary, it is likely to be considered reasonable

There are three main categories of behaviour where physical intervention may be considered:

- 1) Where action is necessary in self defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury, for example:
  - A student attacks a member of staff, another student or is self harming □  
Students are fighting
- 2) Where there is a risk of serious damage to property, for example:
  - A student is engaged in or is on the verge of committing deliberate damage to property
  - A student is causing or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident by rough play, out of control behaviour or the misuse of objects

- 3) Where a student is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline. For example:
- A student persistently refuses to obey an instruction to leave the classroom

In all these circumstances, physical intervention should only be used when all other strategies have been tried and found to be unsuccessful. In the first instance, staff should always attempt to diffuse the situation by:

- Appropriate use of voice in terms of pace and tone
- Adjustment of body position to ensure minimum threat to the young person and maximum safety for staff, generally a sideways stance
- Facial expression and eye contact which is positive and calming
- Appropriate use of humour
- Making clear the expectations of all concerned in the incident and the likely consequences if behaviour deteriorates further
- Seeking help from other staff to diffuse the situation

If these techniques have been unsuccessful, it may be necessary to use physical intervention. There are three categories of physical intervention:

- 1) Escorting – the intention is to move a student away from a particular area
- 2) Holding – the intention is to keep a student in a particular area
- 3) Restraint – the intention is to overpower the student because they have lost all control and are a danger to themselves and or others or property.

In all cases the amount of force used must be the minimum necessary to achieve the desired outcome as defined above. Staff should be attempting to communicate with the student at all times, and it should be clear that the contact will cease when the student complies with the expectation. On no account must staff act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a student around the neck or collar or in any way that might restrict airways and circulation
- Slapping, punching or kicking
- Twisting limbs against a joint
- Tripping the student
- Holding a student by the hair or ear
- Holding a student face down on the ground (except in exceptional circumstances)

The use of supine and prone restraint should only be used in the most extreme circumstances.

If a member of staff judges that they are unable to apply restraint safely they should send for another member of staff and do what they can to contain the situation until help arrives.

### **Recording and reporting**

Whenever force has been used in an incident, a written record of the incident must be made immediately afterwards. The report should include:

- The name of the students involved
- The names of all staff involved including witnesses
- When and where the incident occurred
- The reason that force was used and the nature of the force used, degree and type of hold
- What led up to the restraint
- Students response and outcome of incident
- Details of any injuries including marks to the skin
- Details of damage to property

Staff should use the pro forma (appendix A) to record the incident. The record should be passed to the HT and kept securely within school. It should be used to plan action in the

future with regard to this student. The student should be given time to reflect on the incident, and consider his/her future actions.

Staff involved in the incident should be given support by a senior member of staff, and may need time to calm themselves before continuing with their duties.

**Training**

The senior leadership team will provide the training necessary to provide all staff with the information they need on physical intervention.

**Note:** This positive handling policy is based on DFE Guidance and a model policy provided by Kent County Council

## Appendix A

### POSITIVE HANDLING REFERRAL SHEET

This pro-forma must be completed as soon as practically possible after any incident requiring physical intervention. The member of staff who physically intervened should complete, date and sign below

1. Name(s) of student(s) involved, location, time and date incident took place
2. Details outlining how the incident began and progressed, description of the student's behaviour and actions and any steps taken to defuse the situation
3. Record the names of any other staff or students who witnessed the incident
4. Explain why physical intervention was necessary
5. Describe how the student was handled, the degree of force used, and for how long it was maintained
6. What was the student(s) response? Detail the outcome of the incident
7. Indicate any injury suffered by the student, other student(s), members of staff, and/or any damage to property

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**This form must be given to the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher/Head of School or Deputy Headteacher, on the day of the incident**

Action Taken by Senior Staff
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**Signature (DSL):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature (HT):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_