

THE ARUN VILLAGES FEDERATION

incorporating

Amberley C.E.P School and St. James' C.E.P School

Touch and Physical Intervention Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following other policies: -

- Child Protection
- Code of Safe Conduct
- Intimate Care
- Behaviour and Relationships
- Health and Safety
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Meeting Pupils' Medical Needs
- Complaints
- Managing Allegations Against Staff

Introduction

AVF believes in the power of positive touch and also acknowledge that adults only touch children in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and with due regard to what is acceptable to the individual child.

Adults may need or choose to touch children for reasons such as these:

- First Aid
- Communication
- To comfort a child or young person in distress (appropriate to their age)
- To direct a child or young person (holding hands, hand on shoulder etc)
- For educational skills (PE, Drama etc)
- For life skills (changing for PE, toileting, using cutlery etc)
- In an emergency to increase safety to the child or young person and staff

In an emergency incident, staff are allowed to take into account the use of reasonable force and their responsibilities under duty of care.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and children takes place, staff will consider the following:

- The child or young person's age and level of understanding
- The child or young person's individual characteristics and history
- The location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)

If a child or young person requires physical support on a regular basis this information will be documented on an individual plan such as a handling plan, toileting plan or behaviour support plan.

Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will never be made with sensitive or private body parts, or in a way that would put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular child.

Restrictive Physical Intervention

The school does not routinely use RPI. In the event that a pupil arrives at the school whose needs make RPI likely, the school would take advice from specialists working with the child and ensure that full training had been given to those who would teach and look after the child prior to the child starting.

In all cases, the use of RPI would be a last resort. Staff would be trained in de-escalation techniques etc in order to minimise the likelihood of RPI.

A plan would be drawn up with specialist staff and parents/carers clarifying the circumstances in which it would and would not be appropriate to use RPI. Any incidents would be logged, and lessons learned as appropriate. The number and nature of incidents would be reported to Governors and to the LA Safeguarding team as required.

Any complaints or allegations against staff would be dealt with under the relevant policies and procedures.

Use of Reasonable Force

The school believes in the following principles:

- The use of force should, wherever possible, be avoided
- There are occasions when the use of force is appropriate
- When force is necessary, it must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.

However, as described in guidance from the DfE, we recognise that there are times and situations where use of reasonable force may be necessary in order to ensure that all children are protected from harm and that the school remains a safe and orderly place.

In order to minimise the need to use reasonable force or restraint, staff will strive to:-

- Create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require force, and apply school rules consistently and fairly.
- Develop an effective relationship between staff and a child or young person that is central to good order.
- Ensure all supervision of children is carried out in a consistent manner so children and staff are comfortable within the setting.
- Use relevant materials for approaches to teach children or young person's how to manage conflict and strong feelings.
- Ensure all staff have appropriate instructions and training to enable them to be effective in their various roles in and out of the classroom.
- Ensure that handling plans will be put in place and training given to ensure staff are equipped to deal with individual children or young persons who have been identified.
- Whenever possible, warn a child that force may have to be used before using it.

Responsibilities

It is the head teacher's duty to ensure all staff are aware of their statutory powers to use force and or restrain a child or young person. As part of the induction process into school the head teacher will inform staff if they have the powers to restrain, and who they can turn to if they are in a situation with a child or young person that may be causing concern.

The head teacher will inform the governors those people that have been authorised to use force or restrain a child or young person in school. All staff at school may have the statutory powers to use force to restrain a child or young person or remove them from a classroom.

When and where to use reasonable force

The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use should always depend on the circumstances that staff find themselves in. Time in these circumstances is often short with little time for reflection. Nevertheless, staff need to make the clearest possible judgements. Staff will need to decide the seriousness of the incident and the injury, disorder or damage that could occur if force is not used. The chances of achieving a desired outcome by other means and the risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies. Staff will have been made aware of any significant children i.e. those on SEND/Child Protection Registers and in any extreme cases where there is a need to engage the police to avoid danger to themselves and others.

If a member of staff decides that the use of force is appropriate and an action of last resort then they should always:-

- Advise giving a warning to the child or young person that a physical intervention may have to be used.
- Suggest how the child is to be handled ensuring that no form of restraint is used that could constrict breathing. Appropriate means are passive physical contact such as standing between children or young persons or blocking a child's path, leading a child or young person by the hand or arm, ushering a child or young person away by placing a hand in the centre of the back or in more extreme circumstances using appropriate restrictive methods that a member of staff has been trained to perform.
- Try to ensure that they do not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe or call for assistance.

Examples of situations that particularly call for judgements of this kind include:

- A child attacks a member of staff or other child Children are fighting, causing risk or injury to themselves or others
- A child is causing or on the verge of committing deliberate damage to property.
- A child is causing or is at risk of causing injury or damage by rough play or use of an object.
- A child absconds from a class or leaves school at an unauthorised time.
- A child persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave a classroom.
- A child is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson, a school event or school visit.

In these examples use of force would be reasonable (and therefore lawful) if it is clear the behaviour is dangerous and the situation could not be resolved in any other way. Account must be taken of the individual needs of the child their understanding of the situation

Recording of incidents

A record sheet will be completed by all staff engaged in any incident where reasonable force has taken place even if they did not handle the child. The record sheets will be kept centrally in the school office. Once completed they must be passed to the Head teacher. They must be completed once the situation has been dealt with to ensure accuracy and that it is a true and honest report. The head teacher will inform the parents of the child and if necessary arrange to meet them. The report will then be filed in the child's records in the school office.

All accident, incident or near miss reports must be recorded in the appropriate way.

Following any incidents where force has been appropriate the Head teacher will make arrangements to support the staff and children as these can be upsetting incidents.

First aid will be administered by a trained first aider and emotional support will be provided as required.

Staff will discuss the situation within 2 days with the Head teacher to see if all procedures were followed and how to try to avoid a repetition.

Recording will follow good practice guidelines from the LA and elsewhere.

Complaints procedures

The school has a clear complaints procedure and any complaints would be received in the first instance by the Head teacher. If matters were not resolved then the complainant would take the matter to the Governing Body. Parents wishing to make a complaint will be issued with the guidance booklet detailing the procedures.

Any allegation against a member of staff will be dealt with through the procedures described in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be monitored by the school and governors and will be reviewed or amended in the light of this, to ensure that it meets its aims.