



KINGSMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy on the use Positive Handling and Reasonable Force

**This policy will be reviewed annually alongside
the Behaviour policy and Exclusion policy.**

**Reviewed Autumn Term 2024
Next Review Autumn 2025**

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Context

At Kingsmoor Primary school, we believe that pupils and staff should be safe, that pupils should know how they are expected to behave, and that adults around them are able to manage the children’s behaviour safely and confidently.

This policy has been devised from non-statutory guidance from the DfE. It is intended to provide clarification on the “use of force” to help school staff feel more confident about using this power when they feel it is necessary and to make clear the responsibilities of headteachers and governing bodies in respect of this power.

This policy will also describe how staff will normally use “De-escalation Techniques” and “Positive Handling” to reduce the situations where “Reasonable Force” would be needed reduce person injury or damage to property.

The Policy is to be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy. Both have been agreed in consultation with staff and governors. It also connects to, and is consistent with, policies on Health and Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding, Attachment, Equal Opportunities, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

The **Specific Aims of this Policy** are to –

- protect every person in the school community from harm
- protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.

At Kingsmoor school we only use physical restraint and reasonable force when there is no realistic alternative. We expect staff to de-escalate situations as far as possible. We expect staff to think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention that may be effective. The paramount consideration is that, after assessing the risk, the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate.

Introduction

1. All school staff members have a **legal power** to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property; and to maintain good order and discipline amongst pupils. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort.

The staff to which this power applies are:

- any member of staff at the school;
- any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This can also include people to whom the head has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits). It does not include any pupils.

The power may be used where the pupil (including a pupil from another school) is on the school premises or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of the staff member (for example on a school visit).

2. The purpose of legislating on the use of reasonable force was to provide a clear and transparent power which enables staff to use reasonable force on pupils in specified circumstances. This document provides guidance on how the power should be exercised, particularly to:
 - a) help school staff to understand what the law means for them in practical terms;
 - b) provide advice on good practice;
 - c) ensure that staff are in the best possible position to rebut any false allegations made about the inappropriate use of force; and
 - d) protect pupils by reducing the risks that force may be used inappropriately.
3. **De-escalation techniques** are widely used in Kingsmoor School and examples are listed in the Appendix 1.

4. As far as possible, **positive handling** is used to minimise the need for situations that might otherwise escalate and where reasonable force is needed for safety for those around. Only for a **very small minority** of pupils will the use of positive handling or reasonable force be needed. On such occasions, and as far as possible, only acceptable forms of intervention will be used (these will be along the lines of Team Teach techniques which appropriate staff are taught and undergo refresher training 3 yearly).
5. Kingsmoor School acknowledges its legal duty to **make reasonable adjustments** for disabled children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Staff will be aware of sensitivities associated with any form of physical contact with pupils.
6. **Parents** need to know that their children are safe with us, and they will be informed if a member of staff has had to use positive handling or force to control or restrain them, including the nature of the intervention and the rationale for its use.

Definitions

De-Escalation Techniques are language and behaviour that aims to reduce pupil stress and to lower the risk of situations deteriorating.

Positive Handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property, it covers the broad range of strategies that range from leading a pupil to safety by the hand or arm, through to extreme circumstances where a pupil needs to be controlled or restrained to prevent violence or injury.

Reasonable Force is force used either to control or restrain; it means no more force than is needed. Although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines within this policy.

Reasonable force will never be used as a punishment.

Control means either passive physical contact (standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path) or active physical contact (leading a pupil by the hand or arm or ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back).

Restrain means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control; when staff physically prevent a pupil from continuing what he/she was doing, or when involved in a fight. It can be by using restraint techniques. **Parental consent is not required to restrain a pupil but** and it is only used in more extreme circumstances.

Non-restrictive physical interventions this is either where the child's movement is not restricted or where the child is held supportively but such that they will be released immediately should they so wish.

Restrictive physical interventions prevent, impede or restrict movement or mobility.

Touch

The staff at Kingsmoor School believe that physical touch is an essential part of human relationships, and can be appropriately initiated by staff or the pupil themselves. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary are:

- Holding a hand
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Giving praise or congratulation
- Demonstrating how to use equipment
- Demonstrating or supporting exercises or techniques during, for example, Physical Education
- Giving First Aid.

Why Use Positive Handling?

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him / herself or others. It is only likely to be needed if a child is unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the School's policy on behaviour, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Expectations on Staff

All the school staff know and follow the Kingsmoor Behaviour Policy. They feel confident in using de-escalation techniques and, when appropriate and essential, physical intervention.

They are responsible for understanding what inappropriate behaviours may be communicating and meeting the needs of their children where possible (this is further explored in the school's behaviour policy).

Staff should be aware that they are acting in loco parentis during the school day, or during other supervised activities, and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.

At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention. 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.

Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, we would expect Team Teach trained staff to take over as soon as possible.

School staff (including people with temporary authorisation to have charge or control of pupils) will be kept informed about and advised how to deal with pupils who present particular risks to themselves or others (as a result of SEN and/or disabilities and/or other personal circumstances, such as domestic violence or attachment issues) by appropriate handover and liaison. Staff need to be aware of sensitivities associated with any form of physical contact with students.

If necessary, school staff will use reasonable force to search pupils where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil has a weapon. Where resistance is expected school, of the situation is deemed high risk, staff may judge it more appropriate to call the police.

Staff Training

We consider all staff to have a responsibility for pupil behaviour.

In our school, we have several Team Teach trained staff. Specific staff are fully accredited and update their skills/re-accredit every three years. The Team Teach training includes de-escalation techniques which introduce the use of force at an appropriate time, based on a range of other options. Restraint techniques will not usually be used and staff may well be asked to justify the use of force.

Staff working closely with pupils with SEN or disabilities will undertake risk assessments to inform decisions regarding levels of staff training required. These staff will also inform the circumstances in which the school will temporarily authorise staff or volunteers to have control or charge of such pupils.

Minimising the Need to Use Reasonable Force

In our school we aim to:

- create a calm, ordered environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require using force
- develop positive relationships between pupils and staff
- develop social and emotional intelligence among pupils and use a variety of approaches to teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings
- recognise triggers and prevent challenging behaviours and to de-escalate incidents if they do arise (see Appendix 1)
- use risk assessments and positive handling plans for individual pupils where meeting the behaviour expectations of Kingsmoor School is challenging.

Principles of Using Physical Interventions

When a restrictive physical intervention is justified, staff will use positive handling or only reasonable force. The degree of force is only that which is 'warranted by the situation'. It will 'be proportionate to the circumstances of the incident and the consequences it is intended to prevent'. Any force used will always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result and for the shortest amount of time.

When positive handling becomes necessary, staff WILL

- Tell the pupil what they are doing and why
- Make it clear to the pupil their behaviour is unacceptable and what sanctions may follow (although this may not be appropriate if the child is not capable of being rational at the time)
- Use simple and clear language
- Use positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Remove an audience or take the vulnerable pupil to a safe place
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming him/herself or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property.
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing this.
- Where possible, only employ "Team Teach" techniques used by trained staff
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint; these staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

Physical restraint should never be used to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property.

It may not always be appropriate for a member of staff to intervene in an incident help, in these circumstances staff should take steps to remove other pupils who might be at risk and summon assistance from other staff, and where necessary phone the police.

Staff WILL NOT

- Act in temper (staff will involve another staff member if they fear loss of control)

- Involve themselves in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Attempt to reason with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in sensitive areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

Once the situation is resolved, the incident should be followed up (see later section on post incident support). Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity and if restraint has been needed, the incident recorded in the Bound and Numbered Book.

Post Incident Support

Positive handling, or the use of reasonable force, often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil.

A member of the senior leadership team should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised.

If staff or pupils have been injured, immediate first aid will be provided and medical help accessed, if necessary. If members of staff need time to rest or compose themselves, then the Headteacher will make arrangements for the class group to be supported. Members of staff who have been assaulted may wish to report the incident to the police and/or seek advice and support from their trade union representative.

Staff and pupils will also receive ongoing support for as long as necessary around physical consequences of the incident; and around emotional support for emotional stress or loss of confidence. Staff will be given the opportunity to analyse, reflect and learn from the incident when and if appropriate.

An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved.

Parents/carers will be informed by the Headteacher/SENCO normally on the day of the incident or as soon as is practicable; parents will be informed when and where the incident took place, why it was decided that force had to be used, the strategies used to try to avoid having to use force, what force was used, whether there were any injuries and what follow-up action (support and/or disciplinary) was being taken in relation to their child. Parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have regarding an incident.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development, or review of existing, Personal Support Plans. Additional support will be sought as appropriate, please refer to the Behaviour Policy. Positive Handling Plans (see

appendix 2) may need to be created or reviewed. Appropriate sanctions will be enforced, as deemed appropriate by the staff involved, following the Behaviour Policy.

Recording Incidents

All incidents of serious physical interventions by staff are recorded in the bound and numbered book. If the use of force has resulted in injury to either the pupil or staff, then this will be recorded on the **EEC system and also on SIMS**.

In deciding what is a serious incident, teachers should use their professional judgement and consider the:

- pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- degree of force used
- effect on the pupil or member of staff
- the child's age.

Where positive handling has been used, this will be recorded in their behaviour log on My Concern (the school's safeguarding online platform) and a STAR behaviour analysis will be completed (see behaviour policy). If appropriate witness statements will be received and a record created of the incident, within 12 hours or sooner if possible.

Any injuries suffered by those involved will be recorded following normal school procedures.

The Behaviour policy will be followed, this describes staff's responsibilities in creating a Pastoral Support Plan or Positive Handling Plan.

The Headteacher will check that there is no cause for concern regarding the actions of adults involved. If it is felt that an action has 'caused or put a child at risk of significant harm' the Headteacher will follow the school's child protection procedures (the incident will be reported to Somerset Direct (Tel: 0300 123 2224) or to the police - and parents/carers will be informed of this

If necessary, our school will also inform local authority children's services (Youth Offending Team; Educational Psychology Service; Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service; Social, Emotional and Behavioural Support Service).

Risk Assessments

Responding to unforeseen emergencies

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. An unforeseen event may require an emergency response. After that event, staff have a duty to plan ahead and prepare a new risk assessment.

Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting at risk should have a Positive Handling Plan which goes alongside their Pastoral Support Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to

be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective should be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective or which caused problems in the past. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.

Parents will be involved to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take. Staff will be briefed to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance).

Complaints and Allegations

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents.

If a specific allegation is made against a member of staff, then our school will follow the guidance set out in “Managing Allegations in Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.”

However, if there is a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff, Kingsmoor will lead a prompt and thorough investigation. Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – governing bodies will consider this a defence to any disciplinary action, or to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action. As an employer, Kingsmoor has a duty of care towards their employees and we will provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

Monitoring and Review of Incidents Physical Interventions

Leadership teams regularly assess the frequency and severity of incidents requiring positive handling and the use of reasonable force that are occur in school. The Governing body will be made aware of incidents where the Bound and Numbered Book is completed and where Positive Support Plans are needed. This will be through the termly head teacher reports.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Further Information

- DfE Guidance on Behaviour and discipline in schools (July 2016) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488034/Behaviour_and_Discipline_in_Schools_-_A_guide_for_headteachers_and_School_Staff.pdf
- DfE Guidance on the Use of reasonable force in schools (July 2015) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf

- Team Teach
- Somerset Direct Tel: 0300 123 2224
- Somerset Support Services website

Appendix 1 - De-escalation strategies

De-escalation strategies employed by staff at Kingsmoor Primary School

De-escalation response		
Low level	Medium level	High level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the behaviour and body language • Intervene early to remove sources of frustration • Offer reassurance – including positive physical prompts • Explain clearly what is happening and what will happen next • Communicate – “Talk and I’ll listen.” • Use appropriate humour • Display CALM body language • Talk low and slow and quietly • Assess the situation • Divert and distract by introducing another activity or topic, adult or location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use Low Level de-escalation responses • State desired behaviours clearly • Use distraction to refocus attention on something positive • Set clear enforceable limits • Offer clear choices • Give a get out with dignity • Assess the situation, consider making the environment safer and getting help • Remove audience • Guide elbows towards safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use all Low and Medium Level de-escalation responses. • Make the environment safer • Move furniture and remove weapon objects • Guide – hold or restrain if absolutely necessary (Team teach trained.) • Ensure face, voice and posture are supportive

These responses to levels of behaviour are linked to the Team Teach training which has been undertaken by a high proportion of staff.

Appendix 2 – Positive Handling Plan

Kingsmoor Primary School

Positive Handling Plan

Initial creation and dates updated:

Date Discontinued:

Pupil:

Pupil's date of birth:

Staff Involved:

Effective Strategies previously used:

Strategies Not Recommended:

Physical techniques used effectively:

Physical techniques used which previously proved ineffective or problematic:

Date	Anticipated Risk	Strategy to Use	Effectiveness