

## **Safer Handling Policy**

### **September 2020**

This policy is consistent with the school's main behaviour policy and the same underlying principles of working restoratively apply. However, as a school we have occasionally found ourselves encountering more extreme behaviours than cannot be fully dealt with within the guidance given in our main behaviour policy.

#### ***The purpose of this policy therefore is:***

- To help to maintain a safe and well ordered environment in which pupils can learn.
- To keep pupils and staff from physical harm.
- To give consistent guidance to staff who are faced with challenging, dangerous and disruptive pupil behaviour.
- To make clear the circumstances under which staff may use reasonable force or restraint.

#### **Preventing Escalating Behaviours**

At Airedale Infant School staff work hard to ensure that very disruptive or violent situations do not arise. This is largely achieved by the following means:

- Creating positive relationships between pupils and staff.
- Adopting a whole school approach to responding to inappropriate behaviour choices.
- Working closely with parents from an early stage.
- Use of distraction techniques.
- Use of 'time out' to allow pupils to calm down.
- Involving the SENCo and/or SLT in planning the best way to prevent outbursts and violence.

Where prevention has not been successful, as a last resort REASONABLE FORCE may be needed to manage extremely challenging behaviour.

## Using Force to Control or Restrain Pupils

It is important to differentiate between these two different purposes of force.

- ▣ **Control** can mean either **passive** physical contact (e.g. standing between pupils or blocking a pupils' path) or **active** physical contact (e.g. leading a pupil away by the hand or arm, or ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back).
- ▣ **Restraint** is needed in more extreme circumstances and is intended to stop a child from continuing to do something such as hurting another person, hurting themselves or causing damage to property. A restrictive hold, carried out by a trained member of staff, may be used to restrain a child.

## The Law in Relation to Use of Force by School Staff

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use REASONABLE force to prevent a pupil from the following:

- Committing any offence
- Causing personal injury
- Causing damage to property
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school

In line with this, all staff at Airedale Infant School have the authority to use reasonable force in the following circumstances:

- To prevent a pupil from attacking another pupil or member of staff.
- To prevent a pupil from causing self harm or putting themselves at risk.
- To prevent a pupil from causing serious deliberate damage to property.
- To ensure a pupil leaves a room where the pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to do so.
- To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts learning.

## Serious Deliberate Damage to Property

Serious deliberate damage includes acts such as breaking a window, cutting or throwing furniture, scratching or kicking cars and forcibly breaking equipment.

## Serious Disruption to School Discipline

We define 'serious disruption' as an act which;

- makes learning impossible for the pupil and others
- creates major upset amongst other pupils
- provokes escalating challenging behaviour in other pupils

## **Reasonable Force**

The amount of force used should always be in proportion to the consequences of not using force. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired effect. Staff should therefore make an assessment of the impact of allowing the challenging behaviour to continue before deciding to use force. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

With the above in mind, all staff are authorised to use the following types of force as a last resort where any pupil is behaving dangerously or persistently will not comply with instructions:

- Leading the pupil firmly by the arm.
- Ushering the pupil by placing a hand in the centre of the back or on the shoulder.
- Blocking the pupil's path.

Where a child is resisting reasonable force to the extent that an injury could be caused, the member of staff should cease contact with the child. If the child cannot be controlled by reasonable force and no consent has been given for restraint, the parents will be asked to come to school, meet with the head teacher and collect the child from school. This may result in an exclusion from school.

If a child absconds from school, it is the policy of Airedale Infant School that staff should follow at a distance, so as not to make the child anxious and ring parents/carers immediately and inform the police if necessary.

***In cases of extreme danger (eg a pupil is about to run into a road) physically stopping a pupil is always a REASONABLE course of action.***

In more extreme circumstances, staff may need to use appropriate restrictive holds, which require specific expertise or training. Key members of staff (see attached list) at Airedale Infant School have been trained in Safer Handling. These members of staff are responsible and authorised to work as a team to restrain pupils, as a last resort. Where it is expected that for a particular child significant force, including restraint, may be needed on a regular basis a Positive Intervention Plan and Risk Assessment will be put in place and agreed with parents/carers. Parents will therefore be aware of the ways in which force may be used on their child.

## **Recording and Reporting Incidents**

All incidents of very challenging behaviour should be reported verbally to the Head Teacher in the first instance and followed up by completing a Behaviour Report Form and the Colour by Numbers Book if restraint techniques have been used. The Head Teacher will carry out an informal and supportive debrief with staff and will address any further training needs as soon as possible. The Head Teacher will keep an on-going Incident Log.

Incidents of significant use of force will be formally recorded in the following circumstances;

- If the incident causes injury or distress to the pupil or member of staff.
- If a restrictive hold is used.
- If a child has behaved in an uncharacteristically violent way and no Behaviour Support Plan/Risk Assessment is in place.

These incidents should be recorded on the school's Bound and Numbered Book which is kept in the main office. In the same circumstances, parents should be informed of the incident either in person or by telephone.

## Injuries

It should be noted that when one of the above Safer Handling methods has been used, it may result in scratches, bruising or other injury to adults or children. Any injuries should also be recorded in the Accident Book.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation of the school's success in meeting the needs of children with challenging behaviour will be carried out by the Academy Council. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

This policy is a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as necessary

## **Appendices**

1. *Up to date record of staff trained to Safer Handling*
2. *Wakefield risk assessment.*
3. *Positive intervention plan.*
4. *Behaviour Report Form*