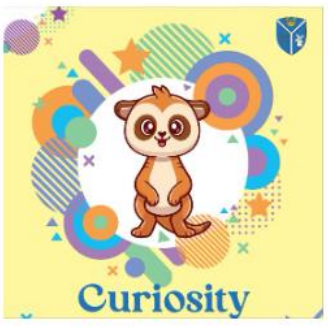
BURSTOW
PRIMARY SCHOOL

BURSTOW PRIMARY SCHOOL
POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

Review Date: September 2026
Agreed by Governors: September 2025









POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

Legal Framework
Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 and DFEE Circular 10/98 allow teachers, and other members of staff at a school who are authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in circumstances where the pupil may need to be prevented from engaging in behaviours which are likely to cause injury to themselves, others or damage to property. The guidance extends this to maintaining good order and discipline, for both on-site and off- site activities.

Positive handling should only be used when all other de-escalation strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful **or in an emergency situation.**

- There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (e.g. physical assault) being committed. Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement. All adults working with children have a professional 'duty of care' within their job description which is underwritten by paragraph 58.7 of School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2002. Together with the legislative framework this enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances listed as points 1, 2 and 3 in the Procedures section.

What does it mean to restrain a child?
Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property. The proper use of positive handling requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining. The decision to use positive handling as restrictive physical intervention must take account of the circumstances and be based on an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention compared with the risks of not employing a restrictive intervention. The physical intervention must also only employ a reasonable amount of force – that is the minimum force needed to avert injury or damage to property, or to prevent a breakdown in discipline – applied for the shortest period of time (see section on use of reasonable force).

Why use restraint?
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. Positive handling skilfully applied may be eased by degrees as the child calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour. Should physical restraint be necessary it will be utilised by staff trained in the correct procedures. Staff members trained in 'School Staff Safety Training: Positive handling in Schools' approach will be summonsed as quickly as possible with the intention of deescalating and reducing the risks to the child, other persons and property.

General aims

The staff at Burstow Primary School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.

Our policy on the use of reasonable force is part of our overall pastoral care procedures and closely related to our policies on managing pupil behaviour in our Behaviour for Learning Policy and also to the Child Protection and Safeguarding guidelines taken from KCSIE 2025.

The aims

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To 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.
- To use the minimum degree of force necessary to accomplish positive handling.
- To give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from pupils or others.
- To maintain accurate records of incidents where positive handling (including restraint) has been employed on CPOMS.

Risk Assessment

Although most young people at Burstow Primary will never require any form of positive handling, staff may have to deal with some young people who exhibit disturbed, distressed and distressing behaviour. It is therefore necessary to carry out a risk assessment. We will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

- The environment
- Body language
- The way we talk
- The way we act

Individual Risk Assessments

The school's respect for the rights of the individual takes into consideration the context of The Human Rights Act (1998) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991). The school's ethos and the guidance in this policy is based on the presumption that every adult and child is entitled to:

- Respect for his/her private life
- The right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment
- The right to liberty and security: and
- The right not to be discriminated against in his/her enjoyment of those rights.

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, it is our intention to plan how to respond if the situation arises.
Such planning needs to address:

- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary);
- Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take;
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance);
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate.

- If positive handling is likely to be necessary this should be included in the pupil's Individual behaviour plan and risk assessment together with information on: de-escalation strategies; the manner in which the pupil will be held; how support can be summoned if needed; any medical factors to be considered.

Procedures
It is important to consider when reasonable force is appropriate, the actions necessary should positive handling be used, the strategies that are deemed acceptable, and the recording procedures that should be in place.

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?
When a pupil may be:
1. Committing an offence
2. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself); or
3. Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or amongst its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Examples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- Pupils fighting;
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which s/he might have or cause an accident likely to injure him/herself or others;
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:
- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom.
- A pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Action Steps:

1. Tell the pupil who is displaying dysregulated behaviour to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
2. If possible summon another adult;
3. Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident;
4. Make it clear that restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary;
5. Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:

    i. Providing medical support
    ii. Providing respite for those staff involved
    iii. Providing after care such as refreshments

A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem.

De-escalation & Positive Handling Strategies

All staff need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with dysregulated pupils and steps, which they can take to attempt to de - escalate and calm a situation.

- Move calmly and confidently
- Make simple, clear statements
- Intervene early
- Try to maintain eye contact
- If necessary summon help before the problem escalates
- Remove audience from the immediate location

EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO SEEK ASSISTANCE IF A PHYSICAL RESTRAINT IS TO BE USED, BUT PARTICULARLY IF DEALING WITH:

- A physically large pupil
- More than one pupil, or
- When the teacher believes that s/he may be at risk of injury

In those circumstances the staff member should

- Remove other pupils who might be at risk
- Summon assistance from colleagues AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
- Where necessary, telephone the police
- Inform the pupil(s) that help will be arriving
- Until assistance arrives, the member of staff should continue to attempt to de- escalate the situation orally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating

We advise that two people are required to hold and it should not be done alone

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following requirements:

Restraint must NOT:

- Involve hitting the pupil
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- Restrict the pupil's breathing
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas

During any incident the restrainer should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding

- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Guided walking a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or
- (In extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

Some Dos and Don'ts

DO
- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Summon help
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way –ensuring that only one person is the key contact (not everyone should be communicating with the child - this can cause further escalation)
- Provide a soft surface if possible
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil
- Hold the pupil's arms by his/her sides

DON'T
- Try to manage on your own – staff must make **every effort** to secure presence of other staff to ensure actions taken are successful and safe,
- Talk too much – if you must talk, use soft tone and volume
- Straddle the pupil
- Push arms up the back
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints

Support for staff
After members of staff have been involved with positive handling, support is needed. They may need space, reassurance and guidance. The aims of the process are:
- To talk about what happened in a non-blaming supportive and caring manner.
- To explore how the member of staff felt before, during and after the incident.
- To use the opportunity to discuss underlying causes and issues that led to the incident.
- To examine what techniques were used and learn from the outcomes to inform future interventions (what worked well and what did not.)
- To develop and record a strategy or alternatives for next time.
- Mutual support is an important part. Sometimes what people really need is somebody to listen to them.

Counselling
Following serious events, more specialist counselling and support may be required and services should be made available to all concerned in these circumstances (e.g. SAS).

Recording

Staff should record (Appendix 1) all incidents of positive handling (including restraint) on our CPOMS using the positive handling log headings.

Details should include:

- Name of pupil(s)
- Staff member(s) involved
- Factors necessitating physical intervention - The incident
- The strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention - De – escalation used
- How physical intervention was effected - positive handling that was used
- Outcome of restraint – de-brief and recovery used
- Any other action taken in the management of the incident

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded. A record of the incident will be kept on CPOMS

Complaints

We all have a duty of care to the young people in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by staff, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It will not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation. All complaints are dealt with according to the School's Complaints Policy and procedures.

Staff, subjected to physical violence or assault, have the right to be supported in making a formal complaint to the police and, if necessary, taking private action against an assailant.

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

Adhering to the principles and procedures referred to in this policy statement is part of effective practice and should minimise risk to young people in our care and enhance our own self-protection.

Training

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that staff members are fully informed of the school policy and understand what authorisation entails. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to arrange training or guidance to staff, possibly through a senior member of staff. An up-to-date list of authorised staff trained in: 'School Staff Safety Training: Positive handling in Schools' is maintained within school and teachers know who they are.

It is the intention at Burstow Primary School to ensure that ALL teachers and Teaching Assistants who work with children who have been identified as displaying challenging and unsafe behaviour are trained in 'School Staff Safety Training: Positive handling in Schools' – an approach to de-escalating difficult situations and to positively handling pupils.