

BRANNEL



Use of Force to Control or Restrain Children Policy

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INTRODUCTION

This policy is based on guidance outlined in DFE (July 2013) Use Of Reasonable Force. The circular refers to the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which clarifies the position regarding the use of physical force by teachers and other staff working in schools, to control or restrain pupils. Staff should also refer to the whole school Behaviour for Learning policy.

PART I

At Brannel School we believe that the use of reasonable force is only necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property, including their own
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, in the classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere, such intervention would only occur if normal positive behaviour management had not worked.

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

A number of Brannel staff have undertaken appropriate training so that these responsibilities can be carried out.

The use of restraint should always be a last resort. If practical, before intervention a calm warning or instruction to stop should be given and every effort should be made to achieve a satisfactory outcome without physical intervention. **In all circumstances help must be sent for, even when immediate intervention is necessary.**

Restraint can take a variety of forms, many of which are outlined in both the DFE (July 2013) Use Of Reasonable Force. Staff should always avoid touching / holding a pupil in a way that might be considered inappropriate. Force, where used, should always be reasonable. There is no definition of 'reasonable force'; it should always be proportional to the circumstances of the incident. It should be used only to control or restrain and never with the intent to cause pain or harm. It must, therefore, be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. In any action, due regard has to be taken to the age, understanding and sex of the child / young person.

Regular changeovers of staff should, where possible, occur during a protracted holding episode and the child / young person must continue to be given opportunities to become calm. De-escalation strategies should be attempted.

Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the child / young person, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the child / young person remains safe. Any adjustments to professional technique are examined in the recording and reporting phase of the procedures in light of any issues arising out of a crisis episode.

The school accepts and understands that, in accordance with the law, corporal punishment is forbidden.

PART II

Where restraint has been necessary, the incident must be reported to the Headteacher and logged. A report should be written and filed.

In the event of an injury occurring, the appropriate forms must be completed and the accident reporting procedures must be followed using the ASSESSNET system used by the school. Parents / carers of the children / young people involved will always be advised of an incident and it may be necessary for it to be followed up by other disciplinary action or pastoral support.

All parents / carers must be made aware of this policy. All new members of staff, part time staff and supply staff will be expected to read this policy.

A policy on restrictive physical intervention (positive handling) should be an integral but discrete element of the school / setting's individual behaviour management policy.

Preferred Practice

DO

- Wherever possible plan appropriate positive intervention and involve parents / carers and colleagues.
- Know the procedures within the school / setting's guidelines for the use of physical restraint.
- Be aware of children / young people who have been physically restrained before and what happened.
- Send for adult help early if things begin to get out of hand and restraint seems likely.
- Assess the situation before acting.

- Stay calm – do not over-react.
- Use minimum restraint for minimum time until the situation is calm.
- Report the incident to the headteacher or senior member of staff as soon as possible and complete a report form.
- Consult your Line Manager, Professional Association or Trade Union if you have any concerns.
- Remember your professional obligations to all children / young people in your care.

DO NOT

- Place yourself at risk: do not attempt to restrain a child / young person who obviously carries a “weapon”.
- Attempt to restrain a child / young person when you have lost your temper.
- Allow the situation to get out of control.
- Use unreasonable force.
- Place yourself at risk of false allegation. Avoid being alone with any child / young person.

Safe touch

In line with DFE recommendations, Brannel School does not have a ‘no touch’ policy. It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

It has been identified that Safe touch has a positive contribution to brain development, emotional regulation, mental health and the development of pro-social skills.

Under special, agreed and supervised conditions, specially trained staff will consider using safe touch as one of the means available to them, for example to calm a distressed child, to contain an angry child and/or encourage or affirm an anxious child or to support a child with low self-esteem.

Safe touch used to calm, soothe and regulate a child’s emotions is a needed developmental experience. The brain does not develop neuronal pathways to initiate calming and self-soothing unless and until this safe emotional regulation has been experienced within a positive relationship with a significant adult. Where children have had insufficient experience of safe touch and calming regulation, this may be a priority to help their brains to develop access to thinking, judging, evaluating and choosing mechanisms.

These are sometimes known as 'higher executive skills' and they are an intrinsic part of cognitive regulation.

Safe touch is one of the key ways of regulating children's emotions, but it is a strategy that fully trained staff will use only under supervision.

Other means of calming, soothing and containing children's strong emotions include:

- Slowing one's pace
- Lowering the voice
- Breathing more deeply
- Initially matching the pitch and volume of the child's emotional display (shout, cry etc) and then regulating it down
- Talking slowly firmly and quietly in an unhurried unflustered way
- Providing clear predictable consistently held boundaries

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- When comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
- To give first aid.

At no point and under no circumstances should staff members use touch to satisfy their own need for physical contact or reassurance.

All staff are trained to be fully cognisant of touch that is invasive or which could be confusing, traumatising or experienced as eroticising in any way whatsoever.

Should you require further information, please contact
the **Clerk to Governors**

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