

Somerville Federation



POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

Somerville Federation's preferred training in Positive Handling strategies and techniques is '[Team Teach](#)' which is accredited by the Institute of Conflict Management. It is aimed at complementing the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy.

Positive Handling Guidance

Policy Statement

Staff at both Somerville Nursery School and Somerville Primary School are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request.

Introduction

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' in [Searching, Screening & confiscation guidance July 2022](#). A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Pupils with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Executive Headteacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It should be considered alongside the most recent LEA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are **reasonable, proportionate** and absolutely **necessary**.

School Expectations

The management takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management. This policy has a clear focus.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

Alternatives to Physical Controls

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

Modifications to Environment

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. In general it is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. For example:

- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils, compasses and darts) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry pupil who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Is the design arrangements or furniture safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage angry pupils to take themselves to a safer place?

Help Protocols

The expectation at both of our schools is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available. (See *Appendix A*)

Well Chosen Words

A well chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can actually wind them up. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation. (See *Appendix B*)

The Last Resort Principal

At both schools we only use physical intervention when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

"If necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predictable future."

Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – "The Control of Children in the Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act 1989" – London: H M S O

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a dynamic risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling Plan (See *Appendix C*). Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer

place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

Reasonable and Proportionate

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

Unreasonable use of Force

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a pupil secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

Definitions of Seclusion / Withdrawal / Time Out

Seclusion - Forced to spend time alone against will (requires statutory powers other than in an emergency)

Withdrawal - removed from the situation but observed and supported until they are ready to resume

Time out - Restricting positive reinforcement as part of a planned behavioural programme
(requires written agreed plan)

Team Teach

It is the policy of both schools that all staff working closely with pupils are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy. Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found on the Team Teach website (www.team-teach.co.uk).

Health and Safety

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the school. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which seems to involve the least risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school and policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important too.

When considering a pupil's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls

when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

Getting Help

At this school the following support structures are in place:

- IEP's and Behaviour Support plans kept on file in each classroom to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Weekly briefing sessions during Wednesday staff briefings in the morning to update staff on current issues and share information when and where appropriate.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Debrief sessions for all staff to share experiences, concerns and access support from each other, fed back to a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) or Exec Team.
- Regular refreshers in the Team Teach strategies and techniques for all staff, and continuous review by Executive Team to inform these.

Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan (See *Appendix C*). The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the Statement and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in a Pastoral Support Plan or Individual Education Plan.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences. The key principals are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or defusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school. In general, if staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The Federation has a formal Complaints Procedure which is published on the school website. Pupils, Parents and Carers should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open federation and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Executive Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. This school has adopted the Team Teach Model of training. All training courses have been fully accredited by the Institute of Conflict Management in accordance with DfES and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. Our preferred approach is for whole staff team training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our clients. Once trained, staff should remind themselves of the techniques.

Recording

Whenever overpowering force is used the incident must be recorded using the approved forms (*see Appendix D*) *The bound book to record these incidents is kept in the Executive Headteacher's office.* All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed. The record refers to supporting sheets and other relevant information.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Executive Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. Data on incidents are also passed on to the Governing body as an additional tool for monitoring. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, behaviour management policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures.

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Behaviour Policy

Exclusion Policy

Staff Disciplinary Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Child Protection Policy

Appendix A



Helping a colleague

Seeking help should always be considered as a sign of professional strength. Moreover, as professionals we should allow others to offer and accept help, particularly at times when our own interventions may be unsuccessful.

The words **“help”** and **“more”** should act like flash cards for staff. It has to be established within the culture of the setting, that help & support framework is something we all do for each other, staff & young people.

- 1) **“Mr Smith, I am available to help”** The member of staff makes a clear statement announcing they are there to help.
- 2) **“Thank you Ms. Jones, you can help by..”** This member of staff then has the opportunity to give directions as to what type of help they require (i.e. help by watching, or help by looking after the rest of the class). But more importantly they at this point retain autonomy over the situation.
- 3) **“Mr. Smith, I am available for more help.”** The word ‘more’ should provide a pause point for the member of staff currently dealing with the service user (in this example, Mr. Smith). At times, as professionals we need to recognise that some interventions are unsuccessful, and/or may escalate situations. Therefore, the professional judgments and support of our colleagues should be accepted.
- 4) **“What do you suggest Ms Jones?”** The focus here should be on team help, autonomy is passed over allowing the member of staff to suggest an alternative strategy.
- 5) **“How about if I sit with John.....and I’ll catch up with you later.”** This example provides us a subtle way of helping a colleague out of a situation with respect and dignity. It is important that we “catch up with” them later, to provide feedback and discuss outcomes.

Appendix B



Helping a Service User

Behaviour is a language. Our function is to provide help for service users and for each other. This help script is aimed at lowering/defusing anger or anxiety in our services users.

1. **“John.”** Use the child’s name, it will help make a connection and engage their attention.
2. **“John. I can see you are upset.”** Choose your words carefully. Recognition of their feelings is fine, but avoid words such as; anger or annoyed, as this may escalate the situation.
3. **“I am here to help.”** This is a statement of your intention, simply, you are there to help. It’s worth remembering that a conscious effort must be made to ensure your para verbal and body language give the same message.
4. **“Talk and I will listen.”** This statement begins to provide the service user with some direction together with securing our function.
5. **“John. Come with me, lets go to the...”** Continue to provide the service user with some direction. Removing them to an area of neutrality to discuss the issue and continue the calming process.

If the child or service user is pacing, staff should avoid walking back and forth, shadowing the young person. This can feel extremely intimidating. CALM stance and body language is essential, as is awareness of staff’s proximity to the services user’s personal/dangerous space. Remember to speak clearly & confidently and remain calm.

Appendix C

Positive Handling Plan (PHP)

Young Learners Name:	
Year Group	
Date of Plan:	
Team around the child members	

Trigger Behaviours: Describe common behaviours/ situations which are known to have led to positive handling being required. When is such behaviour likely to occur?

Topography of behaviour: Describe what the behaviour looks / sounds like

Biting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Screaming	<input type="checkbox"/>
Punching	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attempts to use weapons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kicking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Head Butts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Throwing objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spitting	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other:

Preferred Supportive and Intervention Strategies: (Other ways of C.A.L.M.ing such behaviours Describe strategies that, where and when possible, should be attempted before positive handling techniques are used).

Verbal support	<input type="checkbox"/>	Distraction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reassurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take up time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talking and Stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Time out (requires a written plan)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Negotiation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transfer adult	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices / Limits	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tactical ignoring	<input type="checkbox"/>
Humour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consequences	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other:

Praise Points / Strengths (Areas that can be developed and built upon - Bridge Builders	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Medical Conditions : eg asthma , brittle bones
Preferred Handling Strategies: (Describe the preferred holds: standing, sitting, ground, stating numbers of staff, what “get outs” that can be used when holding, etc)
De-briefing process following incident: (What is the care to be provided)
Recording and notifications required – Who needs to be informed?
Young Learner’s view of the plan:
Teacher in Charge/ Head teacher Signed Date
Parent/ Guardian Signed Date

Appendix D

REPORT ON THE USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN

Report compiled by:		Name of pupil:					
Day and date of incident		Year					
Location:		Start time:					
Activity:		End time:					
Witness – staff		Witness – learners					
List any significant life events which have occurred very recently which may have influenced the young person's mood/physical state							
Give a detailed account below of how the incident began and progressed, including what was said by each party, what steps were taken to defuse or calm the situation, how the pupil was held or restrained and for how long							
How did the incident begin? What led to the incident/triggered the behaviour (antecedent)							
<p>What behaviour was observed? (describe what actually happened - include de-escalation strategies used, length of time de-escalation techniques employed, how the young person responded)</p> <p>De-escalation techniques: (staff should always adopt a non-threatening posture, number other strategies used i.e. thus indicating the order of their use) - verbal advice/support - distraction, what? - negotiation - limits/choices - reassurance - time out offered/directed - tactical ignoring - change of adult - other: (describe)</p>							
Length of time de-escalation techniques employed (mins):							
Why was the use of force necessary? (Please tick)	<input type="checkbox"/> The young person was at risk of harm <input type="checkbox"/> The young person was placing other pupils at risk of harm <input type="checkbox"/> The young person was placing staff or others present at risk of harm <input type="checkbox"/> Property was about to be damaged <input type="checkbox"/> Good order was prejudiced – how _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please explain _____						
Description of physical interventions used: (Team Teach) Friendly, Single elbow, Figure of Four, Double Elbow, T-Wrap, Shield							
Seq.	Hold	Mins	Position stand/sit	Seq.	Hold	Mins	Position stand/sit
1				4			
2				5			
3				6			

Post incident measures undertaken to ensure young person calmed, and final outcome:						
Details of any resulting injuries: (to whom, and action taken as a result e.g. medical treatment, if none, write none)						
Accident Book: yes/no (delete)						
Any other relevant information: (include details of damage to property etc, if none, write none)						
Parents/carers informed: <input type="checkbox"/> phone <input type="checkbox"/> home contact book (attach copy)						
Name of staff member who informed parent/carers: _____						
Time and date: _____						
If not, record reason: _____						
<div style="text-align: right;"> Signature: _____ Date: _____ </div>						
Senior Management Team monitoring:						
	✓	X		✓	X	
Was sufficient/appropriate de-escalation undertaken?			Were physical interventions absolutely necessary?			
Were there grounds for the use of physical intervention?			Was physical intervention used reasonably?			
Were approved physical interventions used?			Was physical intervention used proportionate to event?			
Has appropriate/sufficient post-incident action been taken?			Is the reporting complete and comprehensive?			
SMT comments:						
<div style="text-align: right;"> Signature: _____ Date: _____ </div>						