



## **Positive Handling Policy**

Policy Code:	HR9
Policy Start Date:	December 2016
Policy Review Date:	December 2018

Please read this policy in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- SW4 Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- HR24 Policy for Allegations of Abuse against Academy Staff
- SW5 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SW1 Intimate Care Policy



## **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 This policy is based on guidance outlined in the DfE document *Use of Reasonable Force* (2013). The guidance draws on the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It 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 academy behaviour policy.
- 1.2 We pride ourselves on providing a safe learning environment for our pupils. Sometimes, some of our pupils may get anxious or agitated. We will always help pupils to calm down using communication skills, distraction techniques and removing triggers where possible.
- 1.3 However, there may be times when pupils need more help to calm down and attempts to de-escalate a situation have not proved successful. In these circumstances this may require staff to use physical intervention to ensure:
- the pupil's own safety
  - the safety of other pupils and staff
  - that property is not seriously damaged.
- 1.4 Where possible, physical intervention should be used by staff who have received training in positive handling. All incidents where pupils need to be held or physical intervention is needed to help them to calm down are recorded by the Academy and parents are informed as a matter of course as soon as possible after the event.
- 1.5 Where pupils already have an Individual Behaviour Management plan or a Pastoral Support Plan any intervention should, where possible, follow the plan. After any such physical intervention, the plan should be reviewed to ensure it matches the pupil's needs.
- 1.6 Where physical intervention is used with a pupil who does not have an Individual Behaviour Management Plan, a review will be undertaken following the intervention to consider whether such a plan is needed.

## **2. Responsibility and Implementation**

- 2.1 All members of the Academy staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This power applies to any member of staff at the school.



- 2.2 The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgment of the teacher or other adult involved. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result.
- 2.3 The power to use reasonable force can also apply to people whom the head teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit. Such volunteers or parents will normally follow the advice of the member of staff in charge. In exceptional circumstances they may need to use physical intervention. In these circumstances the same tests of proportionality and reasonableness apply.

### **3. Policy Details**

#### **3.1 What is reasonable force?**

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- Academy staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.



## 3.2 Using Reasonable Force

3.2.1 The use of physical intervention is clearly sanctioned in certain circumstances by Section 550A of the Education Act 1996: *The power of members of staff to restrain pupils*. This is supplemented by guidance from the DfE (July 2013): Use of reasonable force. A copy of this guidance is available to all staff and governors and to parents / carers of pupils on request.

3.2.2 The guidance can be found online at:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/355362/use\\_of\\_reasonable\\_force.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/355362/use_of_reasonable_force.pdf)

3.2.3 The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can be used:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts
- prevent a pupil from damaging property or causing disorder.

## 3.3 Responses

3.3.1 Key staff within the Academies will be trained in the use of specific positive handling physical restraint techniques.

3.3.2 All staff have a duty of care towards students and must always de-escalate situations where other people or property are at risk. The Trust recognises that staff may not wish to undertake training in physical restraint.

3.3.3 Anyone undergoing training must recognise that, in some circumstances, physical intervention may lead to situations which may result in personal injury to themselves.

3.3.4 The use of restraint should always be a last resort. Where it is possible to do so safely before intervention, a calm warning or instruction to stop should be given and every effort should be made to achieve a satisfactory outcome through de-escalation without physical intervention.



The Priory Federation of Academies Trust    **Policy Status:** Approved

**Policy Document**  
Positive Handling

**Ref. HR9**

Page 4 of 7

---

3.3.5 Staff should always avoid touching / holding a pupil in a way that might be considered inappropriate. Force, where used, should always be reasonable; it should always be proportional to the circumstances of the incident. It should be used only to control or restrain and never to with the intent to cause pain or harm. In any action due regard has to be given to the age, understanding, sex and cultural and religious heritage of the student.

3.3.6 Wherever a holding episode is protracted, regular changeovers of staff should take place. The pupil must continue to be given opportunities to calm down and de-escalation strategies should be attempted from time to time. Techniques seek to avoid injury to the pupil, but it is possible that bruising and 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 pupil remains safe. Any adjustments to professional technique used during intervention or restraint will be examined in the recording and reporting phase of the procedures in light of any issues arising out of a crisis episode, and amendments or clarification may be made.

**3.3.7 The Priory Federation of Academies Trust accepts and understands that in accordance with the law corporal punishment is forbidden.**

#### **4 Recording and Reporting**

4.1 Where restraint has been necessary, the incident must be reported to a member of the Senior Team of the respective Academy and logged. A report should be written and filed using the form the academy uses to record serious incidents.

4.2 Parents/carers of the pupil involved will always be advised immediately of an incident and a meeting with parents/carers will always be held to discuss the incident. Where it is not possible to meet parents at the academy, a meeting elsewhere or a telephone discussion will always take place. It may be necessary for an incident to be followed up by other disciplinary action or pastoral support, in addition to consideration of an Individual Behaviour Management Plan.

4.3 Trained staff will be expected to provide guidance for all other staff members, both teaching and non-teaching.



## 5 After an incident

5.1 Positive handling 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 student. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised (it is not recommended that the debriefing take place on the same day). A member of the Senior Leadership Team should always be involved in debriefing the student involved and any victims or close witnesses of the incident should be offered support. The student involved should be given the opportunity to identify a member of staff to be present during the briefing if they wish. Parents/carers should be informed of the debriefing and given the opportunity to attend. Support will be made available for teachers involved in the incident if required.

5.2 The purpose of the debriefing would be to:

- Review events leading up to the use of positive handling.
- Discuss whether the student's behaviour could have been managed differently.
- To maintain good relationships between students, staff and parents/carers.
- To learn any lessons for future practice to avoid further incidents
- To inform reviews of the support in place for the student, e.g. the Pastoral Support Plan.

## 6 Risk assessments

6.1 If it becomes apparent that a student is likely to behave in a manner that may require the use of reasonable force, each Academy will plan how to respond if the situation arises.

6.2 Such planning will address:

- Management of the student ( e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents/carers to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the academy might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate



**The Priory Federation of Academies Trust**    **Policy Status:** Approved

**Policy Document**  
Positive Handling

**Ref. HR9**

Page 6 of 7

---

## **7**    **Complaints**

7.1 In the event that parents/carers express a concern over an incident of positive handling, they have a right to be informed of the Parental Communications and Complaints Policy. This is freely available on the Trust website.

## **8.**    **Policy change**

This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by The Priory Federation of Academies Trust.



**The Priory Federation of Academies Trust**    **Policy Status:** Approved

**Policy Document**  
Positive Handling

**Ref. HR9**

Page 7 of 7

---

## **The Priory Federation of Academies Trust Positive Handling Policy**

This Policy has been approved by the Education and Standards Committee:

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Trustee

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Chief Executive Officer

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Designated Member of Staff

Please note that a signed copy of this agreement is available via Human Resources.