



Cledford Primary School

George VI Avenue, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 0DD
Telephone: 01606 663667
E mail: admin@cledford.cheshire.sch.uk
Website: www.cledford.cheshire.sch.uk

Gainsborough Primary & Nursery School

Belgrave Road, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 7NH
Telephone: 01270 696810
E mail: admin@gainsborough.cheshire.sch.uk
Website: www.gainsboroughschool.co.uk

Local Authority Code: 895
Establishment Number: 3821

Local Authority Code: 895
Establishment Number: 3810

School Principal: Mr C Adlington

Federation Headteacher: Mrs A J Booth

School Principal: Mrs J Nurse

Federation Positive Handling Policy

Reviewed: October 2022

Signed:

Mrs J Sercombe (Chair of Governing Board)

Mrs AJ Booth (Federation Headteacher)

Mrs J Nurse (School Principal GPNS)

Mr C Adlington (School Principal CPS)

Next Review Date: **October 2024**

Cledford Primary School and Gainsborough Primary & Nursery School encourage pupils to make positive behaviour choices. However, pupils sometimes do make the wrong choices. On rare occasions this may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff. Our behaviour policy, which should be read in conjunction with the positive handling policy, is based on positive recognition, nurture and respect and is available to staff, parents and pupils on our website. The behaviour policy includes the authority to use reasonable force.

Our Positive Handling Policy is based upon the following principles:

- Physical intervention is used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies, including de-escalation techniques, have failed
- Any physical contact is only the minimum required
- Physical intervention is used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned
- Incidents are recorded and reported to the Federation Headteacher/Principal
- Parents are informed of each incident

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 allows 'teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Federation Headteacher/Principal who have control or charge of pupils to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- causing injury to his/herself or others
- committing an offence
- damaging property
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order & discipline

This policy has been written with DFE 'Use of reasonable force' advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013 (see appendix 2)

DEFINITION OF REASONABLE FORCE AND POSITIVE HANDLING

The DFE guidance (2013) on the 'Use of Reasonable Force' defines and explains these terms in the following way:

- 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 pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury
- Reasonable in the circumstances means using no more force than is needed
- 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
- Positive handling 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.
- School 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.

Whilst it is good practice to have staff fully trained in positive handling techniques to apply a positive handling, all members of staff who can use reasonable force have a legal power to use it. This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Federation Headteacher/Principal has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying pupils on a school organised visit. The paramount consideration should be the safety of pupils and staff.

The DFE Guidance 2013 on 'Use of reasonable force' states that schools can use reasonable force to:

- 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 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
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

Schools cannot:

- use force as a punishment - it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, the Federation Headteacher/Principal and authorised staff can use such force, as is reasonable given the circumstances, to conduct a search for the following 'prohibited items': knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

OUR APPROACH

We aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in a small minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our behaviour policy (March 2022).

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical positive handling would be necessary or appropriate. Staff exercise their own professional judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff act within our school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Physical intervention is only used as a last resort, when all other strategies have failed to have the desired effect on a pupil's behaviour and the circumstances described in paragraph 2 above exist.

NB It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- 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
- To give first aid

Staff are aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and that they have a 'Duty of Care' to all children. They therefore take reasonable action to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. Staff are not, however, expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

USE OF PHYSICAL POSITIVE HANDLING OR INTERVENTION

Where possible physical positive handling should only be applied by a member of staff who is trained in positive handling (for example. 'team teach'.) All staff are trained in de-escalation techniques. Positive handling is applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It never takes a form which could be seen as punishment. Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical positive handling i.e. only applying the force necessary to stop or prevent danger. In the exceptional circumstance when physical positive handling or intervention becomes necessary:

DO

- Summon help / involve another member of staff if possible
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Use simple and clear language
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for them to remove the positive handling (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax the positive handling in response to the pupil's compliance

FOLLOWING THE POSITIVE HANDLING

The positive handling should be applied for as short a time as possible. The pupil should be removed to a place of safety and de-escalation techniques used to calm/support the pupil. Following the positive handling, when the pupil is calm and ready to communicate, a reflection on what happened can be attempted. At Cledford and Gainsborough, a 'restorative' approach is used to help the pupil reflect. This may be the next day. It is not always necessary to exclude a pupil following a positive handling but you should consider whether it may be in the child's best interests to go home. A positive handling form should be completed and parents informed. Staff may need a debrief and should be offered support.