

Mill Hill Primary School

Policy on Positive Handling

(see also Behaviour, Discipline and Pastoral Care, Single Equality, Child Protection Safeguarding, Complaints)

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for the care and control of pupils presenting very challenging behaviour. Its contents are available to parents and pupils.

1.2 A statement about the school's Behaviour, Discipline, Pastoral Care Policy is made to parents in the school prospectus. This statement includes information on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils (Team Teach).

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff at Mill Hill Primary School.

2.2 It is also acknowledged that, in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required. Mill Hill Primary School acknowledges that physical techniques are used as a final resort where they are necessary to ensure the safety of the child and those around the child. They are only part of a whole school approach to behaviour management.

2.3 Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care for taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary;
- are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

3. Implications of the Policy

3.1 The Education and Inspection Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within the school (this includes authorised out-of school activities);
- self-injuring;
- causing injury to others;
- committing an offence.

Individual members of staff cannot be required to use physical restraint. However, teaching and non-teaching staff work in loco parentis and should always operate with an appropriate 'Duty of Care'; they could be liable for a claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this policy.

3.2 The application of any form of physical control places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

3.3 Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

4. Definitions

4.1 Reasonable force:

No legal definition of reasonable force exists, however, for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it at Mill Hill Primary School:

- positive handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming him/herself, others or property;
- the scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled and the nature of the harm they might cause.

4.2 Physical contact:

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, eg in the care of pupils with learning disabilities, in games/PE, to comfort pupils.

4.3 Physical intervention:

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, eg guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

4.4 Physical control/restraint:

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a 'last resort'.

4.5 The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint.

5. Underpinning Values

5.1 Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity
- be treated with respect and dignity
- learn and work in a safe environment
- be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

5.2 Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection
- expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school
- be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

5.3 The school will ensure that pupils are given support to understand the need for clearly defined limits and the importance of responding clearly to these limits, which govern behaviour in the school.

6. Authorised Staff

6.1 In this school all staff are authorised to use reasonable force within the context of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 – 'The use of reasonable force to control and restrain pupils'.

6.2 The school provides training for key staff and the Head Teacher retains a list of all those staff trained. The list is reviewed on an annual basis (or more frequently if the context requires it).

6.3 The Head Teacher is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given (in what circumstances and settings they may use force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last).

6.4 The Head Teacher will ensure that those authorised are aware of and understand what the authorisation entails.

6.5 Those whom the Head Teacher has not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where control or restraint is needed.

7. Staff from the LA working within the school

7.1 Support services will have their own policies for care and control of pupils. When working within the school, it is the Head Teacher's responsibility to ensure that colleagues from support services are aware of school policy and practice.

8. Training

8.1 It will be the responsibility of the Head Teacher to arrange suitable training.

8.2 Training for key staff will be made available.

8.3 No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

8.4 Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of ongoing staff development

8.5 Following a review of existing school practice, in consultation with governors/staff and the LA, Mill Hill Primary School is committed to using 'Team-Teach' providing this approach continues to adopt the British Institute for Learning Difficulties (BILD) Code of Practice on physical intervention and has been or is working towards being accredited through the BILD Physical Interventions Accreditation Scheme.

8.6 Mill Hill Primary School acknowledges that physical techniques are only a part of a whole school approach to behaviour management. The governors of the school will ensure that:

- the behaviour, discipline and pastoral care policy is reviewed on a two-year cycle at least;
- training will be delivered on a needs based approach and procedures are in place to monitor incidents;
- all training will include theory on at least the following: causes of challenging behaviour prevention strategies, positive behaviour management, de-escalation risk assessment, behaviour support planning, de-briefing following incidents;
- physical techniques are not treated in isolation and the school is committed to ensuring that, as a result of incidents, learning opportunities are created for children that allow them to 'own' and take responsibility for their behaviour.

9. Conclusion

9.1 Procedures need to be in place to ensure that appropriate support is provided for staff and that, following an incident, pupil/staff relationships are rebuilt and repaired to ensure that a positive learning environment is maintained.

9.2 All the techniques used provide a gradual system of responses and take account of a young person's:

- age
- gender
- level of physical, emotional and intellectual development
- special educational needs and/or disabilities
- social context

9.3 Where appropriate, Positive Handling Plans are written for individual children and, when appropriate, these will be designed through multi-professional collaboration. These should be included in all relevant Support Plans.

9.4 Risk assessments need to be completed for each child when it is anticipated that physical restraint may need to be used in the context of identified target behaviour and environments in which they occur. The assessment should identify the benefits and the risks associated with the strategies being proposed.

10. Review of Policy

10.1 The policy will be reviewed in line with the behaviour, discipline and pastoral care policy.

March 2020