

Willows Academy Positive Handling Policy

The Academy Trust, members of the Education Advisory Board (EAB) and staff at Willows Academy are committed to sharing a common objective to help keep the children and staff of the academy safe. We ensure that consistent effective safeguarding procedures are in place in order to support families, children and staff.

Willows Academy Physical Restraint Policy - Rationale

On rare occasions, it may be necessary to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to identify types of incidents that may require reasonable force, to clarify the term 'reasonable force' and who might use it.

Guidelines

Planning ahead:

When the school is aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a way that may require physical control or restraint it is sensible to plan how to respond if the situation arises. This planning, which is recorded on an Individual Behaviour Plan/ individual's risk assessment (Annex A) should address:

- Managing the pupil
- Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about what specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should take
- Ensuring additional support can be summoned if appropriate
- Taking medical advice if necessary as to the safest way to hold pupils with specific health needs

When might reasonable force be necessary?

To prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility or could result in them injuring themselves or others)
- Causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere
- Absconding

This applies when a teacher, or other authorised person, is on the school premises, and when he or she has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned elsewhere e.g. on a trip or other authorised out of school activity.

Everyone has a right to defend themselves against attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so.

In an emergency, if a pupil is at immediate risk of injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff would be entitled to intervene. Intervention should always be a last resort; staff should try to remove themselves from the dangerous situation before considering any physical intervention.

Authorised Staff

Physical restraint should be avoided wherever possible. Support should be sought from individuals named in the IBP or risk assessment. **Other actions such as de-escalation techniques, distraction, removing all personnel from the vicinity etc. should always be tried in the first instance.** If all these fail and the pupil still poses a danger to themselves or others, then a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), or any other Team Teach trained member of staff should be the only people who action any physical restraint unless the pupil is judged to be at immediate risk of injury. Any member of staff involved in a restraint must immediately complete a physical restraint report in the Bound & Numbered Book which is kept in the Principal's Office. The Principal or Associate Vice Principal should be made aware as soon as possible following the incident.

Types of incidents

Reasonable force may be considered where action is necessary:

1. in self-defence
2. there is an imminent risk of injury.

For example:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil.
- Pupils are fighting.
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property.
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- A pupil absconds and tries to leave the school grounds putting themselves at risk.

What is reasonable force?

As there is no legal definition of 'reasonable force', it will always depend on circumstances. Always consider:

- Have you explored every other way of resolving the problem?
- Do the circumstances warrant reasonable force?
- Is the degree of force in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent?
- Is the force the minimum needed to achieve the desired result?

Physical force may involve –

- Interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding (Team Teach recommended methods only; SLT & appropriately trained staff)
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back

Procedures

- If practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop, state what will happen if he or she does not
- Warn the pupil that you will intervene if they choose to continue
- Continue to attempt to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident
- Make it clear that physical restraint or contact will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary
- At all times teachers should be calm and measured in their approach
- Teachers should not intervene if an incident may put them at risk of injury
- If necessary remove other pupils who might be at risk of injury, and summon assistance.

Recording incidents

There should be detailed formal recording of occasions where force is used in the Bound & Numbered Book. Parents must be notified.

Other physical contact

Physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary in order to:

- Demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons
- Administer First Aid
- Provide young children with physical prompts or help
- Comfort a pupil in distress
- Reassure very young pupils.

Be aware that some pupils may dislike physical contact of any kind because of their cultural background or because they have been abused.

Conclusion

This policy should ensure that all members of the school community are aware of what is deemed reasonable force according to circumstances and the correct procedures to employ in order to maintain a calm learning environment.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy ANNUALLY and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with and with due regard to the school's Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding and Welfare Policy.

Date Agreed: January 2017

Review Date: January 2018