



# Positive Handling Policy

**SIGNED - HILARY HOULT (GOVERNOR)**

*H Hoult*

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*individuals matter.*





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**This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies and documents regarding:**

**Anti-bullying**

**Behaviour**

**Exclusion**

**Safeguarding and Child Protection**





## Introduction

This policy takes account of the following legislation:

- [The Education Act 2011](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years 2014](#)
- [Use of reasonable force – advice for Head Teachers, staff and governing bodies – July 2013](#)
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools, Advice for Head Teachers and school staff \(DFE, January 2016\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DFE 2016\)](#)
- [Reasonable Force policy – Safeguarding Sheffield Children’s Board \(September 2016\)](#)
- [Exclusion from Maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England \(September 2017\)](#)

### **Purpose of the Policy**

- To ensure the health, safety and welfare of young people and those who work with them
- To enable staff to effectively dispense their duty of care towards young people
- To provide clear guidance for staff, governors, visitors and parents/carers in regards to positive handling and the use of reasonable force.

### **Scope of the Policy**

This policy is for all staff working for Bents Green Specialist Secondary School. All staff should be aware of the need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and for each student’s individual level of special educational need.

Governors and the Senior Leadership Team should ensure that all volunteers, parents and carers are aware of and adhere to the school’s behaviour policy, including the use of reasonable force.

### **Rationale**

This policy underpins our school’s commitment to ensure that Bents Green Specialist Secondary School is a community in which everyone is respected and supported to achieve their full potential.

Our curriculum and school day are designed to support students’ individual needs and strengths within a safe, caring and supportive environment.

All students have the right to:

- Have recognition of their unique identity together with individual consideration of their needs and have access to appropriate support, provision and adaptation as required
- Be treated with respect and dignity and feel valued members of the learning community
- Learn in a safe environment
- Be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse



To enable a secure and sustainable future for our students when they leave our school community, our curriculum focuses on a blend of academic achievement, independence, social communication and emotional regulation.

## What is reasonable force?

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involves a degree of physical contact with students.

- 'Force'** is used to either control or restrain; e.g. breaking up a fight, or restraint to prevent violence or injury to self or others
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances'** means using no more force than is needed
- 'Control'** is either passive, e.g. standing between pupils, or active, e.g. leading a student out of a learning environment.
- 'Restraint'** means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control.

### Minimising the need to use force

Bents Green Specialist Secondary School recognises that behaviour is a form of communication. Students are supported to develop effective strategies for communicating their needs and for managing their emotional regulation. This may be self-regulation (being able to use strategies to self-calm) or mutual regulation (accepting support and strategies from another person to regulate your emotions)

We constantly strive to create a calm and appropriate environment and curriculum (see behaviour policy) which minimises the risk of incidents that might require the use of reasonable force.

In addition to this all students have personal profiles which promote consistent and personalised approaches for supporting their individual needs. Students who present challenging behaviour also have Individual Support Plans which detail strategies and best approaches for de-escalating and supporting their behaviour. These plans are designed in consultation with parents, students and where appropriate, multi-agency collaboration. These are shared with other agencies and parents to facilitate a consistent and effective approach.

All staff are TEAM TEACH trained, providing them with both the skills to help defuse situations before behaviour becomes challenging and the ability to de-escalate and safely manage incidents should they arise.

### Who can use reasonable force?

All staff have a duty of care towards the students and can use reasonable force to keep themselves and others safe. All permanent staff receive TEAM TEACH training to enable them to promote de-escalation skills and to ensure that where positive handling is needed it is done so in a safe and effective manner. Wherever possible only TEAM TEACH trained staff will carry out any necessary physical intervention. Supply staff and new staff, who have not yet had TEAM TEACH training, still have a duty of care to keep students safe and can use physical intervention to do so in an emergency situation. They can also use reasonable force

if necessary to keep themselves and others safe if needed. However, it is best practice to enable TEAM TEACH trained staff to support students in crisis whenever possible. Untrained staff should be replaced by TEAM TEACH trained staff as quickly and safely as is possible

The use of TEAM TEACH techniques reduces the risks of unintended harm to staff and students. All staff should follow the guidance within this policy and their TEAM TEACH training in order to minimise the risks of any potential litigation.

We have a number of trained TEAM TEACH tutors on staff who deliver regular training and training updates to ensure that staff are skilled in the necessary techniques for safely supporting the students with whom they are working. These tutors will also support staff to identify appropriate techniques and support strategies to use with individuals and to detail in Individual Support Plans.

Staff should follow student's Individual Support Plans when deciding whether to use physical intervention. They should make a dynamic risk assessment related to the individual circumstances which may arise during their work, to make judgements about when the use of force is necessary to manage a situation. Physical restraint should never be used to threaten students in instances where there is no crisis.

The use of physical intervention should always be in the best interests of the child and be **'reasonable, proportionate and necessary'**.

### **When can reasonable force be used?**

Reasonable force can be used in the following circumstances:

- 1. Preventing a child or young person causing harm to themselves***
- 2. Preventing a child or young person causing harm to another person***
- 3. Preventing the child or young person committing a criminal offence***
- 4. Preventing any behaviour which is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline.'***

[www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org](http://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org)

Examples include:

- Removing** disruptive students if they are a danger to themselves or others or causing severe disruptions to good order and discipline e.g. severely damaging the equipment in the learning environment.
- Preventing** students from: disrupting a lesson, event, trip or visit / leaving the learning or social environment where this would risk their safety or hurting someone
- Restraining** a student at risk of harming themselves or others through physical outbursts or self-harm
- Stopping** a fight

**Staff will be expected to follow a student's 'Individual Support Plan', in the first instance, to effectively manage an incident / challenging behaviour.**



Positive handling should use the **minimum** degree of force necessary for the **shortest period of time** to prevent a student harming themselves, others or property.

The TEAM TEACH techniques that are used, take account of a young person's:

- Age
- Gender
- Level of physical, emotional and intellectual development
- Special needs
- Social context

They also provide a gradual, graded system of response.

All staff are expected to remain CALM in a 'crisis' situation and respond using techniques aimed to deescalate the situation.

### CALM

- ✓ Communicate
- ✓ Awareness and Assessment
- ✓ Listen and Look
- ✓ Make safe

All staff should refer to their TEAM TEACH training manuals and / or the TEAM TEACH website for reminders about the different techniques and levels of intervention. They should seek advice and support from the TEAM TEACH tutors in school as needed.

### **FORCE CAN NEVER BE USED AS A PUNISHMENT – THIS IS ALWAYS UNLAWFUL**

**If staff have any concerns about the actions taken by an adult in school, they must report it immediately to the Headteacher.**





## Recording and reporting the use of reasonable force

All incidents requiring any use of force should be recorded on the Bents Green significant incidents forms, which are numbered and signed out from the administrative office. These forms include details of the types of and length of any physical intervention used. Training will be provided on how to complete significant incident forms appropriately and each completed form will be reviewed by the schools behaviour and safeguarding manager/deputy before being finalised.

All staff should inform a member of SLT before handing the completed forms in to be reviewed. Where incidents are very frequent, lead to exclusion or involve bullying they will be reviewed by the senior leader responsible for behaviour.

When compiling and reviewing significant incident forms staff should reflect on how situations / incidents may be avoided / minimised in future. This may lead to the need to make adaptations to student individual support plans.

Records should be kept factual and detailed. They may need to be referred to in any future litigation so procedures should be followed with care. Staff should seek advice from one of the TEAM TEACH tutors in school if they require advice on how to write up an incident.

After an incident has occurred staff should complete a review, repair and reflect process with the student(s) involved to repair the relationships and make a plan to move forward. This should then be record on the significant incidents reports. The process should not be forced or rushed and should be completed when EVERYONE is calm.

Significant incidents will be recorded on SIMs (the school information management system) and will be analysed at regular intervals. Data will be provided to governors and class teams on a termly basis to ensure appropriate steps are taken to reduce significant incidents.

Parents / carers should, be made aware of incidents in which positive handling has been used and of any consequences issued for inappropriate behaviours. Staff will make every effort to contact parents / carers by telephone (or alternative preferred contact method) on the day of the incident.

Details of internal and fixed term exclusions will be recorded on the significant incident forms and input into SIMS by the year team support admin staff.

Any incidents which result in injury will also be reported to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the relevant accident / injury form or RIDOOR (reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations) will be completed and submitted to the HSE (Health and safety executive) through the online form found on [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)



## Recording and reporting the use of reasonable force

A young person is in '**crisis**' and the use of restraint is deemed '**reasonable, proportionate and necessary**'.

An 'Incident Report' form is collected from the admin office and signed for using the '**Reporting Significant Incidents**' book

A member of SLT is informed that an incident has taken place and a decision to exclude is explored.

Parents / carers are informed by a member of the Tutor Team on the day of the incident.

Forms should be completed, signed by a member of SLT and returned to CV / AJJ by the **end of the next working day**.

An 'Incident Review' with the student should take place within **2 working days** (depending on the needs of the student and the context of the situation)

Incidents are reviewed by CV / AJJ / SLT and follow up actions are agreed and recorded. Forms are passed to admin support to log on SIMS and feedback is given to staff and SLT within **5 working days** of incident.

ISPs may require reviewing and updating following an incident by the Tutor Teams.

Staff should be offered an opportunity to debrief at an appropriate time following a serious incident.

Staff need to be aware the 'Incident Reports' can be shared with external agencies, parents/carers and the Police.





## Responding to complaints

Parents/carers wishing to make a complaint following the use of force should refer to the Schools Complaints Policy.

Complaints should be made in writing to the Head teacher who will initiate an investigation.

All complaints about the use of force will be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated by a member of SLT. If the complaint is regarding a member of SLT, the Headteacher will carry out the investigation or the Chair of Governors if the complaint is against the Headteacher.

Where a member of staff has acted within the law, that is they have used reasonable force to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder, this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution.

Bents Green Specialist Secondary School will follow Local Authority procedures for dealing with complaints and will seek advice from the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and from Human Resources regarding any necessary decisions.





## Power to search students

The Head Teacher can authorise staff to use reasonable force in order to conduct a search for the following 'prohibited items':

- Knives and weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs including drugs paraphernalia
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic material
- Any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property

Staff should not carry out a search of any young person without informing a member of SLT who should be present during the search of any young person.

If staff suspect that a young person is concealing a 'prohibited item' they should contact SLT or CV / AJJ.

SLT will decide whether it is necessary, who should perform the search or what other action should be made (e.g. contact with parents / police).

Force **cannot** be used to search for items banned under the school rules (e.g. mobile phones).

Only members of SLT and / or TEAM TEACH Tutors will conduct any searches requiring 'force'.



## Staff responsibilities – all staff

- To provide an environment which supports the individual needs of all students in school
- To implement advice provided within Personal Profiles, Individual Support Plans and any other multi-agency guidance
- To read, be aware of and implement the schools behaviour and reward policy in addition to this positive handling policy
- To develop and maintain an understanding of the TEAM TEACH techniques, taking responsibility for seeking support from a TEAM TEACH tutor for any area of weakness
- To carry out all techniques in line with TEAM TEACH advice and the training provided
- To carry out risk assessments for students in class to ensure that risks are identified and appropriate strategies / plans are put in place
- To support all colleagues in dealing with challenging behaviour, following TEAM TEACH scripts and offering / accepting help as needed
- To support colleagues by providing appropriate feedback to ensure that techniques used are safe and effective
- To support colleagues by ensuring that any errors in techniques are reported to the TEAM TEACH tutors so that updates can be provided
- To seek advice from TEAM TEACH Tutors in school where needed to enable safe and effective practice is upheld at all times.
- To follow whistle blowing procedures where unsafe / inappropriate practice is seen
- To inform parents / carers of all incidents requiring physical intervention
- To follow schools recording systems for all significant incidents
- To follow the schools behaviour policy to reflect on and analyse student behaviour in order to inform future planning
- To support in reviewing relevant policies at Bents Green Specialist Secondary School as requested.
- To report any concerns regarding prohibited items to the Senior Leadership Team immediately on suspicion.

### Role of TEAM TEACH Tutors

A range of staff in school are qualified TEAM TEACH tutors. Currently these consist of the Behaviour and Safeguarding Deputy, 1 HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistants) and two Support Staff are also to be trained to join the team.

- To carry out duties associated with all staff in school as listed above.
- To provide advice and support to class teams in developing strategies for managing students challenging behaviour
- To ensure staff across school are correctly using TEAM TEACH techniques, providing support and training as needed
- To provide planned and ongoing training and support across all school staff
- To support the Senior Leadership Team in reviewing policies and recording and reporting systems at school
- To review all significant incidents with class teams to ensure correct recording and reporting takes place to minimise the risks of litigation

## Role of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- To ensure that staff receive TEAM TEACH training as needed across school within the schools Continual Professional Development (CPD) programme
- To lead on the development and review of all relevant policies and recording systems
- To report to the rest of SLT and to the governors data and information relating to behaviour and significant incidents
- To report to LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) any claims of inappropriate use of physical intervention / force
- To maintain current knowledge of guidance and legislation and ensure it is reflected in policy and practice
- To liaise with other agencies as needed to meet the holistic needs of all students and staff in school
- To ensure that all staff are made aware of the relevant policies and of any changes made
- The Head Teacher will be responsible for making decisions regarding the need to use reasonable force to search for prohibited items

## Role of Governors

- To support the development of relevant policy and practice at Bents Green Specialist Secondary School
- To ensure that all policies are ratified
- To ensure that all staff are made aware of relevant policies and that they are appropriately implemented across school
- To perform a range of monitoring activities to ensure that systems are effective across school, to include; regular meetings with the Senior Leadership Team / TEAM TEACH tutors / observations within school / discussions with staff and students / scrutiny of data and records.

## Role of Administrative Staff

- To input data into SIMS (school's information management system)
- To run reports for SLT as requested
- To support pastoral staff in arranging meetings, making telephone calls and sending out letters.

## Other staff / volunteers in School

The Head Teacher can authorise external support services in school to use physical intervention where necessary.

Volunteers in school **will not be** authorised to use reasonable force.

Where staff from support services are working with students in school it is the Head Teacher's responsibility to make sure that these staff are aware of school policy and practice and that they comply with this

## The use of touch and physical contact

At Bents Green School our aim is to provide clear guidance to school staff on the use of physical contact. We want staff to be able to meet the needs of the children with confidence whilst safeguarding themselves and those in their care. Physical contact is necessary and justifiable when it meets the needs of the pupil. Staff need to maintain a professional relationship with all students whilst providing the necessary care student's needs.

*"No School shall have a no touch policy"* – Use of Reasonable Force in Schools, November 2007.

The Use of Touch and Physical Contact should only be used in the purpose of providing:

- ✓ Personal Care e.g. toileting
- ✓ Physical restraint during a crisis situation
- ✓ Reassurance, support and help to a student

There are two separate gradients to be considered in relation to physical contact between people. Staff should always be mindful of the area of the body where contact is made and the gradient of force/ pressure that is used.

There are occasions where physical contact with students other than physical restraint/reasonable force is appropriate and necessary for example;

- Providing comfort, reassurance, praise or congratulations e.g. *a handshake, Hi Five, pat on the back.*
- Sensory support, therapeutic intervention or aspects of play e.g. as part of their planned provision *some students may require a back massage to soothe and calm.*
- Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument or an exercise / technique used during PE lessons
- To support engagement with resources and classroom activities.
- Administering first aid
- Holding the hand of a child moving around school or during off-site activities where it is appropriate to effectively support their individual needs or keep them safe.
- Supporting students with toileting or changing. The dignity of the child must be maintained at all times. Great care must be taken to ensure that all physical contact is specifically and only for the purpose of the operation being carried out.

There may be other instances where physical contact is made but it always needs to be reasonable, appropriate and necessary to the student's needs.

Any planned physical contact that is used as a part of a sensory diet, de-escalation strategies or supporting a child with toileting should be stated within the child's ISP/Care plan.

***Extracts taken from Physical Contact by Bernard Allen 2011 Director of Steaming Publishing.***