# Bishop Bronescombe C of E School

## *Physical Restraint and Safe Touch Policy*

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| Reviewed: | Oct 2017 | Reviewed by: | Debbie Carmichael |
| Due for review: | Oct 2018 | SMC or Governor responsible: | SMC |

School Aims

At Bishop Bronescombe School we aim to give all children:

- Access to a rich curriculum which enthuses and equips them for life as citizens in the 21st century.
- Opportunities to explore their own developing Christian faith and to have respect for the faith of others.
- High self esteem by feeling valued as a member of our school.
- A sense of fair play, treating others with dignity and respect.
- The chance to enjoy taking part in a vibrant, forward looking school, moving their learning forwards.

Bishop Bronescombe C of E School's motto is: **'Learning that lasts a lifetime'.**
Celtic Cross Education's Mission Statement is: **'We nurture, we learn, we achieve together.'**

General policy statement

All staff, governors, volunteer helpers, students and visitors need to give due regard to all of the policies and practices adopted by the school. Whilst it is acknowledged that people other than staff cannot be expected to read every policy before a visit to the school, it may be that further guidelines are necessary in addition to the Visitor Policy, which all visitors must acknowledge and accept upon arrival. All staff carry responsibility for the welfare and success of the pupils in our school. Staff will advise anyone who is working alongside us of the necessary protocols, procedures and policies we follow.

The purpose of this document

Positive relationships with significant adults is key to healthy development and emotional health and wellbeing. The purpose of this policy is to give clear guidelines on a code of conduct for all staff working with pupils to feel safe and secure. This policy applies to members of staff working with pupils who may need adult intervention in order to become emotionally regulated as a result of their behaviours.

The following purposes underpin our school's policy and practices:

- To create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe
- To protect every person in the school community from harm
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention, which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To develop and implement guidance for staff (teaching and non-teaching) so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such force might be applied.

The physical control or restraint of pupils is fraught with difficulties. This policy provides a framework and guidance for staff which is designed to ensure the safety of both pupils and adults in such circumstances.

This policy is based on guidance from online publications, Department for Education Advice (Feb 2014) and Cornwall County Council guidance. Staff should also refer to the school's policies on behaviour for learning, safeguarding & child protection, health and safety and special educational needs.

References to 'staff' in this policy applies to all **employed** adults on site, both paid and voluntary. All **teachers** are empowered to restrain. This does not, however, include students or peer tutors.

## Rationale

It is fundamental that pupils are supported to feel their emotions are accepted, validated, contained and soothed by a significant adult in order to promote healthy brain development. For some pupils, it can challenging to contain, channel and communicate emotional reactions safely and some children are likely to need the intervention of an adult to support their ability to manage their feelings, emotions and behaviours. Research suggests that for a frightened, sad or angry child who is struggling to contain emotions, safe touch may be appropriately used to enable healthy pro-social brain development as a result of facilitating and providing opportunity to be calmed, soothed and contained through safe touch.

## Safe Touch

All staff working with pupils likely to require the application of safe touch should understand and apply a range of strategies for positively de-escalating behaviours and emotional reactions. Before safe touch is applied, it is important to ensure that the below strategies have been considered or applied.

These strategies may include:

- The use of emotional coaching strategies
- Facilitating the use of calming techniques such as breathing.
- Providing clear, consistent boundaries
- Providing opportunities for de-escalation through distraction
- Removing objects from the proximity of the child should they cause risk or damage to others.
- Encouraging nearby pupils and adults to distance themselves from the child distressed to reduce the risk to others
- Following the child's individual behaviour plan/school's behaviour policy consistently.
- Considering the preventative measures outlined on the child's individual risk assessment. Risk assessments will be considered from two perspectives; environmental risk assessment and individual risk assessment.
- Providing the child with a different significant adult to promote de-escalation.

Under agreed and supervised conditions, staff will consider using safe touch as one of the means available to them for:

- Calming a distressed/angry child

- Containing a child who is incensed and out of control despite verbal attempts of de-escalation
- Containing a child within a safe space which will allow them to de-escalate their destructive behaviour e.g. damaging property
- Affirming or encouraging an anxious child with low-self-esteem
- Containing a child at risk to themselves
- Containing a child at risk to others

This policy rests on the belief that each staff member will recognise and identify the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch, carefully considering using safe touch as one of the last means of supporting the child to become emotionally calm and regulated. Staff should not, however, put themselves in personal danger merely to safeguard property

Staff should recognise that inappropriate or unnecessary use of touch can be damaging and traumatising and may not effectively follow our safeguarding and code of conduct policies. Safe touch is not to be used as a means of achieving compliance from pupils or as an impulsive, unplanned act. Staff using Safe Touch should have considered the impact applying touch will have on the child with their best interests at the heart of their decision.

Staff using Safe Touch should not be applying touch when working alone. Staff members choosing to apply Safe Touch should ensure they are under the supervision of at least one other member of staff to ensure that both children and adults are safeguarded.

Every staff member applying safe touch should ensure that it is used in a way that preserves the dignity and respect of all concerned. When using reasonable force/physical intervention/restraint/safe handling, the pupil's health and safety must always be considered. Physical interventions should involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the situation and calm the pupil. A calm and measured approach should be taken at all times. It should be appropriate to the particular pupil and be in accordance with the school's agreed strategies and the following procedure which must be adhered to at all times:

- Encouraging the pupil to stop the inappropriate behaviour.
- Ask the pupil to behave appropriately, clearly stating the desired behaviour and using positive calming strategies as outlined on their behaviour plans.
- Tell the pupil that physical intervention will take place if inappropriate behaviour continues.
- Intervene in a measured way.

## Physical restraint

Staff who have received specific training called "Team Teach" are: Jay Cross, Debi Allen, Oliver Deadman, Sophie Greenaway, Shuna Paciuszko, Sorrel Bounsall and Hannah Gray.

These staff will be alerted to an incident as a priority as they receive training every 2 years.

At Bishop Bronescombe C of E School, we believe that the use of reasonable force / physical restraint is only necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others

Such intervention would only occur if normal positive behaviour management has not worked.

Circumstances which potentially justify the use of force to restrain pupils:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- Pupils are fighting, causing risk of injury to themselves or others
- 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 or tries to leave school other than at the authorised time and this entails serious risk to the pupil's safety, the safety of other pupils or staff

The use of restraint should always be a **last resort**. If practical before intervention, a calm warning or instruction to stop should be given using non-threatening verbal and non-verbal body language. Every effort should be made to achieve a satisfactory outcome without physical intervention. **In all circumstances help must be sent for, even when immediate intervention is necessary.**

Try to seek the support of another adult before intervening. Restraint can take a variety of forms and staff should observe the following points:-

- Staff should **NOT** act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury.
- Staff should **NOT** slap, punch, kick or trip a pupil.
- Limbs should **NOT** be twisted or forced against joints.
- Staff should avoid touching/holding a pupil in a way that might be considered inappropriate.
- Pupils should **NOT** be held or pulled by the hair or ear.
- Any incident involving a significant level of force must be reported directly to The Senior Safeguarding Manager, County Hall, after consulting with the Head of School.
- Staff should not ignore an incident. If you do not feel able to intervene you should seek help immediately.

**'Reasonable Force'** should not be used for trivial misdemeanors and should always be proportionate to the circumstances of the incident. It should be used only to control or restrain and never with the intent to cause pain or harm. **It must, therefore, be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.**

In any action, due regard has to be taken to the age, understanding, gender and special needs/disability of the pupil. Specific individual pupils may have risk assessments and positive handling plans which offer specific advice and guidance.

Examples of the types of force which could be used include:

- Leading a pupil by the hand (but not pulling or dragging);
- Ushering a pupil away by placing caring hands to guide arms/body;
- The use of restrictive holds known as Team Teach. These will require specific expertise and training.

**The school accepts and understands that in accordance with the law corporal punishment is forbidden.**

## Carrying pupils

It should not be necessary to carry pupils of school age at any time. This is to preserve children's dignity but is also to safeguard the physical wellbeing of staff as to carry children of school age could cause physical injury such as back strain. This policy recognises that it may be appropriate to carry nursery-aged children.

This policy recognises the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled

children and children with special educational needs.

Pupils are NOT to be isolated or locked in a room by themselves except for in extreme circumstances. As detailed in the DfE guidance document – 'Behaviour and discipline in schools', January 2016:

"Schools can adopt a policy which allows disruptive pupils to be placed in an area away from other pupils for a limited period, in what are often referred to as seclusion or isolation rooms. If a school uses seclusion or isolation rooms as a disciplinary penalty this should be made clear in their behaviour policy. As with all other disciplinary penalties, schools must act reasonably in all the circumstances when using such rooms. Any use of isolation that prevents a child from leaving a room of their own free will should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The school must also ensure the health and safety of pupils and any requirements in relation to safeguarding and pupil welfare.

It is for individual schools to decide how long a pupil should be kept in seclusion or isolation, and for the staff member in charge to determine what pupils may and may not do during the time they are there. Schools should ensure that pupils are kept in seclusion or isolation no longer than is necessary and that their time spent there is used as constructively as possible. Schools should also allow pupils time to eat or use the toilet.'

The Ofsted inspector guidance document – 'Positive environments where children can flourish' also states "Isolation can also be used as a means of giving a child a place of safety."

## Documentation

Individual risk assessments and behaviour plans will be carried out on specific pupils who are more likely to require physical restraint.

Where physical intervention is a likelihood for specific pupils a Positive Handling Plan will be devised. This plan will be shared with relevant staff.

Where restraint has been necessary, the incident must be reported to the member of the SLT with responsibility for safeguarding children. This is currently Debbie Carmichael. A report should be written using Team Teach pro-formas, which can be obtained from the school office. The Team Teach book serves as a log of reported incidents.

In the event of any incident involving control or restraint, the appropriate pro-forma should be completed. Parents of the pupils involved will always be advised of an incident and it may be necessary for it to be followed up by other disciplinary action or pastoral support. This should be overseen by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

All members of staff and part time staff will be familiarised with this policy on at least an annual basis.

## Physical contact in other circumstances

There are occasions when physical contact is proper or necessary:

- PE lessons, sports coaching
- Technology and Music
- Administering first aid

- Specific SEND needs
- Touching may also be appropriate when comforting a pupil or when being congratulated or praised.

## Telling parents that force has been used against their child

If an incident occurs which requires the use of force, parents/carers will always be informed. This should be overseen by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

## Complaints

When a complaint is made the school will refer to the Department for Education guidance relating to
"Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff".

This does not mean that a member of staff will be suspended automatically.