



**Osaldwick Primary School  
Positive Handling Policy**

# **POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY**

**Policy Date: April 2016  
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## Osaldwick Primary School Positive Handling Policy

### Policy Statement

Selected staff members at Osaldwick Primary School are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request.

This policy has been written with reference to the following Government and Local Authority Documentation:

**Use of Reasonable Force – DFE 2013**

**Improving Behaviour and Attendance – DFES Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units. Sept 2007**

**Guidance on the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties. Sept 2003**

**Education Act, Section 550a, 1996**

**Positive Handling. Guidance for adults working and caring for children and young people.**  
Barking and Dagenham Local Authority

### Introduction

Osaldwick Primary School is an inclusive school, and as such we have children with a wide range of additional needs who attend our school. One of our aims here is to support children to learn strategies to manage their own behaviour. Some of the children who attend our school have complex issues and can sometimes experience some very strong and confusing feelings which they can “act out” in disruptive or dangerous ways. As identified in our Behaviour Management Policy we aim to provide an “emotionally containing” environment, based on the ideas of theorists such as Bowlby and Winnicott, which encourages children to develop the skills to express their feelings appropriately and safely. However, children often have to go through a process where they need an external locus of control to manage their behaviour before they can learn self control. At times this locus of control can include Physical Intervention by adults. Where possible we will use the **least intrusive** and **least restrictive** intervention for the **shortest time** to keep people safe.

The term ‘Positive Handling’ includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Positive Handling is everything we do in school to manage children’s behaviour in the most positive and supportive manner possible. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term ‘physical restraint’ is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. This is referred to as “Use of Force” in national guidance (DfE (2013) and replaces the term ‘Restrictive Physical Interventions’



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(DfES/DoH 2002). A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

**Physical techniques are based on providing the maximum amount of care, control and therapeutic support. Amongst the key messages are: “I care enough about you not to let you be out of control.” Team-Teach 2006 Course Manual pg 12/13**

Pupils with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Head Teacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils.

### **Examples of when such action may be reasonable are:**

- **to prevent injury to self or others**
- **to prevent damage to property**
- **to prevent the breakdown of discipline.**

This policy details how we implement the guidance at OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL. It should be considered alongside the most recent LA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

### **Positive Handling should be:**

- **essential to appropriate teaching, management and the duty of care for children and young people.**
- **appropriately and consistently applied across settings as required by guidance and statutory compliance;**
- **implemented with a view to promoting children’s welfare and safeguarding, developing safe working practices and minimising risks to children and adults.**
- **‘limited touch’, agreed with the child or young person where possible and never gratuitous or applied beyond that which is acceptable and reasonable or in a way which may be considered indecent;**
- **never used as punishment;**
- **never used secretly.**

(Barking and Dagenham Positive Handling Guidance p.1)

### **School Expectations**

The SLT takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the SLT. This policy has a clear focus.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.



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### **Reasonable, Proportionate and Necessary**

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable, proportionate and necessary. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

When physical intervention is considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

There is no legal definition of the term 'reasonable' but there are a number of considerations:-

- The degree of force used must be in proportion to the incident and the behaviour it is attempting to control.
- The degree of force used should be the minimum needed, but maximum force may be reasonable in some circumstances.
- A risk assessment should take into account the following before 'reasonable' force is used:-
  - The age of the pupil
  - The level of understanding
  - Sex of the child
  - Cultural influences
  - Child's characteristic ways of responding to stress and authority
  - Medication
  - Whether a weapon is involved
  - Availability of staff, their confidence, competence and self control of staff involved

The following key principles must be adhered to when using Positive Handling:

- The child should be warned verbally that Positive Handling will be used unless they can control themselves.
- Only 'reasonable' force should be used to gain control of the situation.
- A minimum of 2 members of staff should be involved if a full restraint is necessary. This is to ensure the safety of both children and staff.



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### Team Teach Training

It is the policy of OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL that staff working closely with pupils who require Positive Handling are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in our Positive Behaviour Management Policy. Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found on the Team Teach website ([www.team-teach.co.uk](http://www.team-teach.co.uk)).

**“How organisations safeguard people and promote emotional health and wellbeing is the focus of the common inspection framework introduced after The Children Act 2004. This legislation places a duty on key partners to work together to provide a coherent services which places the child at the centre. Physical interventions are only a small part of a broader range of positive handling strategies to address the needs of those whose behaviour presents a challenge. Our aim is to reduce the use of physical interventions by influencing attitudes, skills and knowledge. Over a period of time, organisations typically report a reduction in the number of incidents and injuries following training.”** Team-Teach 2006 Course Manual pg 12/13

Any staff at OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL who are expected to use planned physical intervention and are authorised by the Head Teacher, are trained in the **Team Teach** Model of Positive Handling. All Team Teach training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with DfES and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

Staff Training and Deployment is the responsibility of employers and managers, in this case the Head Teacher of Osaldwick Primary School.

- Physical health issues of all staff will be taken into account and documented in relation to their ability to perform their duties as defined by a Duty of Care and in relation to the behaviours and risks they are expected to manage.
- All staff working closely with pupils with SEMH will receive refresher training in PH strategies within a 24 month period.
- The Safeguarding Head will maintain and update a list of all staff that are trained and authorised to use PH strategies. This will include Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Nursery Nurses, Midday Supervisors and Endeavour Room Staff.
- SLT will endeavour to ensure that the physical techniques used are sufficiently robust and flexible enough to manage the challenging behaviours experienced in the school. In the event that a child's behaviour is deemed to be beyond the scope of the school, the child's placement will be reviewed with the LA and further recommendations made.



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The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our clients.

The skills and techniques taught on a Team-Teach course are as a result of an ongoing risk assessment in an effort to safeguard everyone involved in a violent incident where physical interventions are necessary.

***“Team-Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent “side-effect” of ensuring that the service user remains safe”.***

***(George Matthews – Team Teach Director)***

It is also recognised that staff may choose to respond with a technique from outside the Team Teach framework. This does not automatically render the use of such skill or technique necessarily improper, unacceptable or unlawful. Its use must be judged on whether or not it was reasonable, proportionate and necessary in those particular contexts and circumstances.

### **Help Protocols**

The expectation at OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else’s group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

### **Well Chosen Words**

A well chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can actually wind them up. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.



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### **The Last Resort Principle**

At OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

**“If necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen sometime in the predictable future.”** “The Control of Children in the Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act 1989” Para 10, Page 4 - Department of Health, 1997

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

### **Placing Physical Intervention in Context**

Physical Intervention is but one strategy available to staff and should always be seen as a last resort when all other strategies have failed. Physical interventions can be placed in 2 broad categories:

#### **Emergency Interventions:**

Emergency interventions will involve staff employing, where necessary, one or a combination of the strategies mentioned in the previous section in response to an incident. This will occur when all other strategies have been exhausted or the incident requires a rapid physical response (for example a child running on to a road).

#### **Planned Interventions:**

Planned interventions involve staff employing, where necessary, one or a combination of the strategies mentioned in the previous section as an agreed response to an identified behaviour. This will be documented in a Positive Handling Plan and will be reviewed half termly. Permission of parents / guardians will be endeavoured to be gained before initiating this as an accepted response. The Positive Handling Plan will list the accepted strategies to be used as well as strategies that may be used before hand. A risk assessment will also be completed identifying the risks involved in the procedure as well as the risks involved if a planned Physical Intervention is not used.

### **Risk Assessment and Planning for the use of Positive Handling**

As part of our support process it is necessary for us to ensure that we have identified and considered possible risk issues, put control measures in place to ensure the safety of children and staff and identified any further actions we may need to take in the near future. This will ensure that we are



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taking every reasonable action to implement a range of approaches to support and safeguard children. At OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL this process involves the following:

- Positive Handling Plans and Risk Assessments – any child with significant SEBD who requires Physical Intervention will have a Positive Handling Plan and Risk Assessment which details known triggers, preferred techniques and strategies to be used with the child. It will also identify techniques and strategies that will not be used. All staff will be informed of the contents of the PHP and appropriate strategies. The PHP will assume that all the de-escalation strategies required have been used prior to any PH techniques. The PHP will be compiled through discussion with the child and, ideally, his/her parents. PHP will be reviewed and updated every term.
- If an incident occurs and strategies are used that have not been planned for and changes to the PHP are deemed necessary, the PHP will be updated within 24 hours. Appropriate interventions will be put in place to ensure that there is a planned strategy should there be a repeat incident.
- Part of the process of developing a PHP for each child involves assessing the risks for both children and adults, on occasion it will be necessary to determine that the use of PH is not appropriate for a child, this may be due to their own personal circumstances or as a result of a medical condition. In these cases, it will be necessary to identify an alternative support mechanism that will ensure the safety of other children and adults.

### **Unreasonable use of Force**

It is never reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a pupil secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

### **Requirements of Responsible Adults**

At OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL there is an assumption that we are all responsible adults who will behave in a professional and responsible manner at all times. Responsible adults should:

- **Be seen to work in an open and transparent way;**
- **Report, discuss and take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of their service over any incident, including behaviour of colleagues, which may give rise to concern;**
- **Keep incidental and ongoing records of the use of Serious Incidents and of decisions made and further actions agreed, in accordance with the policy of the setting for keeping and maintaining records;**



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- Treat information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner;
- Apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality;
- Make sure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake;
- Be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them;
- Remain sensitive to any child appearing uncomfortable and recognise the potential for misinterpretation of actions;
- Be prepared to work together to deliver appropriate positive handling;
- Never act in a way which will place them at unnecessary risk;
- Record and report to their manager or supervisor any accident or injury to themselves or a child or young person in their care;
- Be responsible for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions; and
- Know what to do when presented with an emergency.

(Barking and Dagenham Positive Handling Guidance pg 7)

### **Health and Safety Considerations**

- Off site interventions. If it is considered necessary to use PH with a child when they are not onsite the same procedures will be followed as if they were on site. The incident needs to be recorded as soon as the child and adult are back on site and the parents need to be informed.
- Positional Asphyxia. "This term has been used to describe deaths which have been attributed to an individual's body position. Adverse effects of restraint include being unable to breathe, feeling sick or vomiting. Signs may include swelling to the face and neck, and petechiae (small blood-spots associated with asphyxiation) to the head, neck and chest.

In order to breathe effectively, an individual must not only have a clear airway but they must also be able to expand the chest and stomach to draw air into the lungs. At rest, only minimal chest wall movement is required and this is largely achieved by the diaphragm and the intercostal muscles between the ribs. Following exertion, or when an individual is upset or anxious, the oxygen demands of the body increase greatly. The rate and depth of breathing need to increase to supply these additional oxygen demands. To achieve this additional muscles in the shoulders, neck, chest wall and abdomen are essential in increasing lung inflation. Failure to supply the body with additional oxygen demand (particularly during or following a physical struggle) is dangerous and may lead to death within a few minutes, even if the individual is conscious and talking.

**"The fact that a person can complain does not mean that they can breathe."**Team-Teach 2006, Course Manual, p. 62.



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As part of the Team Teach training all staff will have been made aware of the Risks of Seated and Standing holds. Please refer to the Manual for more detailed information if required.

In order to prevent the possibility of Positional Asphyxia is important to ensure that all staff are using Team Teach adults appropriately and constantly watching for signs of discomfort. Consequently even if only one person is actually 'holding' a child we need to ensure that there is always another adult who can observe the child to ensure that they are able to breathe and not in any discomfort. Staff at OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL are not currently trained or authorised to use advanced ground holds.

### **Reporting and Recording of Positive Handling Incidents**

**“Use of physical intervention in school should be monitored in order to help staff learn from experience, promote the well being of the children in their care, and provide a basis for appropriate support.”** DFES LEA Guidance/0264/2003

All Serious Incidents at OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL, whether or not Physical Intervention is used, are recorded by the adults involved in the incident. The school has a bound book where the incident form number will be recorded along with the name of the child and the key adult involved in the incident. The incident will be recorded on an Incident Report Form within 24 hours of it occurring. The bound book and incident forms are kept in the Inclusion Manager's office.

Staff should:

- Read through the recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed. A record is written into the Incident Book. This refers to supporting sheets and other relevant information.

These forms will be monitored on a six weekly basis to monitor any trends, Health and Safety Issues and to identify any areas of concern. These reports will be passed to the Inclusion Manager / Headteacher for their information. In some cases we will also forward the forms to other professionals such as the Lead Professional Inclusion Officer or colleagues at CFCS or Social Care. Any recommendations made will be addressed and implemented where they are considered appropriate to the Service.

All incidents need to be reported to a child's parent to ensure that they are aware that PH has been used to support their child. In the majority of circumstances this contact will be made via a telephone call or in person.



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### **Procedures for reporting Injuries**

Within the Serious Incident Report form, space is provided for the reporting of injuries which occur during Positive Handling. It is important that staff and children are provided with basic first aid treatment for any injuries. Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is assessed for any injuries that require anything other than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported in accordance with OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL's procedures and recorded on a RIDDOR accident form.

### **The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff**

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase.

Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong.

Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

### **Further support structures**

At OSBALDWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL the following support structures are in place:

- All necessary staff are informed of the background information held on each child in order to best understand the function of their behaviour
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved, repairing relationships and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Daily debrief sessions for key staff to share experiences, concerns and access support from each other.
- Regular refresher meetings in the Team Teach strategies and techniques for all staff, and continuous review by SLT to inform these.



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### **Complaints**

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. Pupils should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

### **WB staff currently authorised to use Team Teach Positive Handling**

N Bryan-Smith  
Karen Ross  
Emily Robinson  
Suzanne Weston