



## **HILL VIEW SCHOOL POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY**

**September 2025**

**(Adapted from Oxfordshire County Council 'Model Positive Handling Policy  
for all Schools and Similar Children Settings Sept 2019')**

Hill View School believes in creating a safe and secure environment in which both children and adults feel safe, happy and valued. We strive to ensure that all our children are enabled to achieve their full potential and to be educated with respect and dignity. We have a whole school approach to behaviour known and understood by all staff, children, parents and outside agencies. The use of force upon any pupil by a member of staff is a serious matter, and should only be considered as a last resort. However, the law is clear and the Governing Body has a responsibility to all concerned, to support any member of staff who as a last resort uses reasonable force in accordance with the law, and with this policy.

### **1. Aims**

This policy has a clear focus:

- The paramount consideration is to safeguard the welfare of the child
- and to safeguard the welfare of staff and others working in Hill View School who act in good faith

Hill View School takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors. Touch is a sensitive issue requiring careful judgement. Eliminating the inappropriate use of restraint is vital and particularly important in relation to children who are still developing both physically and emotionally as any trauma at this formative stage in their development could be very damaging and have long term consequences. To safeguard both children and staff, Hill View School aims to provide clear guidance and appropriate training within the resources available.

This policy aims to provide guidance in relation to all children including children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health issues who may respond with challenging behaviour (verbal and non-verbal) when confronted with situations that they do not understand. This can cause anxiety or fear, however the likelihood of such behaviour can often be anticipated by those that know the child best. Measures to prevent or address this can be developed with the involvement of the child or young person and their family, careful assessment and where appropriate multi-agency planning and support. A preventative relationships-based approach to supporting children and young people whose behaviour is challenging is always preferable and reasonable force should only be used when it is appropriate and in line with the law, core values and ethical principles. This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Relationships Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Special Educational Needs Policy.

No matter how skillfully and sensitively pupils are managed, a small minority may occasionally engage in unsafe or aggressive behaviour, which may threaten the safety of themselves, other pupils and staff. Hill View School has a responsibility towards all pupils in our care and will take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the welfare of all pupils is safeguarded and that their safety is preserved. This may, on occasion, involve the use of physical handling or 'reasonable force'.

This policy aims to help Hill View School:

- *provide a safe and secure learning/working environment for children and adults;*
- *protect every person in the school community from harm;*
- *protect pupils from use of any physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful;*
- *guide staff (both teaching and non-teaching) as to what circumstance may require the use of reasonable force to restrain pupils and how this reasonable force may be applied.*
- *help staff to develop plans to support children and young people whose behaviour challenges, to reduce the incidents and risk associated with that behaviour; and to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in their care.*

The terms 'Positive Handling' and 'reasonable force' are used interchangeably in this Policy. The working definition of 'reasonable force' is:

*"the minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned."*

This guidance is taken from the most recent Governmental guidance set out in: 'Use of reasonable force Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013'

## **2. Summary of the procedure**

In the first instance, where a child's behaviour could present a significant risk of injury to people the following steps should be taken:

- a) Formal Risk Assessments at the school – these should be routine for staff working with children who exhibit behaviour that challenges staff working in the settings.
- b) Positive Handling Plans – risk management is an integral part of positive behaviour management planning. All children who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan that includes details of the settings and situations which increase risk. It should also detail any strategies which have found to be effective for that individual, along with any responses which are not recommended. Positive Handling Plans should be a result of multi-professional collaboration, including parents, and included in any Pupil Support Plan or SEND Plan or EHCP (where relevant to the child's needs).
- c) Positive Behaviour Management – wherever possible, alternatives to physical interventions that reward behaviour and act as preventative measures to mitigate against the use of reasonable force.
- d) Responding to unforeseen emergencies may involve the use of reasonable force – we acknowledge that the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality, the school and staff should recognise that there are unforeseen or emergency situations which staff will need to respond to at pace.

## **3. Use and Forms of Positive Handling**

The use of positive handling will always depend on the circumstances of the case. The staff at Hill View will take the following into consideration if a situation were to arise:

- *whether it is reasonable to use force, and the degree of force that could reasonably be employed, given the age, sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical conditions and any special educational needs of the pupil;*
- *the circumstances of the particular incident and whether use of reasonable force is required. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Physical force would not be used in any situation that clearly could be resolved without force;*
- *the degree of force employed will be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness*

*of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used will always be the minimum needed to defuse a situation and intended to reduce risk. Staff must always avoid touching or restraining a pupil in any way that could be interpreted as sexual or inappropriate conduct*

- whether the physical intervention is in the best interests of the child and the least intrusive and restrictive of those options which are likely to be effective*

Use of reasonable force will be limited to emergency situations and is seen by Hill View School as a last resort.

Situations that may require the use of reasonable force, include:

- *a pupil attacking a member of staff or another pupil;*
- *pupils fighting*
- *a pupil causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;*
- *a pupil running in an area where he/she might cause an accident resulting in injury to him/herself or others;*
- *a pupil absconding from a class to leave school*
- *a pupil seriously disrupting the learning of others*

The type of physical intervention that may be required in such circumstances includes:

- *physically interposing between pupils;*
- *blocking a pupil's path;*
- *holding a pupil;*
- *leading a pupil by the hand;*
- *shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of their back or the 'caring Cs' on the tops of arms;*
- *using more restrictive holds - in very extreme circumstances only, and where possible with a 'Team Teach' trained staff member*
- *If applied, reasonable force will be eased immediately as/when the pupil calms in response to the physical contact and verbal advice that the physical intervention will stop when they have become calm.*

Key staff (at least one member of SLT, at least one member of Inclusion Team, at least one member of Pastoral Team, at least one member of Enhanced Pathway Team) at Hill View School have received training from 'Team Teach' in safe handling techniques. Those staff members will remain up to date with national and local guidelines, procedures and protocols with regard to Positive Handling and Reasonable Force. They will be involved in the creation of Positive Handling Plans.

Hill View School recognises that the law strictly prohibits the use of force to intentionally cause pain, injury or humiliation and this will not occur under any circumstances.

Physical intervention (and thus reasonable force) will only be used to avert danger by preventing or deflecting a pupil's action or, for example, by removing a physical object that could be used to harm themselves or others.

The use of restraint will only be used in cases of exceptional circumstance, if a pupil appears unable to exercise self-control of their emotions or behaviour and is presenting as a threat to themselves or others. The use of reasonable force will always be applied in a calm and measured way.

Situations may occur when a member of staff will not intervene either because of risk of injury to themselves or the size/scale of the situation. In these circumstances the member of staff will remove anyone who may be at risk but not involved, summon assistance and/or call the police.

#### **4. Post incident**

- If injuries result from the application of reasonable force, medical help should be sought straight away, and this must be recorded on CPOMS.
- It is also important to ensure that staff and pupils are given emotional support and an opportunity to talk through the incident and discuss strategies to avoid it happening again. This will happen in an informal manner and then a formal 'Debrief' with all staff involved.
- As soon as possible after the incident parents/carers should be informed by telephone and provided with a copy of this policy. This conversation will also be recorded on CPOMS. If necessary details of the incident will be confirmed in writing;
- When assessing the incident, consideration may be given to involving multi-agency partners to offer support or advice;
- Where a pupil is responsible for injury to another, as well as holding him/her to account and issuing appropriate sanction, the pupil will be given the opportunity to repair the relationships with pupils and staff affected by the incident. The pupil will be offered appropriate support to help develop strategies for avoiding such crisis points in future.
- Any incident involving the use of restraint will be recorded on the school's CPOMS site (Child Protection Online Monitoring and Safeguarding system) and all relevant staff members will be alerted to the incident.
- Following an incident, consideration will be given to conducting a further risk assessment and reviewing the pupil's Positive Handling Plan, Individual Behaviour Plan or the Positive Handling Policy for the school.
- Serious incident reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. Each incident should be reviewed by the Head of School and Executive Principal who will instigate further action as required.

Any further information deemed necessary as a result of individual circumstances of any incident, e.g. witness statements etc. should be attached to the CPOMS incident record.

#### **5. Responsibilities**

##### **The Head of School**

- will ensure all staff know and understand their role and responsibility in the management of pupil behaviour and when/why the use of reasonable force may be required;
- will ensure an environmental risk assessment is done within the school to establish where there may be an increased risk of incidents, which may require the use of reasonable force, and decide the appropriate type and level of supervision required to minimise this risk. This will be reviewed annually or at any such point where it may be deemed that the level of risk has significantly changed.
- will seek the view of pupils and staff on the risk of incidents that may require the use of reasonable force through staff or pupil voice meetings and/or questionnaires.
- will use the views of pupils and staff, the risk assessment detailed above and the history of any such incidents to ensure necessary steps are planned and taken in order to minimise the risk of any incident which may require the use of reasonable force.
- will ensure individual risk assessments are carried out for a pupil who may have a likelihood of behaving in a manner which may require the use of reasonable force. This will be followed by an Individual Behaviour Plan of how to respond if such a situation were to arise. This will be reviewed annually or at any such point where it may be deemed that the level of risk has significantly changed.
- will ensure all necessary staff are aware of any plans made in relation to specific pupils who may pose a risk.
- will ensure that key staff have had "Team Teach" training
- will have an overview of all incidents recorded on CPOMS

### The Inclusion Lead/SENCo

- will liaise with members of staff with regard to any pupils whose needs may require special attention with regard to physical management.
- will liaise with families and outside agencies with regard to any pupils whose needs may require special attention with regard to physical management., to ensure appropriate and accurate support plans are put in place.

## 6. Training

Any training provider commissioned will be thoroughly checked for credibility, authority and currency of best practice. United Learning or The Local Authority recommended trainers will be used where possible. References will be checked.

## 7. Complaints

Parents/carers and pupils have the right to complain about actions taken by staff/employees. Schools and children's settings should have a formal Complaints Policy and procedure in place to respond to any complaints that may arise following an intervention.

Any complaints made against a member of staff should follow the school's complaints procedure.

## 8. Context and Monitoring of Policy

A copy of this policy is included in Hill View School's Safeguarding and Equality Portfolios which are held in the staff room, a hard copy is available on request from the school office. They can be viewed at any time through the school website. [www.hillview-school.co.uk](http://www.hillview-school.co.uk)

This policy forms part of the Safeguarding procedures at Hill View School and should be followed in conjunction with the School's *Safeguarding Pupils Policy*.

This policy was developed in consultation with parents/carers, staff and pupils and has regard to Oxfordshire County Council 'Model Positive Handling Policy for all Schools and Similar Children Settings Sept 2019'

**Executive Principal:** Mrs Claire Ferens

**Head of School:** Mrs Rebecca Rorich

**Governor with responsibility for SEND:** Mrs Sue Patrick

**SENCO:** Mrs Emma Jeavons

**SENCO Qualifications:** BE(Hons)QTS; NASENCO (2020) and DSL; SENCO is a member of SLT

**EY SEND Lead:** Mrs Emma Jeavons

**This policy will be reviewed annually**

**Agreed by Governing Body:**

**Review date:** July 2026 or when new National Guidance is published

