

# Beormund Primary School

## Positive Handling Policy

### Policy Statement

The staff at Beormund are trained to look after the pupils in their care. All staff have an induction programme when joining the school with a mentor and coach to guide them.

The staff have a 'duty of care' to intervene in order to prevent pupils hurting themselves or others, or putting themselves at risk by absconding from the school premises or from the safe supervision of staff. There may also be situations where physical interventions are used because the behaviour of a child puts themselves or others at risk, seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property.

Restrictive Physical Intervention is the positive application of force by staff, in order to overcome rigorous resistance; directing, deciding and controlling a person's free movement.

The purpose of its application should always be to safeguard the person, other people or prevent significant damage to property.

**All staff is fully trained to ensure that physical interventions are made only when absolutely necessary and in the best interests of the child, and that they are reasonable and proportionate. Staff will therefore be mindful that any intervention should be;**

- **necessary to fulfil our duty of care**
- **in the best interests of the child**
- **use minimum force for the shortest time**
- **minimise potential for injury, pain and distress**
- **Maintain dignity for the child.**

If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's agreed Positive Handling Policy, and the child's Personal Learning Plan/Risk Assessment (PLP/RA).

Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request, and all parents are involved and consulted in drawing up their child's PLP/RA.

### Introduction

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. 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. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' in the joint National Guidance (DfES/DOH 2004B), which is followed by the school except where doing so would not be in the best interests of the young person.

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.

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 Headteacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance at Beormund. It should be considered alongside the most recent LEA 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*.

## **School Expectations**

The Beormund staff team take seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school. Safeguarding of staff is an important element in safeguarding children; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management. This policy has a clear focus.

- The welfare and protection of the children in our care.
- The welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

## **Positive Behaviour Management**

All physical interventions at Beormund are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors that may influence unacceptable behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Personal Learning Plans/Risk Assessments by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are consulted and encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

## **Alternatives to Physical Controls**

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects that could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help when needed.

## **Modifications to Environment**

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils at Beormund may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. In general it is always a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used.

For example:

- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils, compasses and darts) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry pupil who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do the above all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners that present a risk?
- Are the design arrangements or furniture safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage pupils who are upset or going into crisis to take themselves to a safer place?

The ongoing dynamic risk assessments carried out by staff on a daily basis, by continuously making informed judgments and controlling the level of risk, are vital to ensuring the safest possible practice. These include the dynamic risk assessments where staff are faced with a situation that requires more immediate action.

However, the above considerations must be balanced with the need to focus on and take every opportunity for learning. We do not resolve an issue simply by removing the symptoms, or seeking to eliminate all of the risks or triggers of behaviour. It is integral to our remit and philosophy that we use the environment to teach safe behaviour, and to demonstrate trust in our pupils.

### **Help Protocols**

The expectation at Beormund 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. We have found that telling people to calm down usually escalates the situation. 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.

### **The Last Resort Principle**

At Beormund 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 some time in the predictable future.”  
*Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – “The Control of Children in the Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act 1989” – London: H M S O*

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a dynamic risk assessment and choose the surest way to safeguard and support children in their care.

It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention that may be effective.

Beormund has trained tutors in the Team Teach approach, currently Steve Sleat (Advanced), Conan King (Advanced), Andrew Henderson & Lisa Butcher (Intermediate); aims and guidelines central to this approach are incorporated within the policy. Central to this policy is the understanding that any Physical Intervention used by staff must be in accord with the idea of “Reasonable Force” and used only as a last resort once all other strategies have been exhausted. There is no legal definition of ‘reasonable force’. The use of force can only be regarded as reasonable if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it and the degree of force employed is proportionate to the level of challenging behaviour presented or the consequences it is intended to prevent.

It is essential that any discussion of Physical Intervention is set in the wider context of education and behaviour management; it should not be seen as an isolated technique. 95% of the time there will be no need for physical intervention and other methods can be proactively used.

### **Accepted Physical Interventions Used**

Listed below are the Team Teach strategies that have been taught to staff.

A range of personal safety responses to deal with:

Wrist & Hair grabs  
Bear Hugs & Bites

Neck Holds  
Punches & Kicks

A range of guides, escorts and restraints to manage effectively inappropriate and potentially damaging behaviours, effectively ensuring the nurturing environment within the school is maintained:

These provide a graded and gradual response aimed at intervening with the appropriate minimum amount of reasonable force. Restraints where 2 people are used will be deemed as a more restrictive hold. As the amount of restriction / number of people increases so does the risk; staff need to make a dynamic risk assessment based on the situation, as to the level at which they are going to intervene.

<b>Increase in Level of Intrusion</b>	<b>1. Person Standing / Walking</b> Friendly Hold Single Elbow Figure of Four Wrap      Double Elbow      Shield		<b>Associated Increase in Level of Risk</b>
	<b>2. Person Standing / Walking</b> Friendly Hold Single Elbow Figure of Four Wrap      Double Elbow      Shield	<b>1 Person to Chairs</b> Friendly Hold Single Elbow Figure of Four Wrap      Double Elbow      Shield	
	<b>2. Person to Chairs</b> Friendly Hold Single Elbow Figure of Four Wrap      Double Elbow      Shield		
	<b>1. Person to Ground Recovery</b> Friendly Hold Single Elbow Figure of Four Wrap      Double Elbow      Shield		
	<b>2. Person to Ground Recovery</b> Friendly Hold Single Elbow Figure of Four Wrap      Double Elbow      Shield		

NB Ground Recovery holds are the most restrictive and carry the highest risk.

Training on Physical Intervention given to staff will include sections on the background, theory, rationale behind the Team Teach approach as well as an understanding of personal space and body language before any physical techniques are taught. Any Physical Interventions used will need to take into account the age, cultural background, gender, stature, SEN and medical history of the student involved.

### Placing Physical Intervention in Context

Physical Intervention is never seen in isolation at Beormund Primary School. It 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 Personal Learning Plan/Risk Assessment and will be reviewed half termly. Permission of parents / guardians will be sought before initiating this as an accepted response and a meeting to discuss these plans are held at the beginning of each term and as and when then needed. The Personal Learning Plan/Risk Assessment will list the accepted strategies to be used as well as strategies that may be used beforehand.

Physical Intervention should be seen in an environmental context. If an appropriate curriculum is in place and there is an emphasis on a Total Communication environment then the necessity for Physical Interventions will be reduced, (Please see Teaching & Learning and Behaviour Management Policy for more information).

The diagram overleaf provides a model of Behaviour Management aimed at reducing the need for Physical Intervention. The emphasis is placed on strong foundations, followed by planning and then provides some 'tools' that can be used in the event of difficulties.

'Tools' or strategies can be divided into those that are preventative and those that are reactive.

Preventative Strategies need to be:

- clear and understood by all those who come into contact with the individual
- based on thoughts / discussion about possible reasons for Challenging Behaviour
- where possible functionally incompatible with the behaviour we are trying to stop.

Reactive Strategies need to be:

- clear and understood by all those who come into contact with the individual
- manageable
- focused on the behaviour not the child
- flexible
- aimed at de-escalation

Attached in the Appendices is a list of preventative and reactive strategies staff can use to avoid Physical Intervention

### **Proactive Physical Interventions**

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Behaviour Support Plan/Risk Assessment. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

### **Reasonable and Proportionate**

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. 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 controls are considered staff should carefully consider 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 and proportionate.

### **Unreasonable use of Force**

It is not 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 the necessary reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (NB 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 will not become part of a planned strategy at Beormund.

### **Health and Safety**

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the school. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action that seems to involve the least risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school and policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non-physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important to.

When considering a pupil's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

## **Risk Assessment**

Informal dynamic risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this situation, the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

## **Getting Help**

At Beormund the following support structures are in place:

- Personal Learning Plans/Risk Assessments kept on file in each classroom to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Briefing sessions in the morning (Tue, Wed & Thur) to update staff on current issues and share information.
- 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.
- Listening and learning sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Bebrief sessions for all staff to share experiences (Mon, Wed & Fri), concerns and access support from each other, led by a member of the SMT.
- Termly refresher meetings in Team Teach strategies and techniques for all staff, and continuous review by SMT to inform these.
- Staff access to psychotherapy drop-in sessions weekly, and aromatherapy / massage / reflexology / counselling sessions at least once a term.

## **Personal Learning plans with risk assessments (PLP's/RA's)**

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Personal Learning Plan/Risk Assessment. The plan details any strategies that have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses that are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Personal Learning plans should be considered alongside the Statement and any other planning documents that relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Personal Learning Plans/risk Assessments should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in and Pastoral Support Plan or IEP.

They are drawn up with the pupil and parents/ carers at the beginning of each term, and monitored weekly.

## **Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies**

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences. The key principals are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use at Beormund. In general, if staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

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

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of Beormund 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 that could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries that 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.

## **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 safeguarding. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety and to the SMT.

## **Training**

Staff authorised by the Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. (Please see record of authorisation)

Beormund has adopted the Team Teach Model of training. All training courses have been fully accredited by The Institute of Conflict Management (ICM) in accordance with DfES and Department of Health guidance. Qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines always provide positive handling training.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. Our preferred approach is for whole staff team training. Office staff may not require the same level of training in physical techniques as those working directly with the most challenging pupils, however all staff benefit from the whole school training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our clients. Once trained, staff should practice regularly guidance of our in-house instructors and bring any problems or concerns to them.

## **Recording**

Whenever overpowering force is used the incident must be recorded using the school Serious Incident Report forms. The Incident book forming the legal reference document is kept in the staff room, and the incident report forms are kept in staff shared area/ serious incident report. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record that should be completed within 24 hours. The details recorded are kept confidentially on electronic file.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully.
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names should be in full and
- Sign and date all forms.
- Sign the bound book and log the number.
- Write the number on the incident form and file in the relevant class file.

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 concise record should be written into the bound incident book, which can refer to supporting serious incident reports and other relevant information.

A copy of the current Positive Handling Policy and relevant sections of the Staff Practice Guide are archived alongside the individual records each year.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

## **Follow Up**

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Personal Learning Plan/Risk Assessment, behaviour management policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures. (See staff and pupil disciplinary policy)

## **Other Relevant Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Behaviour Policy

Exclusion Policy

Staff/Pupil Disciplinary Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Safeguarding Policy

This policy was implemented in April 2005.

It was last reviewed in September 2007, November 2010, November 2011, and December 2012, 2013, 2014 & 2015

It will be reviewed again in December 2016.