



Positive Handling Policy

Policy Written/Reviewed by	Joanne Skinner
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Date of Next Review	December 2026
Approved by Trust Board	

Rationale

This policy is based upon the original DfE Circular 10/98 and subsequent advice issued including 'Policy and Guidance for Schools on the Use of Positive Handling (March 2003 ECALS) document and 'The use of reasonable force July 2013'

The Rowans AP Academy is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents where restrictive physical intervention may become necessary when a child or young person behaves in an unexpected way. The response must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and use the minimum amount of force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety, consistent with the circumstances and with any training the staff may have received.

Staff will only use positive handling as a last resort in line with DfE advice. If used at all, it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.

Staff will view positive handling of pupils as a **last resort for the purposes of maintaining a safe environment**. If pupils are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every strategy will be used to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation.

Staff will understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment that is calm, supportive and trauma informed.

All staff will understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child, which lie beneath the behaviour as well as to the behaviour itself.

With reference to the DfE document 'The use of reasonable force' July 2013,

Introduction

At The Rowans AP Academy and the Primary provisions there may be children who demonstrate challenging behaviour at certain times, who present behaviours that may necessitate the use of restrictive physical intervention to prevent injury to themselves, staff and pupils, damage to property, or the breakdown of a safe and enjoyable learning environment.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all staff who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for positive handling. The policy is available to parents on request. Staff have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management/ de-escalation strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to ensure a safe and happy environment, where everybody in the school community feels safe and respected.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To provide a safe learning environment.
- To provide a framework in which all staff who come into contact with pupils are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the context of positive handling
- To support the school's Child Protection, Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies

The Law

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a statutory right for school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence or engaging in conduct that could be an offence
- causing injury to themselves or others
- damaging property
- prejudicing good order and discipline at the school

The power applies where the pupil is on school premises or any other place where s/he is in the lawful control or charge of the school staff member. This means that the power extends to school trips.

Definitions of positive handling

Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself/ herself, others or property.

Staff within our provisions have either completed the de-escalation and physical intervention training with Crisis Prevention or Team Teach.

The following objectives have been adopted by all staff;

- to promote the least intrusive positive handling strategy and a continuum of gradual and graded techniques, with an emphasis and preference for the use of verbal, non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before positive handling strategies are utilised
- to develop acceptable and authorised responses to disruptive, disturbing, angry and aggressive behaviours in a manner that maintains positive relationships and provides safety for all.
- to reduce the number of serious incidents involving physical controls in all settings and to emphasise the importance of exhausting behaviour management strategies in the first instance
- to increase the awareness of staff concerning the importance of recording and reporting, monitoring and evaluating, all incidents involving positive handling; to provide a process of repair and reflection for both staff and pupils.
- When members of staff use “restraint” they physically prevent a pupil from continuing what they were doing.
- The use of restraint techniques is usually used in more extreme circumstances, such as when two pupils are involved in a fight and physical intervention is needed to separate them.
- There is no statutory definition of ‘reasonable force’. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the circumstances of individual cases.

Deciding on whether the use of force is justified will depend in part upon the context in which the behaviour takes place. The test is whether the force used is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Use of force could not be justified to prevent trivial misbehaviour.

Staff have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management/ de-escalation strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

De-escalation strategies can include:

- Verbal advice and support
- Choices/consequences
- Using diversion & diffusion e.g., engaging the child in a discussion about a favoured topic
- Using negotiation
- Time out offered

- Re-assurance
- Planned ignoring
- Humour

Authorised staff

All staff in the school are authorised to use **physical contact & physical interventions** and staff trained by Crisis Prevention or Team Teach will be authorised to use **physical control/restraint** as a last resort when alternative strategies have failed.

Staff have a duty to inform the leadership team of any injuries which affect their ability to handle children.

Training

- Training for all staff will be made available
- No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training.
- This Positive Handling Policy will be reviewed at least once every two years.
- Training will be delivered on a needs-based approach and procedures are in place to monitor incidents.

Types of incidents

Incidents fall into three broad categories: -

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations, which fall within these categories, are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing damage or vandalism to property;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by misusing dangerous materials or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school.
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is **seriously** disrupting a lesson, causing distress to the pupils and/or a breakdown of order

Recording

Where physical control or restraint has been used a record of the incident will be kept. This record should be made in the 'Serious Incident Book' which is kept in the Head Teachers office.

- The serious incident book to be completed as soon as possible after the incident.
- The incident will be written up on ARBOR
- Parents will be informed.
- A Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form will be completed and returned to the Authority in situations where injury has occurred to either members of staff or pupils.
- Staff and children will be given basic first aid treatment for any injuries that require treatment. Where staff and pupils have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force, they should have access to emotional support.
- Any injuries to staff must be recorded on an accident form. There may be a management investigation carried out if deemed necessary.

Action after an incident

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedures:

- Review and update of pupil risk assessment and positive handling plan.
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Social Services)
- Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure if appropriate
- The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.
- In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited” items

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.