

Positive Handling Policy



Approved by Governors
November 2016

Positive handling is the positive application of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force with the intention of protecting a child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property. Our concern at Falcon Junior School is the care and protection for everyone within our school community and restraint may be needed on very rare occasions. We will endeavour to handle every situation with care and responsibility.

Staff are authorised to use reasonable physical intervention and have agreed to follow the principles of Norfolk Steps regarding handling children in school. The school will always follow our policy and parents are always fully informed about any situation that arises.

NORFOLK STEPS

All school staff were trained in the 'Norfolk Steps' approach to behaviour management. This will be refreshed periodically. Norfolk Steps is an approach that aims to reduce and manage conflict and build a positive school ethos. The training covers a range of areas, including conflict de-escalation, calm body language, debriefing and positive handling techniques.

In line with the approach, staff agreed on a number of principles:

- Staff should always speak to children respectfully and calmly – reducing conflict and leading by example.
- Staff's job is to help children and always try to reduce conflict, not do anything that may escalate it
- The importance of using a calm stance and de-escalation script in a conflict situation
- 'Recovery time' should be given for the child to calm down after an incident, after which time there should be a de-brief, usually carried out by someone not involved in the incident.
- A risk management plan should be completed for any child for whom there is a 'foreseeable risk' that they may behave in a way that will cause harm to themselves, others or property
- The importance of handling children in a safe, positive and dignified way
- The importance of being proactive in managing children's behaviour i.e. trying to avoid situations which may cause conflict
- The importance of recording incidents and the harm caused by them

Norfolk Steps Approach

De-escalation script is a prepared script to be used when a child is trying to engage adults or others in conflict. The script is:

1. Child's name
2. I can see something has happened
3. I'm here to help
4. Talk and I'll listen
5. Come with me and...

It is important that all staff use the same script, although it can be in a different order. The De-escalation script should be used repeatedly with no variation from it until the child has been persuaded to leave the situation and calm down.

Guiding and Escorting

Sometimes it may be necessary to guide children. All staff who have completed the Step On training have been trained how to do this in a way that does not harm the child or put anyone else at risk.

The most risk free way is to form a 'mitten' shape with the fingers and thumb and place just above the child's elbow. The elbow should NOT be held, so that the child is free to move away; any force exerted can only be by the child pushing back.

This can be extended to a more assertive 'escorting' position by standing side by side with the child and placing the 'mittens' on both of the child's elbows. The adult's shoulder should be behind the child to guide them. This position will lessen the risk of the child turning and lashing out. Both guides and escorts should be performed only if absolutely necessary and should be recorded on the appropriate form, along with an explanation of the reasons for it and what other strategies had been tried first.

Calm Stance

When a child is in a state where conflict is inevitable or already happening, adults must adopt an open body stance – 'side on' to the pupil and encourage the pupil to move by motioning with the hand which way to go.

Calm stance and escorting should usually be used in conjunction with the de-escalation script, in order to remove a child calmly and assertively from a conflict situation.

Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

Very occasionally incidents may occur where a child needs to be positively handled to prevent themselves or others from serious harm. This is only ever justified in cases of actual harm (as opposed to potential harm). In all cases, 95% is de-escalation, 5% RPI.

Staff are trained in these interventions on a needs only basis, and it is only these staff - as long as they have been authorized by the Headteacher - who can perform such actions. If a child presents a foreseeable risk, school should prepare a risk assessment for them and seek advice from the Norfolk Steps Team.

For staff who have not received this training, there may be occasions where they need to use restraint e.g. to stop a child running in front of a car, or other situations that involve immediate risk of harm. In all cases staff must use their best judgment (dynamic risk assessment) and ensure that all actions are reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Following any incident such as this, a written record is to be made in the bound and numbered RPI book within 24 hours, the parents will be informed, a risk assessment needs to be carried out and further training given if appropriate. The child will be given the opportunity to record their view and comments on the incident in the RPI book. This will be part of the de-brief process.