



**THE FEDERATION OF MELLERS  
PRIMARY SCHOOL & NOTTINGHAM  
NURSERY SCHOOL  
HANDLING POLICY  
January 2025**

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## **1. The Legal Framework**

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other policies and not a standalone policy.

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Under the Children Order 1995, it is only permissible as described under the heading “Physical Control”. Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It enables trained staff in the school, authorised by the Head teacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

(Examples of possible situations are given in Appendix 1)

## **2:1 Definition of Positive Handling at Mellers Primary School & Nottingham Nursery School and Training Centre**

This policy defines ‘Positive Handling’ in two senses – the day activity of working with children and extreme incidents requiring intervention to keep children safe.

There are day to day activities that require adults to have physical contact with children include holding hands to play a game, comforting a child and lifting children onto changing trays when needing intimate care (these are examples and not limited to.) Whilst, ‘Positive Handling’ is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming themselves or others or seriously damaging property.

## **2:2 General Policy Aims**

The policy aims to define both day to day physical contact & intervention named as ‘Positive Handling.’

Staff are aware of their duties in line with day-to-day contact with children and examples of which in when physical contact is required as part of this. In the policy we define this as ‘Manual Handling.’ Staff are also aware of boundaries that must be kept in place in line with safeguarding children and their welfare.

Staff at Mellers Primary School & Nottingham Nursery School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety / well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. *Our policy*

*on positive handling should therefore be read in conjunction with our Relationships Policy and our Safeguarding Policy.*

## **2:3 Specific Aims of the Handling Policy**

To protect every person in the school community from harm.

To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.

To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations. This is organised with the RPI (restrictive physical intervention) team from the Behaviour Support Team as part of the Nottingham City Inclusion services.

## **2:3 Definitions and examples of Manual Handling**

Within day-to-day activities, there may be instances where physical contact may be instigated by children or required as part of provision.

All moving and handling of a child or young person should be undertaken in a caring, sensitive manner, respecting their dignity at all times. We encourage children to instigate all forms of physical contact; however, staff may encourage children to hold hands or instigate this to support movement.

Children should be encouraged to walk and move freely without the need for adult intervention. However, if lifting is required, staff must lift children under the armpits using both hands and pulling them close into their body. Staff will remember that moving an object is not the same as lifting a child and will need to adjust accordingly to manage the weight of the child. If the child begins to struggle/wiggle whilst on the move, the adult must stop, put the child down and start again if necessary. This would also apply if children are being led by the hand and drop to the floor, so staff do not pull on the arm or lift by arms or wrists. Staff must never lift from the arm or wrists.

Staff must risk assess their own capacities and strength related to Manual Handling and the strength of the child and must not engage with this if they feel it would cause them harm. This applies to vulnerable adults (including but not limited to pregnant staff, those with physical disabilities etc.)

## **3. Why Use Positive Handling?**

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him / herself, others or property. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the Schools' policy on relationships, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in *loco parentis* and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and well being.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

### **3.1 Alternative Strategies**

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g., is a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g., use of assertiveness skills such as:

- the *broken record* in which an instruction is repeated until the pupil complies
- use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g., if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with the Schools' policy on relationships.

### **3.3 Use of Positive Handling**

**Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.**

Named staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective positive handling should be a last resort. When positive handling becomes necessary:

## DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint, if possible, e.g., above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

## DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Attempt to reason with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in sexual areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g., around the neck
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

## 3.4 Actions After an Incident

Positive handling often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. **A member of the leadership team should be informed of any incident as soon as possible** and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a **behaviour plan** (see appendix 2) which may include rewards and sanctions outside of the standard school policy as appropriate. It may also be appropriate for some children to have an **individual handling policy** (see appendix 3).

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately on the **Record of Incident requiring RPI form** (see appendix 4). All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available. A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

A copy of this should be digitally uploaded to the child's records and a copy made available for parents.

Safe and wellness checks will be done on the child and staff members involved with any physical intervention.

#### **4 Risk Assessments**

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupil (e.g., reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- Risk assessment written that will be shared with all staff working with the child (see appendix 5)
- Behaviour plan written that will be shared with all staff working with the child

In some instances, we may seek support from the Nottingham City Inclusion team services to ensure that we have the training and most up to date information in being able to support de-escalation strategies.

#### **5 Complaints**

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and social services department under child protection procedures. It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

Parents have the right to follow the complaints procedure on the Mellers Primary School & Nottingham Nursery School and Training Centre website if they cannot resolve the dispute through the normal procedure.

## **Appendix 1**

### **When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?**

Examples of situations that may require restraint are when:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- pupils fighting
- a pupil is 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 is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others
- a pupil absconding from a class or trying to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)
- a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave an area
- a pupil behaves in such a way that seriously disrupts a lesson.

This list is not exhaustive.

### **Further appendices available as separate documents:**

#### **Appendix 2 - Example of behaviour plan**

#### **Appendix 3 - Individual handling policy**

#### **Appendix 4 - Recording of RPI incident form**

#### **Appendix 5 - Risk assessment**