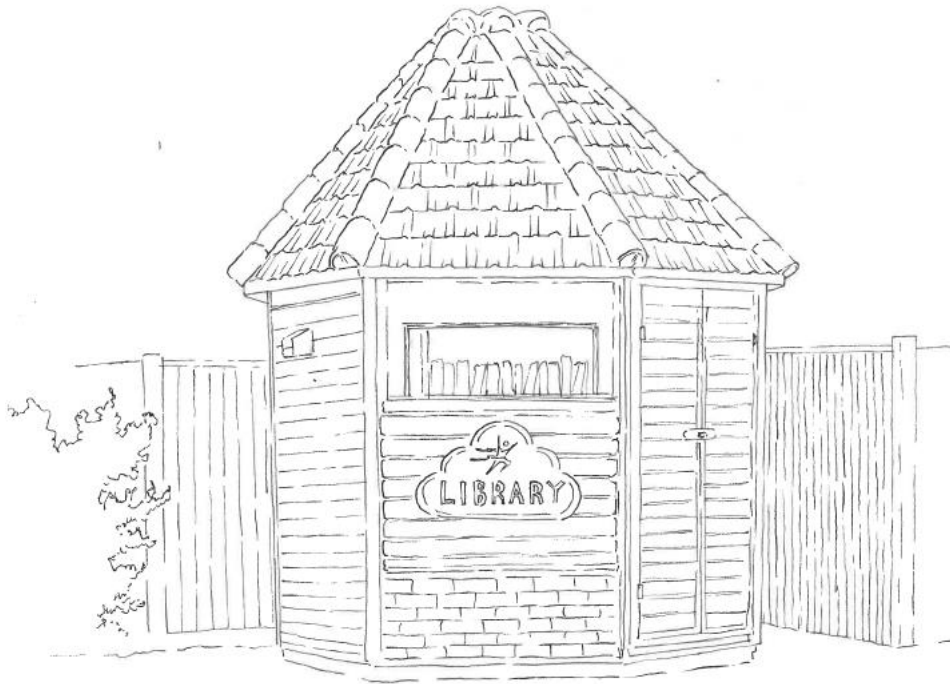




Brown's School Positive Handling Policy



<u>Full Name of Policy</u>	Positive Handling Policy
<u>Date of Approval</u>	September 2023
<u>Date of Next Formal Review</u>	September 2024



Introduction

This policy has been developed with reference to Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and to the guidance 'Use of reasonable force', DfE 2013 and the non-statutory guidance, 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention', 2019.

It is recognised that the vast majority of pupils in Brown's School respond positively to the school's behaviour procedures and expectations, however it is acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required. All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This power also applies to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying pupils on a school trip. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 allows schools the use of reasonable force to:

- ∞ prevent or stop the committing of any offence by a pupil;
- ∞ prevent or stop personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person (including the pupil themselves) by a pupil; or
- ∞ prevent or stop a pupil prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

This applies where a member of staff is on the school premises and elsewhere when a member of staff has lawful control of the children or young people concerned, for example, on a school trip.

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by teaching staff which involves a degree of physical contact with pupils and includes Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

Staff can use reasonable force to:

- ∞ remove a disruptive pupil from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to leave the room;
- ∞ prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- ∞ prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- ∞ prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- ∞ restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Staff at Brown's have a clear understanding that it is unlawful to use force as a punishment and only use the physical interventions which have been taught to them through Team Teach (appendix 2).

Core Values

Brown's School is committed to:

- ∞ uphold children and young people's rights. Children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties whose behaviour challenges have the same human rights as all children and young people and require additional help and support to overcome the difficulties their behaviour may present;
- ∞ treat its children and young people as full and valued members of the community whose views and preferences matter;
- ∞ work together with parents/carers as partners in the development and provision of support for pupils; and
- ∞ recognise that all professionals and services have a responsibility to work together to coordinate support for the children and families of children whose behaviour challenges.



Principles and Aims

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) lead a caring, calm, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

The SLT understands that use of physical intervention carries risks and can be damaging to children and young people but that it may be the only realistic response in some situations. The school promotes proactive, preventative and non-restrictive approaches in respect of behaviour that challenges so that, wherever possible, physical intervention is avoided.

The staff at Brown's school understand that they have a duty of care to ensure the safety of their pupils and the whole school community. Staff rely on their professional judgement and training to decide whether to physically intervene in a situation and this will depend on individual circumstances. Staff understand that any form of reasonable force, including restrictive physical intervention (RPI), should be reasonable and proportionate. Although individual members of staff cannot be required to use physical intervention, staff should always operate with an appropriate 'duty of care' and it could be argued that failing to take action (including a failure to use reasonable force) may in some circumstances breach that duty. (DfE guidance, 'Use of reasonable force', 2013).

The following principles apply:

- ∞ restrictive physical intervention may be necessary to safeguard the individual and/or others from serious injury or harm and sometimes it will be the only realistic option;
- ∞ the school will promote a positive approach to behaviour, including de-escalation techniques appropriate to the child or young person, to minimise the likelihood of or avoid the need to use RPI;
- ∞ the use of RPI is based on assessment of risk and is used to safeguard the individual or others;
- ∞ RPI should only be used where it is necessary to prevent the risk of serious harm, including injury to the child or young person, other children or young people, to staff, the public or others, if no intervention or a less restrictive intervention were undertaken;
- ∞ an intervention is in the best interests of the child or young person balanced against respecting the safety and dignity of all concerned, including other children, young people or adults present;
- ∞ restraint is not used to punish or with the intention of inflicting pain, suffering or humiliation;
- ∞ techniques used to restrain or restrict liberty of movement are reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances, risks and seriousness of harm and are applied with the minimum force necessary, for no longer than necessary, by appropriately trained staff;
- ∞ use of RPI, reasons for it and consequences of its use are documented, monitored, open and transparent; and
- ∞ when planning support and reviewing any type of plan which references RPI (such as a Positive Handling Plan), pupils and parents should be involved.

Therapy Team

Children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties may often respond with behaviour that challenges, for example if they experience sensory overload or when confronted with situations they do not understand, causing anxiety or fear. Such behaviour may be perceived as 'naughty' or 'bad' however staff have a good understanding of the difficulties of their pupils and know them well. Staff use this knowledge to anticipate challenging behaviour and put measures in place to identify triggers, de-escalate situations and prevent the need for physical intervention as much as possible.

The Therapy Team at Brown's, including Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Clinical Psychology, support the school to use evidence-based approaches to promote positive behaviour and support individual children and young people whose behaviour challenges. They also train staff to recognise and support children who have, for example, sensory needs, communication difficulties and mental health issues.



Team Teach Training

The school practises positive behaviour support and follows the principles and aims of Team Teach, which is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment and deployment of staff. It supports teaching, learning and caring by increasing staff confidence and competence, in responding to behaviours that challenge, whilst promoting and protecting positive relationships. Team Teach strategies are used to calm, de-escalate and divert attention in order to prevent hazardous behaviour and include prompts, comfort and reassuring touch, and in a small minority of cases, restrictive physical interventions. All staff are trained and the training is regularly updated. De-escalation techniques and key RPIs are practised regularly at staff meetings and insets to ensure that staff have confidence in care and control of pupils. The school has two members of staff who are Team Teach trainers.

Staff know that, wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before any intervention takes place. If the use of positive handling can be anticipated, e.g. a child refusing to come into school, a response team will be on standby. A form of physical intervention may involve staff doing the following:

- ∞ physically interposing themselves between pupils
- ∞ blocking a pupil's path
- ∞ escorting a pupil from a classroom or other area of the school
- ∞ shepherding a pupil away from a possible incident.

De-escalation Techniques

These are understood and practised by staff. See appendix 1 for a list of de-escalation strategies used.

The power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force, Headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for prohibited items, following advice in Searching, Screening and Confiscation (DfE 2022) Prohibited items are:

- ∞ 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.

Staff will **not** use force to search for items banned under school rules.

Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Plans

When it is likely that a child's behaviour may necessitate the use of RPI, the Headteacher will prepare a written risk assessment followed by an individual Positive Handling Plan. This will include any triggers leading to the behaviour, the de-escalation techniques which may work for the pupil, key staff who the pupil responds well to and any particular physical intervention which may work better than others. All staff will be given a copy of the plan to ensure that they have all the information required to keep a pupil and themselves safe.



Emergency Physical Interventions

In an unexpected, emergency situation, staff must make an immediate dynamic risk assessment and act accordingly to maintain the safety of all involved. All usual procedures will be followed, i.e. recording of incident, informing parents, post incident support for pupils and staff. Emergency physical interventions and dynamic risk assessments will be discussed with staff as part of their Team Teach training.

Recording of Incidents

All incidents involving staff using a physical intervention will be recorded in The Bound and Numbered Book (BaNB). This ensures that there is a record of every significant incident. The BaNB is recommended by Team Teach as an example of good practice as records are numbered sequentially to make it impossible for staff to remove/replace. The BaNB is an invaluable aid for SLT and assists with monitoring incidents, spotting trends and highlighting concerns. The information will inform a pupil's Positive Handling Plan.

Staff have had training on the BaNB and a glossary of words is available to assist with consistency. Staff are required to record significant incidents in the BaNB within 24 hours of an incident occurring. However, the school does not expect staff to complete paperwork directly after an upsetting incident and recognises that staff may need to be supported doing so.

The member of staff who initiated any RPI will record the incident in the BaNB in the Safeguarding Office under the guidance of the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Leads. Any supporting documents, i.e. witness statements (written on an Incident Sheet), will be referenced and recorded on the corresponding sheet.

Post Incident Support

Any incident involving RPI is likely to be highly emotional and distressing for all pupils and staff involved, whether they are involved directly or as observers. The SLT will ensure that support is made available to both staff and pupils. This will be offered in a timely manner when individuals are sufficiently calm to be able to talk about the incident.

Therapy staff will support pupils to understand why RPI was used and allow them to explain how they felt about it. Triggers for the behaviour will be explored and pupils will be helped to understand how they could make different choices about how they behave in the future to reduce the need for this type of intervention. This information will inform any Student Management Plan/Positive Handling Plan which is subsequently put into place.

Reporting of Incidents to parents/carers

A member of SLT will report any incident involving physical intervention to parents at the earliest opportunity. Parents will be given full details of what triggered the incident, how it was dealt with by staff and details of any use of RPI used. The school practises an 'open door policy' and parents are always welcome to come in and discuss significant incidents with a member of the school's SLT. If staff instigate a Positive Handling Plan for a pupil, parents are consulted and are involved in the process, alongside the pupil concerned.

Complaints

Complaints should be avoided if staff follow the Positive Handling Policy and the school's direction about the use of reasonable force. Early involvement of parents should also reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. When a parent makes a complaint about the use of force by a member of the school staff, it will be taken seriously and addressed by the Headteacher, following the school's complaints procedure. The Headteacher will ensure that the complaint is reported to the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) in accordance with Bromley procedures.



Whistleblowing

Whilst Team Teach training encourages the use of help protocols and reflective practice, it is acknowledged that physical intervention may be misapplied. Staff are reminded that part of their duty of care for pupils includes the requirement to report any such matters which cause them concern in relation to pupil management and welfare. All staff have a responsibility to inform the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Leads of any concerns they have observed regarding physical intervention.

Other physical contact with pupils

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force with a pupil is proper and necessary. This can include:

- ∞ holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when walking together around the school;
- ∞ comforting a distressed pupil;
- ∞ when a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- ∞ to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- ∞ to demonstrate exercises or techniques during Occupational Therapy sessions, PE lessons etc; and
- ∞ to give first aid.

Staff are mindful that some children who are on the Autistic Spectrum do not like to be touched.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies including Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour, SEN and Whistleblowing.

Reviewed in Staff Meeting

Person responsible for editing: George Mitchell in September 2023

_____ Signature

_____ Date

_____ Headteacher

_____ Date

This policy will be reviewed in September 2024



Appendix 1 De-escalation Techniques

- ∞ verbal advice and support
- ∞ firm, clear directions
- ∞ negotiation
- ∞ limited choices
- ∞ redirection
- ∞ distraction
- ∞ diversion
- ∞ reassurance
- ∞ planned ignoring
- ∞ contingent touch
- ∞ C.A.L.M. talking/stance - (**C**ommunicate, **A**wareness and **A**ssessment, **L**isten and **L**ook, **M**ake Safe)
- ∞ withdrawal offered
- ∞ withdrawal directed
- ∞ remove others from area
- ∞ change adult
- ∞ reminders about consequences
- ∞ humour
- ∞ success reminders

Appendix 2 Team Teach Physical Interventions

Staff have been trained to use the following restrictive physical interventions:

- ∞ Caring C - used to control or guide a pupil away from a situation (hands open in a C-frame, holding pupil above the elbows)
- ∞ Help Hug/Caring hug - also used to control or guide a pupil away from a situation (one hand moves to shoulder, other remains guiding above the elbow)
- ∞ T Wrap - standing, sitting or kneeling behind a smaller person at 90 degrees. The smaller person's wrists are crossed in front of their hips leaving elbows apart and ribs and abdomen unrestricted. The smaller person is not forced forward.
- ∞ Single Elbow - two carers standing, sitting or kneeling alongside the individual each holding the nearest forearm parallel to the ground with the elbow tucked back. The other Caring C supports the front of the shoulder. Supporting pressure is through the hips to protect backs and heads
- ∞ Figure of Four - standing, sitting or kneeling alongside the individual holding underneath the forearm with the outside hand while the nearest hand passes under the arm and over the individual's forearm to grip the carer's own wrist.