



Positive Behaviour Support Policy

This policy will be reviewed in full on a two-yearly basis.

This policy was reviewed and updated in February 2025

Next review date: February 2027

This policy is reviewed by the Children, Families and Community Committee.

Aim

In our school, keeping pupils safe is of paramount importance. We recognise that positive relationships between staff and pupils is the key to promoting good behaviour and to avoid challenging behaviour. However, in an inclusive school there may be occasions when behaviour poses a risk to pupils or others. This policy outlines how we support staff to manage incidents and how we promote positive relationships at school between staff and pupils.

As a school we are committed to

- Ensuring that all staff have a common understanding of behaviour as a form of communication and are supported to make sense of difficult or distressing behaviour
- Ensuring all staff understand the importance and significance of touch in a school environment
- Providing appropriate training to develop staff skills in de-escalation
- Making sure that staff have a shared understanding of risk and know how to reduce risk in a school environment



- Ensuring all staff are aware of their legal duties and the legal framework underpinning the management of challenging behaviour.
- Supporting staff to manage their own emotions when managing challenging behaviour and providing support where required after an incident.
- Supporting children and young people to manage their own behaviour.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other key school policies, in particular the Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, SEND Policy and the Policy for Managing Allegations against Staff.

1. Building Relationships and a Whole School Approach

We recognise that fostering good relationships amongst pupils, staff, parents and the local community is the key to positive behaviour support. As a school we are committed to developing a whole school approach (link to behaviour policy). This is built on mutual respect, trust and commitment to listening to, and involving pupils, parents and staff in developing our policies and practices.

We aim to be fair and consistent in how we support positive behaviour, providing clear rules, rewards and sanctions that are shared with the whole school community. These are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure their effectiveness. We understand the importance of creating a positive environment where adults model positive attitudes and interactions to all members of the school community, and where all pupils feel safe and welcome.

Evidence shows clear links between good behaviour and effective teaching and learning. ‘Quality First Teaching’¹ is our initial response to meet the additional needs of pupils. This includes appropriate training for our staff regarding the specific needs of our pupils, e.g. autism, speech and language needs, ADHD and attachment issues.

We recognise that whilst all pupils will benefit from a clear structure for behaviour, some pupils will require a more personalised approach. We will make all reasonable adjustments to support pupils’ additional needs to reduce the likelihood of high-risk behaviours. We also provide a range of interventions to meet the social and emotional needs of our pupils, these include Lego therapy, ELSA, pastoral support, a key adult, CAMHS in School (more information about our interventions and support can be found in our *SEND information report*).

Our school works in close partnership with other agencies and families to ensure that we provide timely and effective support. Parents and carers are involved when creating and reviewing SEN support plans and risk assessments. We provide a graduated response to a range of needs and we involve external agencies as appropriate.

¹ “quality first teaching” refers to high quality teaching including a broad range of teaching strategies, which are adapted to meet the needs of pupils, and relevant assessment to inform teaching and learning and the early identification of under achievement.



2. Behaviour as communication

“Behaviour is a means of communication and all behaviour has a purpose. Behaviour that challenges may signal a need for support. Behaviour policies and practice should recognise this and support children and young people to develop alternative ways of expressing themselves that achieve the same purpose but in more appropriate ways.”

Restraint and restrictive intervention: draft guidance (DoH and DfE November 2017 Paragraph 20)

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/restraint-and-restrictive-intervention-draft-guidance

In recognition of this, when behaviour is concerning we seek to analyse and identify triggers and the underlying needs. We believe that all staff have a responsibility to manage their own emotional responses to behaviour in recognition that their behaviour influences the behaviour of those around them including pupils. As a staff group we endeavour to be reflective practitioners e.g. undertaking training around different behaviour strategies (Emotion Coaching in 2023).

3. Touch and Relationships

“The department believes that the adoption of a ‘no contact’ policy at a school or college can leave staff unable to fully support and protect their pupils and students. It encourages headteachers, principals, governing bodies and proprietors to adopt sensible policies, which allow and support their staff to make appropriate physical contact.” (DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf

Touch occurs in many aspects of school life for example during music or PE lessons, when giving first aid, or during a fine motor skills activity. We recognise that appropriate touch is an important aspect of healthy relationships.

Children learn who they are and how the world is by forming relationships with people and things around them. The quality of a child’s relationship with significant adults is vital to their healthy development including their emotional health and wellbeing.

Some of our pupils who require emotional support at school may have experienced trauma or distress and some may not have had a positive start in life.

It is with this in mind that our staff seek to respond to pupils’ developmental needs by using appropriate safe touch. Research has shown the importance of safe touch as a positive contribution to brain development, mental health and the development of social skills.

Children need affection to remind them that someone cares. Our staff will only make physical contact with children in order to meet their physical, developmental, emotional or safety needs. When a child needs affection, reassurance or comfort, it is appropriate to respond in a manner suitable for that child developmental stage and needs. Staff must ensure that their actions do not make them vulnerable to misinterpretation and must always be aware of gender, cultural and individual factors that may play a part when considering appropriate touch. Always consider the best interest of the child.



4. Safety and Risk Reduction

“Behaviours that challenge are often foreseeable, though it may be difficult to predict exactly when they will occur or the degree of challenge they will pose. Settings and services can seek to improve foresight by:

- *Exploring why children or young people behave in ways that pose a risk*
- *Trying to understand the factors that underlie or influence the behaviour*
- *Recognising the early warning signs which indicate that the behaviour is beginning to emerge*
- *Developing the skills to manage difficult situations competently and sensitively.”*

Restraint and restrictive intervention: draft guidance (DoH and DfE November 2017)

“By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children, and agreeing them with parents and carers, schools and colleges can reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force.”

DfE, KCSIE 2021

As a school, we are committed to taking all reasonable steps to minimise behaviour that is a risk to pupils or to other members of the school community.

Our approach to planning support for our vulnerable pupils always seeks to be person centred and to capture the voice of the child and family where at all possible. Our graduated approach to pupils with SEN follows an ‘assess, plan, do, review’ process and ensures that we take an increasingly personalised and multi-agency approach to pupils with the highest level of needs.

As an inclusive school, we recognise that pupils with a variety of needs will require us to make reasonable adjustments to our environment in order to reduce levels of stress and anxiety. In addition, we aim to identify children’s individual triggers, to pre-empt difficulties where possible and to provide opportunities to calm if they are needed. We always follow up any high-risk incidents with pupils and with staff and take steps to reduce the likelihood of the situation happening again. Our staff are trained in de-escalation skills.

We provide support to pupils to teach coping strategies through our whole school Personal Social and Health Education programme, through our targeted small group work and through our Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) 1-1 sessions.

If a pupil’s behaviour presents a risk to themselves or to others, in the first instance we write a risk assessment to identify and put in place additional measures to lower the risk for all concerned. These are developed in dialogue with pupils and families. For pupils with the highest levels of need this is a multi-agency plan which includes a behaviour support plan. These are regularly reviewed by relevant staff to ensure that they remain effective.

“We start from the premise that staff should work positively and confidently with children and find the least intrusive way possible to support, empower and keep children safe” OFSTED - Positive Environments Where Children Can Flourish 2018



5. The Use of Physical Intervention

“Schools should not have a ‘no contact’ policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil, or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil causing harm.” DfE, *Use of Reasonable Force in Schools 2013*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

The DfE guidance on the use of force 2013 outlines the situations when force can legally be used in schools. Our approach is to focus on risk reduction to minimise the likelihood of restrictive physical interventions needing to be used in our school setting. Most behaviour can be anticipated and planned for.

“Any use of restraint carries risks. Risks may be to the child or young person whose behaviour challenges, other children and young people, staff, other adults or property. They may arise as a result of interactions between the child or young person and their environment, the direct impact of the child or young person’s challenging behaviour, or measures and interventions used to limit or manage risks to the child and/or others.

Those risks need to be balanced against the risks associated with other courses of action, including the risks of taking no action at all. Risks associated with applying restraint or deciding not to do so include causing physical injury, causing a flight response, psychological trauma, distress and emotional disturbance to the child or young person and to staff.”

Restraint and Restrictive Intervention: draft guidance, (DoH and DfE, November 2017)

We recognise as a school that there may be unexpected, exceptional circumstances where we might need to intervene physically to keep a pupil (or pupils) safe. This would always be a last resort and only where there is an imminent threat of danger to the child, other children or member of the school community. If a situation arose where the use of restrictive physical intervention was required, it would always be the least amount, for the least amount of time to keep the child or wider school community safe. Any use of restrictive physical interventions would need to be in the best interest of the child and be reasonable and proportionate in order to be lawful.

If the need ever arises to use a restrictive physical intervention we will always record the incident and contact parents/ carers as soon as possible to discuss. This would be followed by an immediate risk assessment which would include a review of the incident, the lead up to it, the incident itself, how it was responded to and the outcomes. This may include consultation with other agencies and will help to reduce the likelihood of the situation reoccurring.

Through our risk reduction approach, we aim to ensure that any incident where a restrictive physical intervention is required is very rare. We are also mindful of the impact of any type of restrictive physical intervention on children with SEND:



“When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, schools and colleges should in considering the risks carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups”.

KCSIE 2021

All our staff receive training in positive techniques which are likely to bring about a de-escalation of the situation. In addition, we will provide more in-depth training (e.g. CPI MAPA training) to a small group of inclusion staff which includes strategies dealing with common types of challenging behaviours if and when we feel that is appropriate.

6. Recording of Incidents and Monitoring

“Staff use effective de-escalation techniques and creative alternative strategies that are specific to the individual needs of children and learners. Reasonable force, including restraint, is only used in strict accordance with the legislative framework to protect the child and learner and those around them. All incidents are reviewed, recorded and monitored and the views of the child or learner are sought and understood. Monitoring of the management of behaviour is effective and the use of any restraint significantly reduces or ceases over time.”

Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015>

In line with our behaviour policy we record incidents of risky behaviours including incidents that may result in the use of a restrictive physical intervention. In addition we record any injuries to staff.

We do not use photos or filming of children as part of our recording of incidents.

We review our incident data on a regular basis which allows us to identify pupils who may need additional support and referral to appropriate outside agencies. We also report to governors about behaviour on a termly basis. As a school we are committed to analysing our behaviour data to support us to identify where we may need to make changes.

Model incident form

Under the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children have the right to express their views on all matters affecting them, and in relation to how behaviour is managed in schools this should always be with due respect for their human rights (article 28)

Pupil’s involvement therefore, should include full participation in the planning and review of environmental changes that can reduce the possibility of behaviours. Draft guidance from the department of health has also raised the expectation that schools should

“Involve children, young people and their parents/carers as appropriate in decisions relating to behaviour and use of restraint”

7. Searching, Screening and Confiscation



If our staff are concerned about items brought into school by pupils, they will follow the DFE guidance: *Searching, Screening and Confiscation at School 2015*.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>.

We are committed as a school to working in partnership with parents and carers to address concerns.

8. Seclusion/Isolation Rooms

Force cannot be used to enforce a seclusion except in an emergency. An emergency is a genuinely unforeseeable event and must be proportionate to the level of risk. If this course of action is taken, the staff involved will have needed to assess that this is the least restrictive response at that moment and must be mindful that this must be for the least amount of time. We recognise that as a general rule keeping a child in a room to contain them cannot be a planned response to challenging behaviour. We are aware that pupils (with or without learning disabilities) are likely to feel secluded even if they are not locked in - as the presence of staff outside a door may be enough to stop them leaving of their own free will, in which case isolation may become seclusion and may therefore not be lawful (even with parental consent).

“No school should restrict the liberty of a child or young person as a matter of routine and as part of a strategy to improve a pupil’s behaviour. It is not an acceptable substitute for adequate staffing levels or the appropriate expertise to meet a child’s needs....”

HMI conference 2014

As a school we recognise that we need to “ensure our expectations of children are developmentally appropriate and fair” (SEND C.o.P 2015) e.g. it would not be reasonable to isolate a child with ADHD for not sitting still.

In our school, we believe that children who are very distressed or anxious need our support. Our most vulnerable children have key adults that they can access at times of stress. We operate a “time in” approach with these children which gives them the support they need when they are distressed to support them to regulate their emotions.

If a child becomes very distressed in a classroom setting, generally it would be the staff member who has the best relationship with that child who would be the first on call to de-escalate the situation.

9. Concerns and complaints

If parents have concerns about how a matter has been dealt with, they should follow school procedures and communicate the concern with a member of the senior leadership team.

If there is a complaint, this should be processed through the school’s complaints procedure. This document is readily available on the school website.

Safeguarding concerns should be reported directly to the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Parents also have the right and may feel that it is more appropriate or necessary to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - See the Merton Children’s Safeguarding board’s website for contact details and procedures. In most instances however, the school should be the first port of call to report a concern.



As well as the duty of care to children's welfare, the school has a duty of care for staff too. Where a concern/allegation is raised about a staff member, it should be dealt with in a serious yet sensitive, confidential manner, with appropriate regard for staff welfare.

If a staff member has a concern about how another staff member has dealt with an incident, in the first instance - this should be reported to senior leadership (the head where possible). All staff have a responsibility to report where necessary. If, in the unlikely event the school does not appear to investigate /take appropriate action, the staff member also has the right to report the concern to the Merton LADO.

Children's welfare (emotion and physical) is of always of utmost importance.

