The Link Academy Trust

Positive Handling Policy 2021

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (EFSA). All Members of the Board of Trustees of the exempt charity are also Directors of the company; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director. This Policy applies to all academies within the Link Academy Trust.

The Trustees and Local Hub Governors will act in accordance with Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the Government guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' Sept 2020 to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils[1] at the schools within the Link Academy Trust.
The Link Academy Trust believes that good training for positive handling is vital and ensures that more than one member of staff in each academy is trained in Passive Intervention and Prevention Strategies (PIPS). Their support in any situation should be sought wherever possible.
Within the Link Academy Trust, we believe that positive handling should only be used as a last resort. It is only used when dealing with a situation where a child is putting others or themselves into danger or is flouting our rules to an unacceptable degree. We recognise that there are times when positive handling may be necessary, and this Policy sets out agreed criteria.

Some children find it difficult to retain control of their emotions or actions. Whilst supporting these children, staff need to recognise when the child is responding to the adult's presence and when this has ceased to happen.

Staff will intervene where a child is liable to hurt themselves either by their actions or putting themselves in danger e.g., running near a car. Equally, staff will intervene if a child's actions are liable to cause harm to, scare or intimidate another pupil, or cause damage to property, which again creates a significant risk of harm.

The aim of any action is to bring a situation to a quick and calm conclusion. However, staff will always need to weigh the situation carefully, as a physical response to a physical outburst can often be inflammatory. If the pupil can be maintained in a calm and safe environment away from other children (and stimulus) this would be a preferred option. In this situation a change of face/adult should be alerted and available to support.

If the child's outburst is around other children and appears to be escalating, staff need to encourage the aggressor to come to a safe, calming down area. If this fails, bring the other children away and remove the 'audience'. Again, other staff members should be alerted and available to support.

[1] References to 'pupils' throughout this policy includes all children and young people who receive education at this establishment.

Use of a calm, but authoritative voice and approach is important and again helps to de-escalate events.

If all calming, or 'ignoring' techniques fail and the risk remains significant, or is rapidly escalating, staff should consider the following points:

- Additional staff must be made aware or available. Do not leave the situation, but send a pupil if possible.
- Do not put yourself in danger by tackling a situation where you do not feel confident – support of a partner member of staff enables you both to be much more effective.
- It is preferred that staff trained in Passive Intervention and Prevention Strategies (PIPS) should be 'holding' a pupil.

Positive handling carries responsibilities to restrain without causing undue harm to the child.

*Never hold a child round the neck or in a position where breathing might be impeded.
Types of restraint which may be appropriate:

- Any holding tactic in which a young child is restrained without injury until the young child calms down.

- Physical contact with a young person designed to control the young person's movements which pose a danger (e.g. holding by the arms against the side of the body). Standing by the side of the young person is likely to minimise the risk to adult and young person.

- The holding of a young person's arms or legs to prevent / restrict striking / kicking. Holds should be with the palm of the hand where possible.

- Physically preventing a young person from exposing themselves to possible danger by leaving the premises.

The member of staff involved should advise the young person calmly and repeatedly that they could stop the need for restraint by applying self-control.
The young person should be released from restraint as soon as it is safely possible. Release must always be carried out in a planned, controlled way.

In all of the above, the person exercising the restraint must be aware of appropriate means and ways.

Physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

Equally, under no circumstances would it be permissible to use physical force as a form of punishment, to modify behaviour, or to make a pupil comply with an instruction.

Risk Assessment:

Although most pupils within the Link Academy Trust will never require any form of Positive Handling, staff may have to deal with instances of disturbed, distressed or distressing behaviour. It is therefore necessary to carry out risk assessments. In order to reduce risk as far as possible we will carefully manage:

- The environment
- Body language
- Adults as role models
- Share clear and understood expectations

Evidence of risk assessments, where a child presents an ongoing risk to self and others, is a valuable resource to support an application for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) additional funding and highlighting the severity of need.

Individual 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, it is our intention to plan how to respond. Such planning needs to address:

- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary);
- Involving the parents/carers to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the academy might need to take;
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance);
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate;
- If Positive Handling is likely to be necessary, this should be included in the pupil's IEP together with de-escalation strategies, the manner in which the pupil may be held, how support will be summoned and any medical factors to be considered.

In all cases of restraint the incident must be documented and reported. All staff present must write and sign an independent report to be given to the Academy Head and SEND Co-ordinator. Parents/carers must also be informed.

Summary:

Under the circumstances outlined in this policy, physical intervention by staff may involve:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Carefully pulling or pushing a pupil away from danger
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- In extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds

Staff must not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury to the pupil, for example by:

- Holding a pupil by the neck or collar
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a pupil
- Holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground
- Touching or holding a pupil in any way that might be considered indecent

The Trust's Positive Handling Policy will be discussed, reviewed and updated by the Senior Leadership team annually. This Policy will be reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum Committee annually and must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Policy reviewed by Standards & Curriculum: June 2021

Date approved by the Board of Trustees: 12 July 2021

Next Review: Summer Term 2022