



Positive Handling Policy

January 2023

Date Approved: _____

Signed: _____

Policy on the Use of Force by Staff to Control or Restrain Pupils

At Melin Primary School we have high expectations that encourage good habits, promote ambition and positive attitudes to learning. This will enable the children to grow to be literate, numerate, digitally competent and independent life-long learners. They will be happy, healthy, safe and contribute creatively and ethically to their community, Wales and the world.

Melin Primary School respects the Rights of the Child and firmly believes that it contributes positively to both the four purposes of our curriculum, but also our vision as a school. This policy supports these aims through the following rights:

- Article 1 Everyone under 18 has all these rights.
- Article 3 All adults should always do what is best for you.
- Article 23 If you are disabled, either mentally or physically, you have the right to special care and education to help you develop and lead a full life.
- Article 28 You have the right to education.
- Article 29 You have the right to education which tries to develop your personality and abilities as much as possible and encourages you to respect other people's rights and values and to respect the environment

Situations involving decisions about whether to use force can occur in any school.

Both using force and deciding not to can entail significant risks for pupils and staff. Melin Primary School has a clear policy on the use of force by staff which is an important part of minimising these risks. This policy has been drawn up following guidance from document number 041/2010: 'Safe and effective intervention – use of reasonable force and searching for weapons'

Objectives

The key objective of this policy is to maintain the safety of pupils and staff at all times both on site and off site. Positive handling, when applied as part of positive handling plan including de-escalation techniques can help prevent serious breaches of school discipline. It can prevent serious damage to property and other staff or children. However, it needs to reflect the need to preserve children and young people's rights.

Minimising the need to use force

At Melin Primary School, we aim to create a calm learning environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require using force arising. We take proactive and planned steps to ensure that staff and pupils show each other respect and that each individual feels valued, secure and able is helped to recognise and handle their emotions appropriately.

We use social and emotional well-being approaches such as SEAL, Circle Time, Philosophy for Children and Emotion Coaching to teach pupils how to recognise emotions, manage conflict and strong feelings and reduce adverse behaviours through co-regulation and co-learning. Emotion Coaching techniques should be used including 'connecting' with the pupil, 'relating' to them and their emotion and 'guiding' them to make better decisions regarding related behaviours in the future.

We believe in using our personal knowledge and awareness of our children to provide effective de-escalation of incidents if they do arise to significantly reduce the need for the use of positive handling.

Staff will only use positive handling when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force. However, only school staff, or approved members of long-term supply who are Team Teach trained and have an in-date award may use positive handling techniques with pupils.

Where possible, the school will look to be proactive and undertake risk assessments and subsequently positive handling plans for individual pupils may be at risk of displaying behaviours which would require positive handling to be used.

Staff authorised to use force

All teachers and staff the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils automatically have the statutory power to use force. Within Melin Primary School, school employed teachers, teaching assistants and school clerks are authorised to use Team Teach approved positive handling techniques where required.

Where teachers or teaching assistants are provided by an agency on a long term placement who have completed the Teach Teach training and are within their 'renewal date' will be able to follow the positive handling plans but should consult heavily with school employed staff, allowing them to take a lead in any such intervention if possible.

Deciding whether to use force

Staff should only use force when the potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force. Force should only be used when the chances of achieving the desired result by other means were low and the risk associated with not using force outweighed those of using force.

Staff will be kept informed about and advised how to deal with pupils who present particular risks to themselves or others (as a result of SEN and/or disabilities and/or other personal circumstances, such as domestic violence) through risk assessment distribution, positive handling plan distribution and instruction from a member of the Senior Management Team. Supply teachers and teaching assistants will be notified of pupils with positive handling plans in their class by a member of SMT.

Staff should seek to minimise the highest risks to their own safety and the safety of the children for example by calling the police if a pupil suspected of having a weapon seems likely to resist a search.

Using force

It is essential that all staff, pupils and parents understand the importance of only using the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired result.

Staff should, whenever possible, give a clear oral warning to the pupil that force may have to be used. Where de-escalation has not been successful and where, if possible support has been summoned and arrived by use of the 'green card', the 'caring c' action may be suitable to lead pupils away from a situation. Failing this, or where the 'caring c' may not be effective, other approved Team Teach strategies such as the single or double elbow, a figure four or 'wrap' may be used as appropriate to the size, age and situation that the pupil is in.

Types of force that are likely to injure a pupil (particularly anything that could constrict breathing) should only be used in extreme emergencies and where there was no viable alternative. As far as is possible, should not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.

Staff training

The school has decided to follow the suggestion of the Local Authority and access 'Team Teach' training. This training will be renewed every three years for all staff. New members of staff will access training through the authority as part of their induction.

Recording incidents

All incidents of positive handling being used will be reported to the headteacher verbally in the first instance and then in writing using the reporting form. The headteacher will then record this incident on My Concern in PDF format. The paperwork relating to the use of positive handling will be stored in the pupil's educational record in PDF format too.

If the headteacher is not on site, the deputy headteacher should be informed verbally and followed up with the form.

Reporting incidents

When positive handling is used, regardless whether it is part of an agreed positive handling plan, parents will both spoken to and will also be informed in writing with a section of the letter being returned by parents to acknowledge receipt. Every effort will also be made by either the class teacher or a member of senior management to discuss the use of the plan or positive handling techniques with the parent.

When appropriate, the school will liaise with external agencies such as the local education authority, the local authority children's services, the local

Children's Safeguarding Board, the Health and Safety Executive and the police.

Post-incident support

Arrangements for supporting staff and pupils involved in incidents are in place within the school. Urgent actions including meeting immediate physical needs and rebuilding relationships are essential and should be carried out as a matter of utmost importance.

As part of the reporting and recording procedures, a member of SMT should review the actions and scenario and ensure that lessons are learned from the incident and the use of force.

Complaints and allegations

The school's arrangements for dealing with complaints and allegations of misconduct arising from incidents will be dealt with via the School Complaint Procedure or, where appropriate, safeguarding and child protection policies.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed in light of changes of advice from the local authority or Welsh Government or every three years.

T. Richards
January 2023