

Vision statement
BRIDGE is a family of schools committed to high performance. We embrace a universal culture of excellence in the learning communities we build.
Aims
To continue building a Multi Academy Trust that promotes strong values, an excellent education for all children, develops highly effective School Teams, is financially secure, and ensures effective governance.
To nurture, support and encourage aspirations by providing excellent learning opportunities, inspiring teaching environments, and a creative approach to curriculum subjects that secures engagement from all our learners resulting in high levels of academic progress and outcomes.
To develop outstanding leadership, teaching and support teams by valuing committed, reflective staff, and providing rigorous and challenging professional development for continual School Improvement.
To develop hubs as centres of learning excellence to disseminate best practice, firstly within and then beyond, the Trust.
To successfully engage and communicate with parents/carers in our local communities, supporting the children's progress, well-being and achievement.

Safer Handling Policy

Purpose
This document outlines the operational management of Safer Handling (sometimes called restraint) at Bridge Schools Trust. It should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour and Safeguarding policies.

May 2022

Policy Version	V1.0	Next Review Date	05/23
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Aims:

- Ensure that all members of the school community are aware of the guidelines and procedures which may be used to protect children and staff.
- 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 enables them to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.
- Ensure that all staff recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety / well-being.

Definition of Safer Handling at Bridge Schools Trust

Safer handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming him/herself or others, or seriously damaging property. Safer Handling should only be applied where all other responses have been exhausted and where it is in the best interest of the child involved and/or other children.

1. The Legal Framework

DfE Circular: Use of Reasonable Force, 2013. (DFE-00295-2013) Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006 All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. The law forbids Corporal Punishment; any degree of physical contact intended to cause pain, injury or humiliation.

Safer handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. It enables trained staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, 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. Why Use Safer Handling?

Safer 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 or others. 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 safer handling would be necessary or appropriate. Staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff are acting in *loco parentis* and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and well being.

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

3. Alternative Strategies

There are some situations in which the need for Safer Handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (eg 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:

- Repeating an instruction until the pupil complies
- Use of a distraction, 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 school's policy on behaviour.

4. Use of Safer Handling

Safer 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.

The Headteacher can authorise staff to use reasonable force in applying safer 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.

When safer handling becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff as quickly as possible
- Involve another staff member, and transfer adult, if you fear loss of control
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

5. Actions After An Incident

Safer 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. Parents should be informed.

All incidents should be recorded immediately on 'Arbor' 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.

6 Risk Assessments

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a Safer Handling Plan, written and agreed by the SENDCo, in partnership with the parent/carer. If we become aware

that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, a plan detailing how to respond if the situation arises will be required.

This 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

Safer Handling will be immediately discontinued if the child shows any of the following:

- Difficulty breathing/rapid breathing
- Seizures
- Vomiting
- Choking
- Blue colouration to extremities
- Discolouration/paleness of skin
- Swelling

7 Complaints

A clear safer handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. 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/or Social Services under Child Protection procedures.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

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.
- In an emergency situation.