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# **SPORTING STARS ACADEMY**

## **SAFER HANDLING POLICY**

**Current Version Valid From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023**

**To be Reviewed in September 2024**

**Reviewed by The Directors**

*September 2023 – September 2024*

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### 1. School Statement of Purpose

At Sporting Stars Academy, we are committed to providing a secure and stimulating environment for all of our children. We value excellence, recognise achievement and celebrate the success and effort of all, encouraging strong role models where everyone feels valued and is encouraged to recognise and achieve their full potential.

#### 1.1. Our Aims:

- To provide a happy, caring and stimulating environment where quality relationships are important, and each individual is valued and respected
- To enable everyone to experience success and help children to develop lively, enquiring, imaginative and creative minds and reach their full potential
- To prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of adulthood in a changing world
- To provide an exciting, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum appropriate for individual needs
- To fulfil potential in all areas of school life
- To work together in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals so that they are fully informed and involved in their children's education

#### 1.2 Inclusion

Sporting Stars Academy is committed to creating a school in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every member of the school matter. We seek to create opportunities for all students to achieve their very best in terms of academic and personal attainments.

We aim to make the curriculum accessible to all in a stimulating learning environment where success is celebrated. We endeavour to work with parents/carers, other professionals and members of the community to create a supportive environment for learning. We strive to make everyone feel welcome.

Sporting Stars Academy predominantly caters for children who present with social, emotional and mental health difficulties and is therefore open to the risk as a setting in terms of Physical Intervention. As a result, we have used the DFES document: Use of Reasonable Force - Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2013) and Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (September 2023) as our primary reference in matters concerning physical intervention.

The Headteacher and the school's Directors recognise the serious implications for all concerned when the use of physical intervention becomes necessary. In particular, they acknowledge the stress and very real anxiety that such actions can and do generate in children and young people, parents/carers and staff. The production of this policy and guidance will ensure everyone has a positive and safe way of responding to behaviour that requires the use of physical intervention.

## **2. Introduction**

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with students who may need to be safely handled. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

## **3. Purpose of the Policy**

Good professional relationships between staff and students are vital to ensure good order in the school. It is recognised that the majority of students in school respond positively to the discipline practised by the staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all students and staff. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of Safer Handling may be required.

The objectives of our policy are to maintain our duty of care in:

- Protecting the safety of all students
- Protecting the safety of all staff
- Protecting the good order of the learning environment
- Preventing damage to property
- Preventing students from committing criminal acts

In discharging that duty of care, staff might be required to use force for the purpose of preventing a student from, for example:

- Self-harming
- Causing injury to other students or staff
- Causing personal injury
- Absconding
- Committing an offence
- Causing damage to property
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff:

- Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where safer handling is necessary
- Are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur

The application of any form of safer handling places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for safer handling.

Safer handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when students, staff or property are at risk.

#### **4. Definitions**

(a) *Physical Contact Situations* in which proper physical contact takes place between staff and students, e.g. in games/PE or to comfort pupils.

(b) *Physical Intervention* may be used to divert a student from a destructive or disruptive action, for example, guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

(c) *Safer Handling* this will involve the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to students, staff or property or if good order is being seriously prejudiced. All such incidents will be recorded.

#### **5. Underpinning Values**

Everyone attending or working at Sporting Stars Academy has the right to:

- A recognition of their unique identity
- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Learn and work in a safe environment
- Be protected from harm

Students attending this school and their parents/carers have a right to:

- Individual consideration of students' needs by staff that have responsibility for their care and protection
- Expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies
- Be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all students and staff working in the school
- Be informed about the school's complaint procedure

The school will ensure that all students understand the need for, and respond to, clearly defined limits which manage behaviour in the school.

On successfully completing the student induction process, all students will follow Sporting Stars Academy's Behaviour Policy.

In order to minimise the use of force, staff work within the framework of the following principles and procedures:

- Creating and maintaining a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require using force
- Using learning approaches to teach students how to manage conflict and strong feelings
- De-escalating incidents if they do arise
- Only using force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force
- Using risk assessments and individual support plans for individual pupils

## **6. Training**

Safer Handling training will be made available to all staff and will be the responsibility of the Headteacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake Safer Handling without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

Refresher training will be undertaken annually and/or in accordance with statutory guidance.

## **7. Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour**

Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively. Where unacceptable behaviour that threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, is displayed, some or all of the following approaches will be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

a) Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with a request for the student to refrain; this includes negotiation, care and concern.

b) Further verbal reprimand stating:

- This is the second request for compliance
- An explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable
- An explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.

c) Warning of the potential need to intervene physically and that this will cease when the student complies. If possible, summon assistance.

d) Physical intervention. Reasonable physical intervention using the minimum degree of contact to prevent a student from harming him or herself, others or property.

## **8. Escalating Situations**

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006: Power of Members of Staff to Use Force stipulates that reasonable physical intervention may be used to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its students, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom, during a teaching session or elsewhere (this includes authorised out-of-school activities)
- Self-injuring or placing themselves at risk
- Injuring others
- Causing damage to property, including that of the student themselves
- Committing a criminal offence (even if the student is below the age of criminal responsibility)

## 9. Types of Incidents

Incidents described above fall into three broad categories:

- Where action is necessary for self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury
- Where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property
- Where a student is behaving in a way that compromises good order or discipline

Examples of situations which fall within one of the first two categories are:

- A student attacks a member of staff or another student
- Students are fighting
- A student is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of materials or objects
- A student is running in a corridor or in a way which they might have or may cause an accident likely to injure themselves
- A student absconds from a class or tries to leave the school

Examples of behaviour which fall into the third category are:

- A student persistently refusing to do as requested
- A student is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

## 10. Acceptable Measures of Physical Intervention

Safer Handling can only be deemed reasonable if:

- It is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident
- It is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent
- It is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result
- The age, understanding and gender of the student are taken into account
- It is likely to achieve the desired result

## 11. Deciding Whether to Use Force

Staff must consider the following guidelines when deciding whether or not to use force:

- There is a clear and unequivocal emphasis on the rights of students to be kept safe at all times
- Physical intervention should only be used when:
  - The situation is or is likely to become dangerous for students and/or staff or when there is a risk to the maintenance of good order
  - A criminal act is being committed, or property is being damaged
  - Previous history suggests that failure to act promptly will result in any of the above, and all else has been tried
  - The potential consequences of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force
  - The chances of achieving the desired result by other means were low, or the risks associated with not using force outweighed those of using force

Individual Support Plans (ISPs) and Risk Assessments (RA's) are produced for all students to inform staff of the particular risks that each student may present. The plan will also advise where a student presents a difficulty as a result of SEN/disability or personal circumstance, such as domestic violence.

After any use of physical intervention, staff must update the ISP and RA in line with any changes needed to procedures.

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervention.

The form of physical intervention may involve staff doing the following:

- Physically interposing themselves between students
- Escorting a student
- Shepherding a student away

Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the school's overall ethos, the way staff exercise their responsibilities, and the behaviour management strategies used.

## **12. Recording**

Where Safer Handling has been used, a record of the incident always needs to be kept. All recording needs to be completed on the day of the incident and needs to include the following:

- The name of the student
- The date, time and location of the incident
- A brief description of the incident and actions taken
- Details of the attempts made to calm the situation
- The names of people who witnessed the situation
- Details of any damage/harm to persons or property
- The name of the person informing parents/carers
- After investigation, a summary of actions taken

All incidents involving restraint and/or the use of significant force must be recorded on the Incident and Safer Handling form. The form must be completed on the day of the incident and must include the names of all members of staff involved and any witnesses.

The form must be given to the Headteacher. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the forms are viewed and signed, then logged electronically on Integris and noted in the Safer Handling log.

When an Incident and Safer Handling form has been completed for a particular student, it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure a phone call is made to the student's parents/carers on the day of the incident. One call is sufficient for multiple incidents.

## **13. Action After an Incident**

The positive debrief is an essential element of the procedure following the use of restraint or significant force. This takes place when all parties have recovered. Staff will encourage students to explore their feelings before the incident and how those feelings impacted their behaviour. While acknowledging and understanding the student's feelings, staff should help the student plan alternative behaviours to respond to those feelings to avoid physical intervention in the future. Staff must ensure that students understand why physical force was used.

Similar post-incident support is also available for members of staff where the need arises. It is an expectation that all staff acknowledge the importance of using a senior member of staff to discuss any personal issues encountered due to the use of physical restraint.

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a student, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Safeguarding
- Staff Disciplinary
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions
- Complaints Policy

Members of staff will be kept informed of any action taken. In case of any action concerning a member of staff, they will be advised to seek advice from their professional association/union.

#### **14. Risk Assessments**

If we become aware that a student is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address the following:

- Strategies to be used prior to intervention
- Ways of avoiding 'triggers' if these are known
- Involvement of parents/carers 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
- The school's duty of care to all students and staff

#### **15. Complaints**

The availability of a clear policy regarding safer handling and early involvement of parents/carers should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's Complaints Policy.

The HR Manager will be informed of complaints.

#### **16. Monitoring of Incidents**

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use safer handling, this will always be recorded and documented. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any student(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using safer handling. This process will address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all policies and will be reviewed annually or after any major incident.



**Appendix 1 – Incident and Safer Handling Form**

**Section A**

Name of Student:		Class:	
Date:		Year Group:	
Location:		Time:	
Name of Staff Completing the Form:			

<b>Names of Staff/Witnesses:</b>
<b>Names of Other Students Involved:</b>

<b>Behaviour Category</b>			
Physical Assault or Attempted Physical Assault Against Student(s)		Verbal Aggression Against Student(s)	
Physical Assault or Attempted Physical Assault Against Staff		Verbal Aggression Against Staff	
Injury/Potential Injury/Causing Injury		Self-Harm	
Vandalism		Telephones/Social Media	
Attempted Damage		Absconding	
Use of Drugs/Alcohol		Incident Outside of School Hours	
Anti-Social Behaviour		Ignoring Staff Instructions and/or Directives/Unacceptable & Disruptive Behaviour	
Bullying		Racist Abuse	
Sexual Misconduct		Other	

<p><b>Antecedents</b> (what were the potential triggers for the incident, what emotional state did the student come into school in, did they express any thoughts or feelings?):</p>          
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**Details of the Incident** (fill in as much detail as possible, including locations, staff and students involved, etc):

<b>Remained in Class</b>		<b>Time Out</b>		<b>Return to Class</b>	
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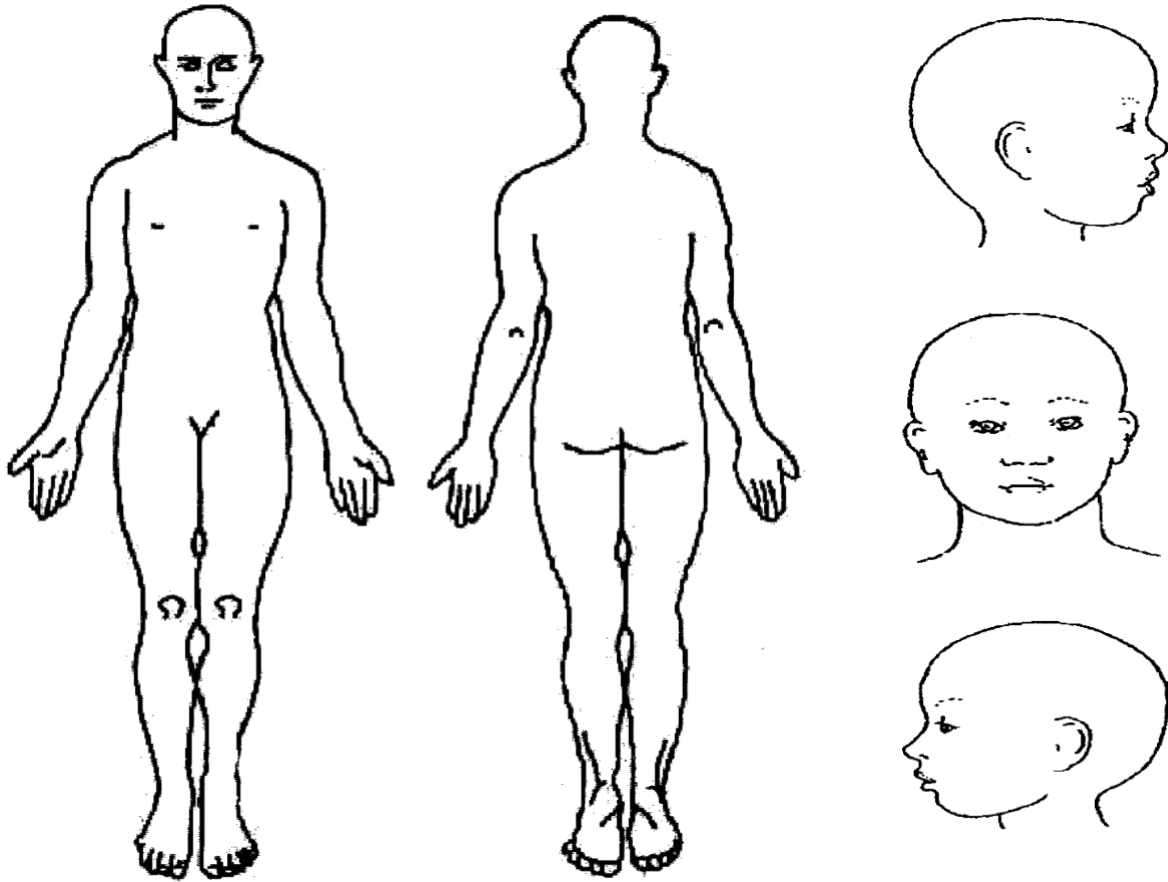
<b>De-Escalation Techniques Used</b>					
Verbal Advice & Support		Humour		Distraction	
Reassurance		Options Offered		Step Away	
Calm Talking		Time Out Offered		Time Out Directed	
Change of Face		Other (please specify):			

<b>Physical Intervention Used:</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
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**Section B** (to be filled in if physical intervention was used)

<b>Physical Intervention Techniques Used (as Taught by Safer Handling)</b>			
Held by 2 or More Staff		Friendly Hold	Figure of Four Hold
Holding Only		Single Elbow	Wrap (for Smaller Child)
Guided Escort		Double Elbow	Shield
Taken to Floor (Sitting/Kneeling Prone)		Inside Double Elbow	
<b>Approximate Duration of Physical Intervention:</b>			

<b>Details of Injuries as Marked on the Body Map</b> (number the injury on the body map)	
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
Sign:	Date:



Medical Intervention (where appropriate)				
Child Checked by:				
Injury Suffered by Student:	Yes	No		Specify:
Injury Suffered by Staff:	Yes	No		
Treatment Required	Yes	No		
Referred to First Aider	Yes	No		
Parent/Carer Informed by:	Phone	Letter		

**Section C**

<b>Outcome</b>				
Suspension		Loss of Afternoon Activity		Exclusion
Restorative Work Complete		Part-Time Timetable		Referred to Police
Repair and Reflect Complete		Return to School Meeting		Other:

**Details of Follow Up Action Taken:**

<b>Parents/Carers were Informed</b>			
Date	Time	By Whom?	By Direct Contact, Telephone, Letter?

Was the Student Debriefed?	Yes / No
Were Staff Offered a Debrief?	Yes / No
Was it Taken Up?	Yes / No

<b>Staff Completing Form:</b> (PRINT NAME)	<b>Sign:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Other Staff/Witnesses Completing Form:</b> (PRINT NAME)	<b>Sign:</b>	<b>Date:</b>