



Safer Handling

SAFER HANDLING POLICY (September 2024)

Introduction

Yavneh Primary fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in our care. The Safer Handling policy seeks to support this through addressing when and how safer handling techniques may be used in school.

This policy has been written using advice taken from Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies DfE 2013 alongside Safer Handling training. The school acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND) in line with the Equality Act 2010, SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years 2015.

This policy is a whole school policy and applies to all pupils. Care and consideration will be given to the age of the child when following the guidance in this policy. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the school including governors.

For the Purposes of this Policy Document:

- Reasonable force is defined as using no more force than is needed in the circumstances.
- Safer Handling is defined as the positive application of force in order to protect/prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others or seriously damaging property. It is necessary in more extreme cases, for example to stop a physical fight.
- Injury means 'significant injury'; this would include actual or grievous bodily harm, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others, by wilful or reckless behaviour.

Who can use Reasonable Force and Safer Handling techniques?

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.
- The Inclusion Leader, Head Teacher and members of support staff underwent safer handling training in January 2022 and are therefore able to apply Safer Handling techniques when necessary.

When can Safer Handling techniques be used?

Safer Handling techniques can be used:

- to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, from committing an offence, or from causing disorder;
- to remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- to prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground;
- to restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts;

Guidelines for the Use of Safer Handling

Professional judgement should be used in circumstances where the use of safer handling techniques and reasonable force is needed.

- Staff should always ensure any action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues.
- In any application of safer handling techniques, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation.
- Help should be summoned from colleagues that have undertaken the training; pupils should never be involved in restraint.

What to do in circumstances when the use of safer handling and reasonable force is needed

- Approach the pupil calmly but firmly.
- Where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour should be explained and it should be communicated to the pupil that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
- A calm and measured approach is required by staff throughout.

Method of Handling

The method of handling employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following:

During any incident the person carrying out handling should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury
- Cease the restraint if there are any signs of physical distress in the pupil such as sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting

Safer Handling can be:

- Partial – restricting and preventing particular movements
- Total – as in the case of immobilisation

Safer Handling can take several forms and may involve staff:

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

Handling will not:

- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- Restrict the pupil's breathing

When carrying out Safer Handling techniques staff will:

- Ensure there are two adults carrying out any technique
- Be aware of any feelings of anger from the pupil
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil that could cause injury
- Monitor the pupil's reactions
- Release the pupil from their hold as soon as it is safe to do so

Recording Incidents

- All serious incidents involving the use of safer handling techniques must be reported to the Head Teacher as soon as possible after the incident. These must be recorded on CPOMS.

Telling parents when force has been used on their child

- In a serious incident where a member of staff has had to use Safer Handling techniques on a pupil, the parent will be informed on the day.

What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?

- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.

- When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:

Emma Marks, Assistant Headteacher, (02087365580)

This policy will be reviewed annually or when relevant national or local guidance indicates additional need.

Date: September 2024

Date of review: September 2025