

Auchinloch Primary School & Nursery Class



Safe Holding Policy

INTRODUCTION

Safe Holding is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting a pupil from harming himself/herself or others, or from seriously damaging property. Safe Holding should be limited to emergency situations and used only as an absolute last resort. In Auchinloch, the use of reasonable force is the very last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and maintain good order and discipline. This policy should, therefore, be read in conjunction with the school's *Child Protection* policy, as well as the general guidance provided in Management Circular C11 and the use of reasonable restraint.

When they are in charge of pupils during the school day (or during other supervised activities), staff are acting in loco parentis and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Indeed, failure to physically restrain a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. Nevertheless, staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer personal injury as a result of their intervention.

Should the need to physically restrain a pupil seem likely, staff should, if at all possible, immediately send for the Head Teacher. Although this policy provides guidance for all Auchinloch's staff, the school's preference is that the Head Teacher is the only member of staff ever involved in the Safe Holding of a pupil, should such circumstances arise.

AIMS OF POLICY

- To protect every person in the Auchinloch school community from harm.
- To protect pupils against any form of physical intervention that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate and reasonable actions when dealing with dangerous/potentially dangerous or violent/potentially violent situations.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE TO USE SAFE HOLDING

Safe Holding should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action (or perhaps by removing a physical object) which could be used to harm himself/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 Safe Holding would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own professional judgement in situations which arise within the categories below.

Examples of situations that may require a pupil to be physical restrained

- A pupil attacks another pupil or a member of staff.
- Pupils are involved in a physical fight which, without intervention, could result in serious injury.

- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects.
- A pupil is running in a corridor in a way in which he/she may have or cause an accident likely to injure himself/herself or others.
- A pupil is absconding from a classroom or attempting to leave the school (this only applies if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or in school)
- A pupil behaves in such a way that seriously disrupts a lesson and fails to respond to all other strategies.

USE OF SAFE HOLDING

Safe Holding should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible while, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force when applying Safe Holding. 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, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines contained in this policy. There are some forms of physical intervention which involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or a member of staff physically interposing himself/herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. In some circumstances, however, direct physical contact may be necessary.

Should Safe Holding become necessary:

DO

- ATTEMPT TO GET THE HEAD TEACHER FIRST BEFORE PERSONALLY APPLYING SAFE HOLDING
- Employ de-escalation techniques - Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance
- Inform the Head Teacher (or Principal Teacher) as soon as possible to ensure that a formal debriefing with the pupil takes place, their parents/carers are informed and that a record of the incident is recorded on SEEMIS and CIRBUS.

DO NOT

- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in sexual areas

- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil
- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

There are some situations in which the need for Safe Holding is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances, there are alternative strategies which can be tried before applying Safe Holding including:

- the 'broken record' in which an instruction is repeated until the pupil complies
- use of a distracter (e.g. a raised voice or loud whistle) to interrupt the behaviour long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- withdrawal of attention (e.g. other pupils acting as an 'audience')
- avoiding confrontation
- use of humour
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with the school's *Positive Relationships Policy*.

With each of the above strategies, the incident in question can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high.

ACTIONS AFTER AN INCIDENT

Safe Holding 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 for the pupil. The Head Teacher (or Principal Teacher) should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. Any victims of the incident which required Safe Holding should be offered support, and their parents informed as soon as possible. If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of an ASP and by seeking advice/support from the ASN Manager. It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided. All incidents should be recorded immediately in the Pastoral Notes area of SEEMIS and on CIRBUS. The Head Teacher (or a Principal Teacher) will contact the parents/carers of the pupil who required safe holding as soon as possible after an incident to inform them of the actions taken and why and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss the matter.

ASSESSING RISK

Should Auchinloch Primary school staff become aware that a particular pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way which may require the use of reasonable force, the school will plan how to respond should the situation arise. Such 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/carers to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school may be required to take
- Formal briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should take
- Identification of additional support that may be required (e.g. input from ASN Manager)

COMPLAINTS

A clear Safe Holding policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents/carers, should help to avoid complaints. AuchinlochPrimary school and Nursery will, therefore, endeavour to ensure all staff, parents/carers and (where appropriate) pupils are aware of the guidelines contained in this policy and the context in which they apply.

Should a parent/carer have concerns about their child being physically restrained, they should ask to meet with the Head Teacher. If this meeting fails to resolve the complaint, parents/carers may refer the matter to the school's link Education Officer at Education and Families at Head Quarters.