

Safe Student Handling Policy: Incorporating intimate care and restraint

At Harbour International, we are committed to the emotional, social and physical well being of all our children. We believe that human contact and touch is a vital and important feature of children thriving but we also understand that outlining the parameters of appropriate and safe handling is needed to ensure that all children and staff members feel safe and are protected.

The school understands that the following examples are instances of safe touch which may occur between staff and pupils:

1. Comforting an upset or distressed pupil
2. Holding the hand of a pupil to guide them, such as when crossing a road or walking to assembly
3. Giving first aid to a pupil
4. Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or when using musical instruments
5. To restrain them
6. To help them after they have had an accident, either soiling or wetting themselves (intimate care)

For each of these circumstances, we have outlined clear guidelines.

1. Comforting an upset or distressed pupil

Children may seek out comfort when upset or distressed and staff members also may choose to reach out and comfort a child using a gentle touch or arm around the child or a hug. It is important in these instances, that the contact be initiated based on the needs of the child and not on the adult.

3. Holding the hand of a pupil to guide them, such as when crossing a road or walking to assembly

Staff should use their professional judgement when holding hands with students. Students often need support with walking and balance or may need support for safety and to avoid running off.

Verbal instructions should always be used first. If a child does not understand due to being EAL then the hand can be taken and the child gently guided whilst repeating the instructions.

4. Giving first aid to a pupil

When administering first aid we appreciate that the child may need treatment on more private areas above the knee or below the shoulders. In this instance, a decision will be made if first aid is appropriate. If it is needed then two members of staff will be present when the first aid is administered.

5. Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or when using musical instruments



In the first instance, verbal instructions should be given.

If a child is struggling to understand the instructions or is in danger then the teacher may touch the child understanding that the most appropriate places to touch pupils are on the head, shoulders, arms and back.

If the PE or music teacher needs to touch the child they will tell them they are doing so or with Group 4 and above ask their permission to do so.

6. Restraint

When should restraint be used?

The overriding principle relating to positive handling is that the best interests of the child take precedence over every other consideration.

Restraint should only be used when all other possibilities; talking to the child, calming them down, removing the other children or property have been tried and are not proving effective.

The minimum amount of force should only ever be used in relation to the size and age of the child. The adult should explain to the child the actions that are going to be taken in a calm and reassuring tone.

Restraint may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- Injuring themselves or others
- Running away
- Causing serious damage to property including the pupil's own property
- Engaging in behaviours that will disturb the order at school or among any of its pupils whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere

What kinds of restraint might be used?

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking the 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



Risk Assessment

- all staff including teachers, classroom assistants and other colleagues in the school must be informed about pupils/families who are vulnerable or volatile
- vulnerable or volatile pupils/families should be clearly identified in documentation e.g. on the pupil's profile and on the main records which will be annotated.
- a risk assessment based on knowledge and previous experience will be carried out and a plan of action for individuals will be written by the Headteacher or delegated member of staff. This will be periodically reviewed and updated.
- parents must always be informed:
 - If their child is displaying behaviour which may mean he/she may need to be physically restrained
 - If an incident has happened in the school whereby their child has had to be restrained

7. To help them after they have had an accident, either soiling or wetting themselves (intimate care)

It is expected that children will be toilet trained and out of nappies before they begin at school or nursery. However, we recognise that children will join Harbour International Primary school, having reached differing levels of independence and development in toileting and self-care. Therefore, it is inevitable that from time to time some children will have accidents and need to be attended to.

Every child's right to privacy and modesty will be respected.

As much as possible, the child will be encouraged to remove their own clothes and clean themselves. The staff member may be in a position to watch the child do this to ensure they are safe, completing the request and not distressed. If the child needs to take off their underwear, where possible, another adult will be present.

If the child can not take off their own clothes, the staff member may assist as long as another staff member is present. If the child is unable to clean themselves to an appropriate and safe level then the parents will be called to assist with the cleaning and to bring clean clothes.

The parents will be informed on that day as to the nature of the accident and the level of care provided.

For children with known medical needs, a care plan will be provided and agreed with parents from the start.

In the case of repeated incidents, a meeting with parents will take place and a care or action plan will be made.

