



# AVONDALE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

## Manual Handling Policy

(with direct reference to the Child Protection Policy)

At Avondale Preparatory School, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, play a crucial role in protecting our children from harm. Staff should always provide a caring, positive, safe, and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, and moral development of every child.

### 1. Physical Contact

During their time at Avondale Preparatory School, particularly with younger children, there will be occasions when staff may need to have physical contact with the children in their care. Close, physical contact is often essential to help children develop into well-balanced, secure, and happy individuals. However, we are mindful of the need for clear boundaries to ensure the safety and protection of both staff and children. Physical contact may be misconstrued by a child, parent, or observer. It is essential that staff exercise discretion to ensure all interactions are appropriate.

### 2. General Guidelines

Staff must avoid gratuitous physical contact with pupils. Physical touch should not be a default part of teaching style or a way of relating to pupils. There are some children for whom physical contact is unwelcome, due to factors such as cultural background, special needs, or past experiences of abuse. Staff must ensure they have relevant information about these children while maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity. Additionally, staff should be mindful of gender dynamics in physical interactions.

### 3. When Physical Contact May Be Acceptable

There are specific circumstances where physical contact is appropriate, such as:

- During PE and Sports: Demonstrating exercises or techniques.
- First Aid: Administering necessary care.
- Supporting Younger Children: Assisting with dressing, undressing, or separating from parents/carers.
- Providing Comfort: Reassuring or consoling a distressed child (e.g., after an accident).
- Ensuring Safety: Holding hands for reassurance, circle games, or crossing roads.
- Toileting and Changing: Supporting children who need assistance, with appropriate communication and discretion.

In all cases, physical contact should be limited to what is necessary, professional, and age-appropriate. Staff should seek guidance from the Headteacher or DSL if uncertain.

### 4. Reasons for Acceptable Contact

Acceptable reasons for physical contact include:

- Comforting an upset or distressed child.
- Reassuring a child struggling to separate from a parent or carer.
- Assisting with dressing or hygiene.
- Helping a child who has soiled themselves, ensuring privacy and informing colleagues.
- Protecting a child from harm (e.g., guiding them away from danger).
- Removing a child from a situation where they may cause harm to themselves or others.

### 5. Physical Restraint

Physical restraint should only be used when absolutely necessary and consistent with the concept of reasonable force. Before intervening, staff should:

- Attempt to de-escalate the situation verbally.
- Inform the pupil of the consequences of their actions.
- Restraint should be the minimum force necessary and applied in a calm, controlled manner to avoid injury.

Staff should not put themselves at risk. If assistance is needed, remove other pupils from the area and seek help from colleagues or, if necessary, contact the police. Staff must document and report all incidents to the Headteacher or DSL.

## **6. Types of Incidents Warranting Restraint**

Physical restraint may be necessary in situations such as:

- A child attacking staff or peers.
- Preventing self-injury, injury to others, or significant property damage.
- Intervening in situations of rough play or accidents.
- Preventing a child from absconding if they could be at risk.

## **7. Appropriate Physical Intervention**

Physical intervention may involve:

- Blocking a child's path.
- Leading a child by the hand or arm.
- Guiding them away with a hand on the back.
- Holding them to prevent harm.

Staff must not:

- Use excessive force or actions likely to cause pain or injury.
- Hold a child by the neck or in ways that restrict breathing.
- Slap, punch, or kick.
- Force limbs against joints or hold a child face down.

## **8. Recording Incidents**

Any physical intervention must be documented. Staff should report the incident to the Headteacher or DSL as soon as possible and provide a detailed written account, including:

- Events leading up to the incident.
- Actions taken and alternative methods considered.
- Observers or other parties involved.
- Outcome and follow-up actions.

Parents/carers must be informed promptly, ideally on the same day.

## **9. Staff Training**

Avondale Preparatory School is committed to ensuring that staff are appropriately trained to handle situations requiring physical intervention. Training will be provided as needed, following updates to national guidance or identified school-specific needs.

## **10. Planning for Incidents**

Where a child is known to have behaviours that may require physical intervention, the school will:

- Develop a plan in consultation with parents.
- Share strategies with relevant staff.
- Ensure staff are briefed and, if necessary, trained.
- Plan for additional support when appropriate.

For all 'off-site' incidents, the above procedures will also apply (where possible). The best interests of the child will always be at the forefront of any action taken.

## **11. Red Card Emergency System**

Each class has a laminated red card hung at the entrance doorway. Should there be a need for the Head (or other member of staff) to intervene in any emergency, the red card should be taken straight to the office. At break times there are always (at least) two members of staff on duty to deal with an emergency such as anaphylactic shock, or situation requiring intervention.

## **12. Further Guidance**

Staff should refer to the DfE guidance document: "Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies" (February 2023).

In the event where a child needs to be handled, strict procedures are followed to ensure the safety of the child is kept paramount.

### **Support Following a Toileting Accident**

At Avondale Preparatory School, we understand that toileting accidents can occasionally occur, particularly with younger children. Our approach ensures children are treated with dignity and care while adhering to safeguarding protocols.

#### **Procedure for Toileting Accidents**

##### **1. Providing Clean Clothing**

- A clean pair of underwear and uniform will be provided to the child, if available.
- The child will be offered a private and secure area to change independently.
- A plastic bag for soiled clothing will be given to the child, and parents will be asked to launder and return any borrowed items promptly.

##### **2. Non-Toilet-Trained Children**

- For non-toilet-trained children in Tots or Nursery, nappy changing facilities are available.
- Nappy changes take place in a visible, designated changing area that aligns with the school's safeguarding policies.
- Each nappy change is recorded in a Toileting Support Record, signed by the staff member and a witness. (*Please refer to the intimate care policy for further details*).

##### **3. Support for Toilet-Trained Children**

- For children in Tots, Nursery, and Reception, accidents requiring assistance (e.g., wetting or soiling) will be handled with care. Details will be documented in the Toileting Support Record immediately after the incident. A second staff member must remain within sight of the child during any assistance.

For older children in Years 1-6, the following applies:

- Wetting accidents: Children are encouraged to manage changing themselves independently.
- Soiling accidents: Staff will contact the child's parents to inform them of the incident and provide the option for the parent to come to school to assist. If staff assistance is necessary, it will be carried out discreetly, ensuring a second staff member is within sight of the child.

##### **4. Recording and Reporting**

- For all incidents requiring assistance, a Toileting Support Record is completed immediately.
- For children in Years 1-6 requiring assistance with soiling, a log will be added to Impero Backdrop to record the incident which will notify the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Avondale Preparatory School's approach ensures children's dignity and wellbeing are prioritised while maintaining transparency and safeguarding standards.

Revised October 2024

Signed as read:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_