





'Dream, Believe, Achieve!'

'With God, all things are possible.' Matthew 19:26

Ephesians 4:2

'With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love'.

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

Policy Date:	September 2025
Policy Review Date:	September 2027
Signature of Headteacher:	
Ratified by Governors-Date:	September 2025
Signature of Committee Chair:	

Guiding Principles

Legal Framework

- Section 5550a of the Education Act 1996 and DFEE Circular 10/98 allow teachers, and other members of staff at a school, to use such force as is reasonable in circumstances where the pupil may need to be prevented from engaging in behaviours which are likely to cause injury to themselves, others or damage to property. The guidance extends this to maintaining good order and discipline, for both on-site and off-site activities.
- Positive handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful **or in an emergency situation.**
- There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (e.g. physical assault) being committed. Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement. All teachers have a professional 'duty of care' within their job description which is underwritten by paragraph 58.7 of School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2002. Together with the legislative framework this enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable.

What does it mean to restrain a child?

- Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting a child from harming themselves or others or seriously damaging property. The proper use of positive handling requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining. The decision to use positive handling as restrictive physical intervention must take account of the circumstances and be based on an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention compares with the risks of not employing a restrictive intervention. The physical intervention must also only employ a reasonable amount of force – that is the minimum force needed to avert injury or damage to property, or to prevent a breakdown in discipline – applied for the shortest period of time (see section on use of reasonable force).

Why use restraint?

- Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him/herself or others. Positive handling skilfully applied may be eased by degrees as the child calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour. Should physical restraint be necessary it will be utilised by staff trained in the correct procedures, though any member of staff will intervene in a dangerous situation e.g. a child walking into the road. Staff members trained in 'Team Teach' will be summonsed as quickly as possible with the intention of de-escalating and reducing the risks to the child, other persons and property.

General aims

- The staff at St Mary's Church of England Primary School recognises that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.
- Our policy on the use of reasonable force is part of our overall pastoral care procedures and closely related to our Behaviour Policy and also to the L.A.'s Child Protection guidelines.

The aims

- To protect every person in the school community from harm
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations
- To use the minimum degree of force necessary to accomplish positive handling
- To give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from pupils or others
- To maintain accurate records of incidents where positive handling (including restraint) has been employed

Risk Assessment

- Although most young people at St Mary's Church of England Primary School will never require any form of positive handling, staff may have to deal with some young people who exhibit disturbed, distressed and distressing behaviour. It is therefore necessary to carry out risk assessment. We will attempt to reduce risk by managing:
 - The environment
 - Body language
 - The way we talk
 - The way we act

Individual Risk Assessments

- The school's respect for the rights of the individual takes into consideration the context of The Human Rights Act (1998) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991). The school's ethos and the guidance in this policy is based on the presumption that every adult and child is entitled to:
 - Respect for his/her private life
 - The right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment
 - The right to liberty and security
 - The right not to be discriminated against in his/her enjoyment of those right
- If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, it is our intention to plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning needs to address:
 - Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
 - Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
 - Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
 - Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate
 - If positive handling is likely to be necessary, this should be included in the pupil's Positive Handling Plan

- together with information on: de-escalation strategies; the manner in which the pupil will be held; how support can be summoned if needed; any medical factors to be considered

Procedures

- It is important to consider when reasonable force is appropriate, the actions necessary should positive handling be used, the strategies that are deemed acceptable, and the recording procedures that should be in place.

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?

- When a pupil may be:
 - committing an offence
 - causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself) or
 - Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or amongst it's pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwiseExamples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are:
 - a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
 - pupils fighting
 - a pupil causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects
 - a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in which s/he might have or cause an accident likely to injure him/herself or others
 - a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:
 - a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom
 - a pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

Action Steps

Low level responses

- Communicate – “talk and I’ll listen”
- display calm body language
- talk low, slow and quietly
- divert and distract
- remove audience from the immediate location

Medium level responses

- state desired behaviours clearly
- use distraction to refocus
- set clear enforceable limits
- give a get out with dignity
- make the environment safe
- remove audience
- guide elbows safely

High level responses

- continue to use low and medium level responses
 - make environment safe, remove weapon objects
 - guide assertively- hold or restrain if absolutely necessary use Help protocol to save face by changing face
-
- In those circumstances where the member of staff has decided that it is not appropriate to restrain the pupil without help they should:
 - remove other pupils who might be at risk
 - summon assistance from colleagues - inform the pupil(s) that help will be arriving
 - until assistance arrives, the member of staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating
 - The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following requirements Restraint must NOT:
 - involve hitting the pupil
 - involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
 - restrict the pupil's breathingDuring any incident the adults should:
 - offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
 - reduce the danger of any accidental injury

Recovery

- Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include;
 - Providing medical support
 - Providing respite for those involved
 - All incidents must be recorded on CPOMs and in the Number and Bound book kept in the Headteacher's office.
- A calm and measured approach to as situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem.

Some Dos and Don'ts

DO:

- be aware of any feelings of anger
- summon help
- continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- provide a soft surface if possible
- be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil hold the pupil's arms by his/her sides

DON'T

- try to manage on your own
- stop talking even if the pupil doesn't reply
- straddle the pupil
- push arms up the back
- touch the pupil near the throat or head
- put pressure on joints

Recording

- Staff should record all incidents of positive handling (including restraint) in accordance with this policy and report these to the Headteacher.
- Details should include
 - name of pupil(s)
 - staff members involved
 - factors necessitating physical intervention
 - the strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention
 - how the physical intervention was effected
 - outcome of restraint
 - any other action taken in the management of the incident
- Parents/Carers should be contacted as soon possible and the incident explained to them.

Complaints

- We all have a duty of care to the young people in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by staff, should help to avoid complaints from parents.
- It will not prevent all complains, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation.
- All complains are dealt with according to the School's Complaints Policy and procedures.
- Staff, subjected to physical violence or assault, have the right to be supported in making a formal complaint to the police and, if necessary, taking private action against an assailant.
- It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.
- Adhering to the principles and procedures referred to in this policy statement is part of effective practise and should minimise risk to young people in our care and enhance our own self-protection.

Training

- An up-to-date list of staff who have attended Positive Handling/Team Teach training should be maintained within the school and teachers should know who they are.

ST. MARY'S

