

Positive Handling Policy



St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

The School Mission Statement

To love, serve and learn as Jesus shows us

DOCUMENT STATUS

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POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

We believe that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. Our school mission statement underpins the procedures outlined in this policy. The high quality of personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils, based upon the gospel values, are central in our everyday life. It is recognised that the vast majority of pupils in our school, respond positively to the values which are practiced by staff and are at the very heart of our school community. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school.

This policy acknowledges however, that exceptional situations will arise in which staff members will be required to use positive handling, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to manage conflict when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that actions such as positive handling and reasonable force are used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy complies with the following legislation, including, but not limited to:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Children Act 1989
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy will also have due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE 'Use of reasonable force in schools' 2013
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015

The school will implement this policy in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy and Equality Policy.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School to explain the arrangements for care and control.

WHAT IS POSITIVE HANDLING?

For the purpose of this policy, 'positive handling' is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting pupils and limiting damage to property.

The legal framework and national guidance often refers to the 'use of force'. For the purpose of this policy, we use the term 'positive handling' whenever possible.

Positive handling is used in the school in order to:

- Restrain a pupil who has lost emotional self-control until the situation is diffused.
- Limit the amount of harm that the pupil involved can do to their self or others.
- Demonstrate to pupils that they are within a safe environment in which adults can contain pupils' anger and other erratic emotions.
- Protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.

Where positive handling is required, the school will abide to the following guidance:

- Initial intervention will always be without force.
- Any physical intervention will follow other appropriate actions.
- Staff will take a calm and measured approach in all situations.

Positive handling will be limited to emergency situations and used only as a measure of last resort.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who subsequently gets injured, or injures another pupil, could lead to an accusation of negligence.

Positive handling will never be invasive, humiliating, flirtatious in nature or take a form which could be seen as punishment.

Positive handling will be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control.

WHAT IS REASONABLE FORCE?

There is no statutory definition of reasonable force; it will always depend on the circumstance of the case. However for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, positive handling uses the **minimum** degree of force necessary for the **shortest period of time** to prevent a pupil harming themselves, others or property.

Reasonable force is only acceptable to use in order to control pupils or restrain them.

'Control' is in regards to either passive physical contacts, such as blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm.

Restraint refers to physically bringing a pupil under control, such as holding them back. This is typically used in more extreme circumstances, such as to separate two pupils fighting.

The degree of force which is used will depend on the pupil and circumstances.

Staff members will always use actions which are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances of the incidents.

All incidents which involve the use of reasonable force will be reported to the Head Teacher, recorded in writing and communicated to the pupil's parents/carers.

The school is able to use reasonable force in situations when:

- Disruptive children must be removed from the classroom, and have previously refused to leave.
- Members of staff need to control disruptive pupils on school trips, or similar.
- Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom when doing so would lead to a risk to their safety.
- A pupil is attacking a member of staff or another pupil.
- A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff must intervene to prevent this.

Physical intervention will never be used as a substitute for good behaviour management in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

USE OF POSITIVE HANDLING AND REASONABLE FORCE

All members of staff are allowed to use positive handling where they believe it to be appropriate, as long as all necessary precautions are taken.

The power to positively handle pupils also applies to any individual whom the Head Teacher has identified as temporarily in charge, such as volunteers.

The decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances.

Staff will always calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it was necessary in a non-threatening manner.

Staff will never give the impression that they are acting out of anger or are punishing the child.

All teachers will develop strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and situations, which they will use to diffuse and calm a situation.

In non-urgent situations, staff will always try and deal with a situation through other strategies before using force.

Staff members will always avoid acting in a way that could cause injury; however, dependant on the circumstances, this may not always be possible. When an injury does occur accidentally, this is not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of

ensuring that the child remains safe. Any such injury will be reported using the 'Positive Handling Form'. Any injuries to pupils as a result of incidents involving restraint will be reported to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher and parents / carer.

All staff are trained in First Aid. Any may be called upon to implement First Aid or seek further guidance in the event of an injury or physical distress arising as a result of a physical intervention.

Where a member of staff believes that they are at risk, such as where an injury is likely to occur, they will not intervene in an incident without help and assistance of another staff member.

Emergency intervention is necessary when there is a high risk of pupils being injured or property being damaged.

If emergency intervention is required, a member of staff will use other methods of defusing the situation, without physically intervening, until assistance arrives.

Following the event, the pupil involved may be subject to separate disciplinary procedures, in which strategies should be formed to help avoid reoccurrence of such incidents.

Staff must be aware that they are responsible for:

- Assessing risks (dynamic risk assessment) related to individual circumstances which may arise in the course of their day to day duties
- Making judgements about when the use of force is necessary and the degree of force which may be regarded as necessary to manage a situation.
- Staff need to be aware that they are required to justify their decisions in writing through the recording and reporting procedures outlined later in this document.

Systems in place to manage challenging behaviour should minimize the need for use of positive handling or reasonable force and the escalation of strategies should form a planned approach designed through multi agency collaboration and, with parental consent:

- The Behaviour Policy outlines sanctions to be put in place
- For children with identified needs, their Support Plan / Risk Assessment / Positive Handling Plan should outline:
 - The child's triggers
 - The best de-escalation techniques for that child, for example:
 - Time out – Pre-arranged strategy with child who has designated time alone away from the situation.
 - Withdrawn - Removed from the situation by a member of staff but observed and supported until they are ready to resume.
 - The PHP will be reviewed after each incident.

SUPPORT AND REFLECTION FOLLOWING USE OF POSITIVE HANDLING AND REASONABLE FORCE

Following any physical intervention when the child has regained control and is in a calm, rational state a follow up discussion should take place for the purpose of repair, reflection and review and so that learning can take place which would avoid the situation happening again in the future and positive relationships maintained. This may require additional recovery time before taking place and will vary for each individual child.

Staff should be aware of their own physical and emotional state following a physical intervention. They may need time for adrenaline to dissipate. The duty of care to colleagues and the wider team extends to recognising when they are in need of a period of repair and reflection and to facilitate this.

Any member of staff or pupil at the school involved in or witnessing a serious incident involving the use of physical hold, may require additional support following the incident. Staff should ensure that they are fully recovered from an incident before resuming their duties and colleagues are encouraged to seek and offer support where it is deemed necessary.

Where staff have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force, they should have access to support through Supervision Time with the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

REPORTING INCIDENTS

A detailed written report will be kept of any incidents where force is used.

- Immediately following an incident, the member(s) of staff involved will verbally report the incident to the Head Teacher and provide a comprehensive written record of the situation as soon as possible.
 - The written report of the incident must be thorough, including as much detail as possible as to what had happened before, during and after the incident, and describing any injuries incurred due to the event.

The Head Teacher will make the decision as to whether it is appropriate to inform the pupil's parents/carers of the details of an incident.

- Parents/carers will be informed in writing and a copy of this report will be given to the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.
- The report will inform parents/carers of their right to complain about the use of positive handling and reasonable force.

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects the use of positive handling or reasonable force, where another member of staff is actively involved in physical intervention, they will report this to the Head Teacher immediately.

WHISTLE BLOWING

It is acknowledged that under some circumstances, physical intervention can be misapplied. Staff are reminded that part of their duty of care to pupils includes the requirement to report any such matters which cause them concern in relation to the welfare of children. Any such concerns should be raised with the Head Teacher, or with the Chair of Governors if the concern relates to the Head Teacher.

Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school's Allegations Against Staff Policy.

- The Head Teacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

COMPLAINTS

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Where a complaint alleges the misuse of positive handling or reasonable force by a member staff, the Complaints policy, or Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy will be followed as appropriate.

In such circumstances, the investigation of the complaint/allegation and any resulting action in respect of child protection, disciplinary or other procedures will be carried out in accordance with the relevant school policy.

STAFF TRAINING

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that training in the use of positive handling is available to staff and is kept up to date.

No member of staff will be expected to use Team Teach techniques without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of on-going staff development.

Most school staff working directly with pupils should receive the 6-hour Basic Course in Team Teach as the school is considered to be a low risk setting. This is in line with Team Teach policy. This level of training is required for most staff as they are expected to be able to actively support each other, and pupils, if an incident occurs and a child needs physical intervention to keep themselves and/or others safe. However, if staff are unable to support physically they are expected to support with de-escalation.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Head Teacher and Governing Body, who will consider any necessary changes and communicate the findings of the review to all members of staff.

The Head Teacher will review records of the use of positive handling and reasonable force on a termly basis, in order to analyse the frequency of occurrence and determine what further measures could be taken to prevent these situations from reoccurring.



Positive handling report form

We believe that positive handling and reasonable force should only be used when absolutely necessary. With this in mind, this form has been created to ensure that all incidents of this type are recorded. Incidents must also be documented in the Positive Handling Log.

Name of staff member:	
Name of pupil:	
Date and Time:	
Location:	
Name(s) of staff member(s) who witnessed the incident:	
Informed parties (parents/carers, social workers, police etc.):	
Circumstances prior to the incident:	
Details of the incident:	
Details of any negative impact on other pupils:	

Reason(s) for positive handling (please tick):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Danger to self
<input type="checkbox"/>	Danger to others
<input type="checkbox"/>	Significant damage to property
Details of the intervention:	
Any disciplinary additional action taken:	
Injuries (if any) to staff members, the pupil concerned or other pupils:	
Damage (if any) to property:	
Recommendation(s) to avoid future incidents:	

Headteacher signature:	Date:
Signature of staff member concerned:	Date:



Positive handling log

We believe that positive handling and force must only be used when absolutely necessary. Positive handling will always to be used in accordance with the Positive Handling Policy. All incidents of this nature must be recorded in this log. Details of the individual incident will be recorded using the Positive Handling Report Form.

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