

# Positive Handling Policy

**St Anne's RC Primary School**



## Contents

1. Mission Statement .....	1
2. Purpose of Policy Statement .....	2
2.1 Reasonable Action .....	2
2.2 Staff responsibility .....	2
2.3 Definition .....	2
3. School Expectations .....	2
4. Positive Behaviour Management .....	2
5. Alternatives to Physical Controls .....	3
5.1 Modifications to Environment.....	3
5.2 Help Protocols.....	3
5.3 Well-Chosen Words.....	3
5.4 The Last Resort Principle.....	3
6. Proactive Physical Interventions.....	4
6.1 Reasonable, Proportionate and Necessary .....	4
6.2 Unreasonable use of Force .....	4
7. Health and Safety.....	5
8. Risk Assessment .....	5
9. Positive Handling Plans .....	5
10. Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies.....	6
11. The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff.....	6
12. Complaints .....	6
13. Training .....	7
14. Recording .....	7
15. Monitoring and Evaluation .....	7
16. Follow Up.....	7

### 1. Mission Statement

*In partnership together families, school and parish we are working to meet our mission which is to, 'work together, learn together, care together and play together in God's love to enable each unique person to achieve their full potential.'*

*Everyone wishes to do their best for the children in everything we say and do, to set an example through good citizenship based on Gospel values so that our children too will aspire to be like our patron St Anne.*

## 2. Purpose of Policy Statement

### 2.1 Reasonable Action

Pupils sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Headteacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It should be considered alongside the most recent LA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

### 2.2 Staff responsibility

Staff at this school are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Procedure. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request.

### 2.3 Definition

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. This is referred to in 'The Use of Reasonable Force in School' in national guidance (DfE 2013). A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

## 3. School Expectations

St Anne's RC Primary takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management. This policy has a clear focus:

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

## 4. Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk.

## 5. Alternatives to Physical Controls

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason, in line with the school behaviour policy.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

### 5.1 Modifications to Environment

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. For example, ensuring there is comfortable, safe place for pupils to have reflection time when their emotions are out of check.

### 5.2 Help Protocols

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. At St Anne's we use the words code red or code green to indicate whether support is needed, (Code green= no help needed, Code red=support needed).

### 5.3 Well-Chosen Words

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. The only purpose in communicating with an upset or angry pupil is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

### 5.4 The Last Resort Principle

We always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

“If necessary, staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring, even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predictable future.”

*Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – The Control of Children in the Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act 1989 – London: HMSO*

It does mean that we expect staff to consider the risk involved and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

## 6. Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent behaviour from becoming unsafe provided that it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling Plan. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and angry. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

### 6.1 Reasonable, Proportionate and Necessary

Any response to behaviour should be reasonable, proportionate and necessary. Staff should never react in anger. If an adult feels they are becoming angry they should withdraw to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable, proportionate and necessary, they will be supported.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- Is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Is a less intrusive intervention possible?
- Do we have to act now?
- Am I the best person to be doing this?
- Is this absolutely necessary?

If staff judge the answers to the above questions to be yes, it is likely that a physical intervention can be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

### 6.2 Unreasonable use of Force

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a pupil secluded.

## 7. Health and Safety

If unsafe behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Unsafe behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as unsafe equipment. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk.

Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try to think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which seems to involve the least risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school and policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so.

When considering a pupil's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent unsafe behaviour from developing?

## 8. Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit unsafe behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk.

## 9. Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the Statement and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration.

## 10. Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences. The key principals are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable, proportionate and necessary;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should first be a calm verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school. In general, if staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

## 11. The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid.

All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong.

Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships. Parents and carers will be informed immediately when a child has been physically restrained.

## 12. Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. Pupils should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated child protection officer. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

## 13. Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. Positive handling training is always to be provided by qualified instructors within rigorous guidelines.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. Our preferred approach is for whole staff team training.

## 14. Recording

Whenever force is used the incident must be recorded in the Positive Handling Log by the person involved, in their own words. This is kept on staff share. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours.

Staff should:

- Read through the Log form carefully.
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Positive Handling records should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed.

## 15. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The Positive Handling log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

## 16. Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, behaviour management policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures

## Additional Information and Guidance.

- The power for school staff to use force comes from Section 93 Education and Inspections Act 2006. The link is <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/93>
- Additionally all persons have powers to use force under Common Law and Section 3(1)(a) Criminal Law Act 1967. This would include if a child was in danger of hurting someone else or themselves or from damaging property.
- The Department for Education guidance in [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/444051/Use\\_of\\_reasonable\\_force\\_advice\\_Reviewed\\_July\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf) advises that certain restraint techniques present an unacceptable risk when used on children and young people. The techniques in question are:
  - the 'seated double embrace' which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing;
  - the 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest; and
  - the 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose.
- Use of prone position (face down on the floor) or T Supine position (on their back) should not be performed
- By showing in your policy that staff will not perform these techniques it will demonstrate that the school has a positive duty to the preservation of life and thus complying with Article 2, Human Rights Act, which all public authorities must comply with.

Shared with staff 5.5.17

Agreed by governing body 23.5.17

Signed Headteacher.....

Signed Chair of Governors.....