

# Positive Handling Policy

## St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy



"Happy together in God's family,  
we love, grow and learn."

<b>Approved by:</b>	Jessica Wilkinson	<b>Date:</b> September 2021
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## Guiding Principles & Legal Framework

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 and DFEE Circular 10/98 allow teachers, and other members of staff at a school who are authorised (see Appendix 2) by the Headteacher, 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 in the circumstances listed as points 1, 2 and 3 in the Procedures section.

### What does it mean to restrain a child?

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself 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 compared 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. Staff members trained in 'Team Teach/care & control' will be summoned as quickly as possible with the intention of deescalating and reducing the risks to the child, other persons and property.

### General aims

The staff at St Mary's recognise 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 policies on managing pupil behaviour in our Behaviour Policy and also to the LEA'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.

## What is reasonable force?

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

## Who can use reasonable force?

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school.

## When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.
- The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

## Risk Assessment

Although most young people at St Mary's will never require any form of positive handling, staff may have to deal with some young people who exhibit distressed and distressing behaviour. It is therefore necessary to carry out a 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: and
- The right not to be discriminated against in his/her enjoyment of those rights.

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 (PHP) 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:

1. Committing an offence
2. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself); or
3. Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or amongst its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Examples 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 is 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 a way 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 a classroom.
- A pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Action Steps:

1. Tell the pupil who is dysregulated to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
2. If possible summon another adult;
3. Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident;
4. Make it clear that restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary;
5. Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:
  - i. Providing medical support

## ii. Providing respite for those involved

A calm and measured approach to a 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.

### De-escalation & Positive Handling Strategies

All teachers need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps, which they can take to defuse and calm a situation.

- Move calmly and confidently
- Make simple, clear statements
- Use distraction techniques
- Intervene early
- If necessary, summon help before the problem escalates
- Remove audience from the immediate location

### THERE ARE SITUATIONS WHERE STAFF SHOULD NOT INTERVENE WITHOUT HELP

Assistance should be sought when dealing with:

- A physically large pupil
- More than one pupil, or
- When the teacher believes that s/he may be at risk of injury

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
- Where necessary, telephone the police
- 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 breathing
- Involve contact with sexual areas

During any incident the restrainer should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury

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

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- 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

### 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 does not 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 (Appendix 1) 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 member(s) involved
- Factors necessitating physical intervention
- The strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention
- How physical intervention was effected
- Outcome of restraint
- Any other action taken in the management of the incident

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded. A record of the incident will be kept in the physical intervention file kept centrally.

## Post-Incident Support

Incidents that require use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and could result in injuries to the child or staff. After incidents have subsided, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries. Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require other than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures. The school should take action to report any serious injuries to staff or students in accordance with LA guidelines.

We need to consider: - thoughts, feeling, emotions, - emotional 'first aid'

Stage 1 – Immediate 'Are you ok' This should occur before people leave to go home.

Stage 2 – De-briefing checking people have adjusted to an emotionally difficult event. This should occur within 48 hours.

Stage 3 – Counselling: formal support. Support is available when requested by a member of staff, however it is not imposed.

## Post Incident Review

Focus on actions and behaviours:

- Who did what, when, why, how?
- What was the outcome?
- What does it tell us about what we already know about the young person?
- What have we learnt and what or how does this inform our practice?

## 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 principles are that any physical intervention should be:

- In the best interest of the child
- Reasonable and proportionate
- 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 be a 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.

### Monitoring use of Restrictive Physical Interventions

Use of physical intervention in school is monitored in order to help staff learn from experience, promote the well being of children in their care, and provide a basis for appropriate support. Monitoring can help the school to determine what specialist help is needed for children and to assess the appropriateness of the child's placement at the school. The use of physical intervention is monitored and evaluated regularly at the SENCo. Individual student risk assessments are reviewed annually.

### 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 complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation.

All complaints 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 practice and should minimise risk to young people in our care and enhance our own self-protection.

### Training

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that staff members are fully informed of the school policy and understand what authorisation entails. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to arrange training or guidance to staff, possibly through a senior member of staff. An up-to-date list of authorised staff should be maintained within school and teachers should know who they are.

Additional advice and support on managing behaviour can be provided through the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Team and SENIT.

The staff members currently trained in the principles of 'Team Teach' are listed in Appendix 2.

References used in drawing up this policy: The Human Rights Act (1998), DfEE Circular 10/98 [DfE advice template – Use of reasonable force \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) July 2015

### Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy and Practice
- Health & Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy and Practice
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff
- Staff Induction

# Appendix 1 – physical intervention recording form

## Physical Intervention Record Form



School ..... Year Group.....

Name of child/young person .....

Is this young person a looked after child/SEN/vulnerability? .....

When did the incident occur?

Date	Day of week	Time	Where?

Staff involved

Name	Designation	Team Teach trained?	Involved: physically? (P) as observer? (O)	Staff signature

Please describe the incident and include:

1. What was happening before?
2. What do you think triggered this behaviour?
3. What de-escalating techniques were used prior to physical intervention?
4. Why was a PI deemed necessary?
5. Any other information relevant to include.

Team Teach technique(s) used (tick as appropriate)

Technique	Standing/escort	Sitting/chairs	Kneeling	Ground
Breakaway/defensive				
One person				
Two people				

Please give details below of hold, e.g. single elbow, double elbow, wrap, etc. ....

How long was the child/young person held? .....

If the child/young person was held on the ground: Did they go to ground independently?\*   
 (e.g. did the child lift their weight off the floor, or go deadweight)

Were they taken to ground by staff?\*

\*tick as appropriate



*Good practice dictates that schools should review what happened and consider what lessons can be learned, which may have implications for the future management of the pupil. These need not be added to this form but should be incorporated in the individual plans for the child.*

Has the child/young person been held before?	Yes/No
<i>A child/young person should have an individual plan clearly detailing reactive strategies and physical intervention approaches if they have been involved in physical interventions on more than one occasion.</i>	
Does the individual support plan need to be reviewed <u>as a result of</u> this incident?	Yes/No
Does the risk assessment need to be reviewed <u>as a result of</u> this incident?	Yes/No
If yes, who will action and when? (less than four weeks)	

Who was the incident reported to, and when? .....	
.....	
Was there any medical intervention needed?	Yes/No
Include names of any injured person and brief details of injuries .....	
.....	
.....	
Please specify any related record forms	
Accident Book <input type="checkbox"/>	Anti Bullying and Racist Incident Record Form <input type="checkbox"/>
Skin Map <input type="checkbox"/>	Violent Incident Record <input type="checkbox"/> Complaints recorded <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) .....	

Was the pupil debriefed?	Yes/No
Were staff offered a debrief?	Yes/No
Was it taken up?	Yes/No

Parents/carers were informed

Date	Time	By whom?	By direct contact, telephone, letter?

Form completed by:	Name	Designation	Date and time

Headteacher signature .....|.....

Appendix 2

**Authorised Staff – Positive Handling (Team Teach trained/care & control)**

*From section 550A of The Education Act 1996:*

The Act allows all teachers at a school to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. It also allows other people to do so, in the same way as teachers, provided they have been authorised by the Head teacher to have control or charge of pupils. Those might include classroom assistants, care workers, midday supervisors, specialist support assistants, education welfare officers, escorts, caretakers, or voluntary helpers including people accompanying pupils on visits, exchanges or holidays organised by the school.

Head teachers should identify people, other than teachers, whom they wish to authorise to have control or charge of pupils and therefore be able to use force if necessary.

Authorisation may be on a permanent or long-term basis because of the nature of the person's job, or short term for a specific event such as a school trip. The Head should explicitly inform the people concerned, and ensure that they are aware of and properly understand what the authorisation entails. To ensure this, Heads may find it helpful to arrange for a senior member of the teaching staff to provide training or guidance. They should keep an up-to-date list of authorised people and ensure the teachers know whom they are.

Staff members currently trained in application of 'Team Teach/care & control principles	
Name of staff member	Date of Training
Sarah Hurley	January 2022 and March 2023
Ali Roberts	January 2022
Kay Quinn	January 2022
Emma Roberts	January 2022
Penny Leng	January 2018 and April 2023

**Appendix 3**  
**St Mary's CVA – Letter to parents- single incident**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_ was involved in an incident today at school which required a member of staff to physically intervene.

The staff at the school have a Duty of Care to all pupils whilst they are here. That duty may extend to the use of reasonable force to prevent a pupil from causing injury or damage. Staff in schools are also given guidance on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils as set out in Section 93 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006. This act allows staff in schools to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injury to themselves or another, damage to property or engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline.

The incident has been recorded and a copy will be kept in St Mary's School Physical Intervention file. If you require further information about the incident please do not hesitate to contact the relevant teacher (s).

Signed,

**Appendix 4**  
**St Mary's CVA – Letter to parents- multiple incidents**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_ was involved in incidents at school which required a member of staff to physically intervene.

The staff at the school have a Duty of Care to all pupils whilst they are here. That duty may extend to the use of reasonable force to prevent a pupil from causing injury or damage. Staff in schools are also given guidance on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils as set out in Section 93 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006. This act allows staff in schools to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injury to themselves or another, damage to property or engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline.

The incidents have been recorded and a copy will be kept in The St Mary's School Physical Intervention File. If you require further information about the incidents please do not hesitate to contact the relevant members of staff.

Signed,



**St Mary's Positive Handling Plan (PHP)**

<b>Name:</b>		
<b>Setting:</b> St Mary's Horsforth CVA		
<b>Medical conditions:</b> (Note any medical or physical conditions that could impact on the use of physical intervention)		
•		
<b>Trigger behaviours:</b> (Describe common behaviours/situations which are known to have led to positive handling being required. When is such behaviour likely to occur?)		
•		
<b>Risk:</b> (Tick the potential risk)		
Low:	Medium:	High:
<b>Risk assessment completed:</b>		

**De-escalation:**

(Describe any strategies which have worked in the past or should be avoided. E.g. verbal advice and support, firm clear directions, negotiation, limited choices, distraction, diversion, reassurance, tactical ignoring, prompt touch, take up time, time out – offered, time out – directed, reminder of consequences, reminders of success.)

Behaviour observed	Staff response

**Physical Intervention strategies:**

	Try	Avoid
Shepherd		
Steering		
Cradle hold (cuddle)		
Double elbow		
Half shield		
Friendly escort (2 person)		
Single elbow (2 person)		
Double elbow (2 person)		
Use of sitting in chairs		

<b>Follow up to restraint:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>
<b>Recording and notifications:</b>
<b>Signatures:</b> <b>School:</b> <b>Parent/carer:</b> <b>Date:</b>