



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

educate protect love serve

Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

The policy has been developed in response to The Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 93, which reinforces and replaces previous guidance. It also takes cognisance of joint guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health, and follows the guidance for 'The Use of Reasonable Force to Control or Restrain Pupils'.

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 the school to explain the school's arrangements for care and control. Its contents are available to parents and pupils.

Objectives

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required. St Mary's Catholic Primary School acknowledges that physical techniques are only a small part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

1. Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where use of force is necessary.
2. Are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- **Self – injuring**
- **causing injury to others**
- **committing a criminal offence**
- **engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within school (this includes authorised out-of-school activities)**

Teaching and non-teaching staff work 'in loco parentis' and have a 'Duty of Care' towards their pupils. The use of Team Teach techniques is one of our control methods for reducing risks presented by children's challenging behaviour.

Staff, have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. 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 and**
- **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.

The basic principles of Team-Teach are:

- Staff numbers – emphasis on at least two members of staff when a situation occurs. This is protection for both staff and pupils concerned.
- **95% of crisis situations can be resolved through calm, controlled, dignified and skilled de-escalation strategies.**
- Minimum force and time – important not to react emotionally but professionally and composed.
- Last resort (where possible) – all other behaviour management strategies to be tried and used first.
- Restrictive physical intervention techniques that provide a gradual, graded system of response – commensurate with the situation, task and individuals involved.
- Techniques allow for verbal communication – utilising positive relationships.
- Staff safety & protection issues addressed – important for staff to have a range of break-away and release techniques in a serious situation where health & safety are at risk.

- Emphasis on staff awareness & communication skills – verbal & non-verbal used to de-escalate a possible crisis situation.
- Following restraint there should be both a supportive and reflective structure for both staff and pupils.
- All incidents involving pupils being physically managed should be reported, recorded, monitored & evaluated.

Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity;
- be treated with respect and dignity;
- learn and work in a safe environment;
- be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school;
- expect Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP) to be designed to achieve outcomes that reflect the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern and others affected by the behaviour requiring intervention;
- be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

The school will ensure that pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in the school.

Use of Physical Handling

No legal definition of reasonable force exists however for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in St Mary's Catholic Primary School:

- Positive Handling uses the **minimum** degree of force necessary for the **shortest period of time** to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property.
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be **proportionate** to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- Staff would be expected to follow the pupil's IBP / Risk Assessment in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour
- If this was unsuccessful and the situation continues to escalate staff would then be expected to employ other Team Teach techniques that they have been trained.

- Only if all of the above have been tried and are unsuccessful should staff even consider any other form of restraint. The overriding consideration should still be the reasonableness and proportionality of the force used.

Staff will need to take the following factors into consideration:

- **Age and gender of the pupil**
- **The behaviour of the pupil**
- **The known intention of the pupil**
- **Their known wishes, feelings and emotional state**
- **The pupils personal history**
- **The influence of other pupils, family and friends**
- **Any events that may be causing the pupil anxiety**
- **Knowledge of the pupil and any special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**
- **How long the pupil has been attending St Mary's Catholic Primary School**
- **The time of day**
- **The antecedents to the situation**

Where behavioural records and/or risk assessment identifies a need for a planned approach, plans (IBP) are written for individual children and where possible, these will be designed through multi agency collaboration and, with parental consent, shared with other agencies/services supporting the child to facilitate consistency of approach so far as is possible.

Minimising the Need to Use Force

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we constantly strive to create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of force. In addition to this, pupils who present with persistent challenging behaviour are assigned a Teaching Assistant/Key Worker who will work in partnership with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) and class teacher, in supporting the IBP and associated behaviour targets.

Pupils who have issues relating to sensory dysfunction or other conditions that may result in increased anxiety levels, and therefore an increase in the likelihood of challenging behaviour, may have individualised support or programmes to help them to manage this.

Through the Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) curriculum pupils learn about feelings and managing conflict, where this is appropriate to their level of development. The ethos further promotes independence, choice and inclusion; pupils are given maximum opportunity for personal growth and emotional wellbeing.

All staff are trained in skills to help them to defuse situations before behaviour becomes challenging and how to de-escalate incidents should they arise. Reasonable force will only be used when the risks involved in doing so, are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

Prevention of unsafe behaviour will be enabled through:

- **The deployment of appropriate staffing numbers;**
- **The deployment of appropriately trained and competent staff;**
- **Avoiding situations and triggers known to provoke challenging behaviour;**

- **Creating opportunities for choice and achievement;**
- **Developing staff expertise through a programme of Continuous Professional Development;**
- **Exploring pupils' preferences relating to the way/s in which they are managed**
- **Staff employ 'diffusion' techniques to avert escalation of behaviour into violence or aggression**

Definitions of Positive Handling.

Positive Handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. Positive handling is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment, and deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion, and de-escalation. Risk assessment identifies positive prevention strategies and how a pupil may need to be supported in a crisis.

1. Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, e.g., in the care of pupils and in order to support their access to a broad and balanced curriculum. It would seem reasonable that young children do require opportunities for close contact, as long as this is within public view, sensitively carried out and age/person-appropriate.

2. Physical Intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the arm or shoulder where the pupil is compliant.

This technique cannot be emphasised enough and in the hands of a skilful practitioner, many pupils can be deflected from a potentially volatile situation into a less confrontational situation i.e. it may be possible to "defuse" a situation by a timely intervention.

3. Physical Control / Restraint / Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. All such incidents must be recorded on the Positive Handling Form. If anyone is injured an accident/incident report must also be completed. Records of incidents must be given to the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team (SLT) as soon as possible, and by the end of the school day at the latest.

The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint/RPI. Restraint is defined by Team Teach as the positive application of force by staff, in order to overcome rigorous resistance, completely directing, deciding and controlling a person's free movement.

Types of Incident

The incidents described in The Education and Inspections Act 2006 The Use of Reasonable Force to Control and Restrain Pupils fall into three broad categories: -

- **Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.**
- **Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.**
- **Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline.**

Examples of situations which fall within one of the first two categories, are:

- **A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;**
- **Severe physical conflict between 2 or more pupils;**
- **A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;**
- **A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;**
- **A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or 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 which fall into the third category are:

- **A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;**
- **A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.**

Strategies: Time-Out / Withdrawal / Planned and Emergency Physical Interventions / Recovery

Time out

This involves restricting the child's access to positive reinforcements in a room or area which they may freely leave. It is a specific behaviour management technique and does not necessarily mean time spent out of the class/group, but rather refers to a withdrawal of attention and/or things they find rewarding. It could be as simple as turning away from a child who is attention-seeking, or positioning a child away from the class/group. This withdrawal of attention could also be achieved by sending a pupil to another class/group or a quiet area.

Withdrawal and Isolation

Withdrawal involves removing the child from a situation that causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This can mean removing a child from the class/group, to allow them time to calm down or to prevent a situation from escalating. They may need time away from staff and pupils (either on their own or in another class/group) in order to break the cycle/pattern of their behaviour or to reduce their level of anxiety/distress. The arrangement of "quiet time" shall be negotiated between the child and staff involved.

Isolation is where a pupil may require the provision of higher levels of staff supervision and support to enable them to overcome temporary difficulties that are preventing them from successfully engaging in normal classroom routines / activities. It should be:

- **Used positively and constructively. It should be aimed at actively engaging the pupil; promoting their safety, welfare and emotional stability, and returning the pupil to a less extraordinary means of management.**
- **Not exceed in duration a morning or afternoon school session. The length of time involved should be reviewed a minimum of every 15 minutes**
- **Have had the approval of the Senior Leadership Team**

Planned Physical Intervention

Is described/outlined in the pupil's IBP/Risk Assessment. This should cover most interventions, as possible scenarios will be identified and planned for when the IBP is drawn up. These interventions may include the use of Team Teach techniques.

Emergency Physical Intervention

May be necessary if a situation arises that was not foreseen or is uncharacteristic of the pupil. Members of staff retain their duty of care to pupils and any response, even in an emergency, must be proportionate to the circumstances. Staff should use the minimum force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety, consistent with the training that they have received. Following any such incident, a risk assessment will be devised (or the existing one updated) to support effective responses to any such situations which may arise in the future.

Wherever possible assistance will be sought from another member of staff.

Positive Handling at St Mary's Catholic Primary School (defined as the full range of strategies used to manage behaviour including where necessary physical intervention) is seen as a proactive response to meet individual pupil needs and any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way that staff exercise their responsibilities and the range of behaviour management strategies used.

Recovery

Pupils who may be distressed by events can be offered the following support:

- **Quiet time taking part in a calming activity**
- **Quiet time away from the incident/trigger**
- **Resuming their usual routine/previous activity as soon as possible, especially for pupils with special needs**
- **Time with a member of staff to debrief the incident**

Injury to the Child

Whilst the physical techniques are intended to reduce risk, there is always risk when two or more people engage to use force to protect, release or restrain. Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the child, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are 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 / Assistant Headteacher and parents / carer.

A First Aider will 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.

Staff: Authorised Staff / Health and Safety / Training / Support

Authorised Staff

All teachers, staff and the Headteacher are authorised to have control or charge of pupils automatically, they have the statutory power to use reasonable force within the context of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the subsequent guidance 'The Use of Reasonable Force to Control and Restrain Pupils.'

Supply staff must ensure that they are familiar with this school's policy. Appropriate guidance will be given if they have not undertaken Team Teach training.

Authorisation is not given to volunteers, students on placement, visitors or parents as they will not have control of pupils who may present with challenging behaviour, but will be supervised at all times.

Health and Safety of Staff

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, employees have a responsibility to report any circumstances which give rise to an increased risk to their Health and Safety.

Staff who have, or acquire, permanently or temporarily, any medical condition that may impact on their ability to carry out pupils' plans have a duty to report these to the Headteacher / SLT immediately, as there may be an impact on their own safety and that of colleagues and/or pupils. This information will be shared on the staff notice board.

Through the provision of Team Teach training, the risk of harm towards staff is reduced but it is possible for some injury to be received. All such occurrences should be treated and subsequently recorded, on the Positive Handling Form/Accident Form.

Staff Training

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that Team Teach training in the use of positive handling is available to staff and is kept up to date. The school provides training for all authorised staff and the Headteacher / SLT retains a list of all those staff trained. The list is reviewed on an annual basis.

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 SEND pupils receives 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 staffs are unable to support physically they are expected to support with de-escalation.

Staff Support Following Incidents

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.

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we have a debrief procedure which should be utilised if staff need to debrief after an incident. Where the staff have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force, they should have access to support; this will be made available/supported through the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team.

Recording and Monitoring Incidents

Recording

Where physical control or restraint has been used, a record of the incident will be kept. This record should be kept in the Positive Handling file located in the filing cupboard inside the Head teacher's office.

Appropriate documentation will be completed as soon as possible after the incident, prior to staff going off duty and be signed by all staff involved and the Headteacher/Parent Support Advisor (PSA).

After the review of the incident, a copy of the details will be placed on the pupil's file as part of their educational record.

Monitoring

Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour may require the use of reasonable force.

Monitoring of incidents will take place on a regular basis (at least termly) and the results used to inform planning to meet individual pupil and school needs. The Headteacher will present an annual summary of incidents that have involved the use of force to the Governing Body .

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

*** Review of IBP/Risk Assessment**

Visits Out of School

Our equal opportunities policy states that all pupils should be included in all curriculum activities. However, Health and Safety remains a priority and staff should carry out risk assessments for pupils that may be a possible danger prior to each visit into the community. Due consideration should be given to the following:

- **Is the pupil able to cope with the demands of the proposed visit?**
- **Are there sufficient, suitably trained staff - particularly if there should be an incident?**
- **How will you contact school to get extra help if necessary and how will you get back?**

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