

Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy

Name of School	St Edward's Catholic Primary School
Policy review Date	September 2025
Date of next Review	September 2026
Who reviewed this policy?	Ms S Naz Assistant Head Teacher for Inclusion

1.Introduction:

At St. Edward's, we believe that pupils need to be safe, know how to behave and know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. For a very small minority of pupils the use of reasonable force may be needed and on such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention will be used.

The majority of pupils behave well and conform to the expectations of our school. We have responsibility to operate an effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class and individual pupils. We acknowledge that physical techniques are only part of a whole setting approach to behavioural management and that Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

St Edward's school does not support the routine use of physical interventions and all staff understand that it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. Positive handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest of time to prevent a pupil harming themselves, 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.

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

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

2. Definition of Reasonable Force:

There is no legal definition of "reasonable force" however for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in St Edward's school, the clarification provided in the DfE guidance document "use of reasonable force", 2013 is used:

- 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.
- 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.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- 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.

- 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.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury. However it is acknowledged that in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injury as an accidental consequence of the intervention.

3. Different types of physical contact with pupils:

In all situations where physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must consider the pupils' age and level of understanding; the individual characteristics and history and the location where the contact takes place (this must not be in private without others present).

- **Physical Contact**

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupil:

- holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when together around the school;
- when comforting a distressed pupil;
- when a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- to demonstrate exercise or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching;
- to give first aid.

- **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.

- **Restrictive Physical Intervention**

The Law allows for teachers and other persons authorised by the Head teacher to use Restrictive Physical Intervention to prevent a pupil doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property
- Engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school.

"Restrictive Physical Intervention" is the term used to include interventions where bodily contact using force is used. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Head teacher has to, in specific circumstances, use "reasonable force" to control or restrain pupils.

4. The use of Restrictive Physical Interventions

Staff will use the minimum force which is reasonable in the circumstances that is believed to be necessary to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows: -

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions
- staff will only use it when there are reasonable grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary. The safety of all children at the school and the staff team will be balanced with the best interests of the child.
- staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion and at the level of understanding of the child or young person
- force will only be used where it is necessary as a last resort and then in a way which is proportionate to the risk in the immediate circumstances.
- staff will be able to show that the intervention used was in keeping with the incident
- every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses
- as soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control
- a distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy or an Individual Education/Behaviour Plan
- escalation will be avoided, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable
- the age, understanding, and competence of the individual pupil will always be taken into account
- in developing Individual Education/Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance
- procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

5. Who may use Restrictive Physical Interventions

The following staff are authorised by the Head teacher to have control of the pupils, have had training and are aware of this Policy and its implications.

We take the view that staff should not put themselves in danger and that removing pupils and themselves is the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to

rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the pupils.

6. Recording Incidents

Any incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention should be reported to the Head teacher. The use of restrictive physical interventions, whether planned or unplanned (emergency) should always be recorded as soon as practicable (and in any event within 24 hours of the incident) by the person(s) involved, using the **Restrictive Physical Intervention Recording Form** and filed in the restraint log. The contents of which should be regularly reviewed and monitored and appropriate action taken.

It is important that parents are notified when their son/daughter has been involved in any Restrictive Physical Intervention.

7. Developing a positive handling plan

If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a **Positive Handling Plan** will be completed. The use of **Potential Triggers to Negative Behaviour Form** will be used to inform the completion of the plan.

The plan will include:

- Involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why.
- Techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a restrictive Physical Intervention may be used.
- Identifying key staff who knows exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil.

8. Guidance and Training for Staff

Guidance and training is essential in this area. We adopt the best possible practice, at a number of levels including:

- awareness for governors, staff and parents
- behaviour management for all staff
- managing conflict in challenging situations - all staff
- specific training on Restrictive Physical Intervention techniques - relevant staff

9. Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we could avoid the need for complaints. All disputes that arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to Child Protection and Safeguarding policies. Any concerns regarding the application of this policy by staff should in the first instance be reported to the Head teacher and if this is not possible then the procedures outlined in the Whistleblowing Policy should be applied.

10. Behaviour on Trips Outside School

Children whose behaviour is such that the Group Leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the Group Leader should consider whether such children should be sent

home early. Parents and children should be told about the procedure for dealing with misbehaviour, how the child will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

Appendix 1.

Advice for staff

At St Edward's, we believe that physical intervention and/or restraint should be the last resort. In the majority of cases de-escalation and diffusion are the appropriate methods of dealing with situations that might result in a threat to the health and safety of any individuals. On extremely rare occasions it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically with or between pupils. These include:

- Injury, or risk of injury, to another pupil
- Injury, or risk of injury, to a member of staff
- Serious damage to property

Any intervention should be a last resort and be **proportionate, reasonable and appropriate**, and be done with the aim to **reduce** not **provoke**.

All staff owe a **duty of care** to pupils. To take no action, where the outcome is that a pupil injures him/herself, or another, including staff, could be seen as negligence.

Members of staff facing confrontational situations with pupils are reminded that the following behaviours can either reduce or inflame incidents, and that a brief moment of risk assessment may allow the time to decide on the appropriate action necessary.

Staff are strongly advised not to physically stop pupils from leaving their room. They should give a clear choice and spell out consequences, but unless there is a risk of injury should never block a pupil's exit.

Remaining calm – the ability to try and remain calm and appear relaxed is less likely to provoke. A relaxed posture and a non-threatening (CALM) stance, i.e. not toe-to-toe, are recommended.

Awareness of Space – try to be aware of the space around you and avoid stepping into another individual's personal/intimate space. Try to take a step back outside the circle of danger.

Pacing and Chasing – angry people often pace around in tense situations and staff should try to avoid the temptation to follow as they attempt to help them calm down. This can be counter-productive as it may trigger an animal chase response and drive the other person away. Where possible it is preferable for the staff member to stand still, speaking calmly, clearly and confidently – or even sit down.

Intonation - when people are anxious or angry they tend to talk faster, higher and more loudly. In a potential crisis situation staff need to deliberately speak slower, lower and more quietly

Help Script

- Connect by using pupil's name
- Recognise the feelings
- Tell the pupil you're there to help
- You talk and I will listen
- Give direction

Diffusing body language responses

- Social distance
- Sideways stance, step back

- Intermittent eye contact
- Relaxed body posture
- Palms open

Calm Stance

Think of the values of stepping back from a situation, both physically and emotionally:

- Allows a more considered response
- Time to make a 'dynamic' risk assessment and seek assistance
- Allows other person 'take up' time to make their own choices

Application of Force (DfES advice to schools 10/98)

Staff should NOT act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. This includes:

- Slapping, punching, kicking or tripping a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against joints
- Indecently touching, holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- Other than in circumstances that are exceptional, using reasonable force to hold a pupil face down on the ground

In the event of a serious incident e.g. a fight, staff should:

- Make their presence felt – “stop fighting, stop fighting”
- Send for assistance
- Spell out sanctions
- Remove the 'fuel' by clearing the 'audience' away
- Be a witness
- Intervene physically if confident and having assessed the degree of risk

But should not ignore or walk away.

Appendix 2

SOME NON- PHYSICAL INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES

Do	Don't
appear calm and relaxed	appear afraid and unsure of yourself; appear bossy, arrogant; assume an "I don't give a damn about you" attitude
keep the pitch and volume of your voice down.	raise your voice
feel comfortable with the fact that you are in control (if you control yourself, you control the situation); project a calm assured feeling that you will see the situation through to peaceful end no matter what happens	appear to expect an attack (or you will have one)
talk with the pupil	give commands; make demands
be very matter of fact if the pupil becomes agitated; be sensitive and flexible; be flexible yet consistent; be aware of body language; monitor breathing (chest movements) which can telegraph aggressive responses	make threats (Especially any that you are not absolutely sure that you can carry through!); maintain continuous eye contact; gesticulate (this may provoke confrontation)
stay close to the pupil and attend to him/her	turn your back or leave; invade the pupil's personal space
be patient; if a pupils agitation increases to the verge of attack: * Acknowledge his/her feelings; * Continue with a matter of fact attitude; * Always leave the pupil an avenue of escape	display emotion; argue; corner the pupil physically or psychologically
where possible, remain seated as long as the pupil does; avoid crowding	get up and move towards the pupil
stay near him/her, about one arm's length away; stand to one side; give the pupil more space if appropriate	give up
seek to relax your muscles and keep them under control.	tense your muscles