

St Barnabas C of E First and Middle School

‘Let all that you do be done in love’ I Corinthians ch16 v14



Positive Handling Policy

Reviewed by	Approved by	Date of Approval	Version Approved	Next Review Date
LCR	LAB	October 2025	v1	September 2026

Our Vision.

We are an inclusive Church School with a commitment to providing quality education that meets the needs of all. We aim to create successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens through our Christian approach of love and cooperation. **'Let all that you do be done in love'** encourages us to have a lifelong love of learning so we flourish as human beings.

'Let all that you do be done in love' 1 Corinthians ch16 v14

We believe that as a school, we work in partnership with parents and carers to lead, guide, encourage and instruct children within a framework of rights, responsibilities, values and rules. Effective behaviour management is essential to the smooth running of our school and in the creation of an environment where everyone's faith, rights and responsibilities are addressed.

We are a Church of England First and Middle school where we respect and promote all Christian values. We have the highest expectations of conduct – we believe in the importance of good manners and in treating others with care and respect at all times, both in and outside of the classroom.

School Values:

Respect

Generosity

Love

Thankfulness

Honesty

Courage

Mission Statement

In partnership with parents and the local community, we will provide a challenging, creative curriculum which develops the whole child. By providing a safe, caring and stimulating environment where all individuals are valued and respected, we will meet the needs of each school member, allowing them to fulfil their potential and prepare them for their future.

Introduction

This has been developed in response to DfE non-statutory guidance 'The Use of Reasonable Force' July 2013 (following the enactment of Section 93 of the 1996 Education and Inspections Act). It also takes cognisance of DfES, DOH Guidance for Restrictive Physical Interventions, 'Guidance on the use of restrictive physical intervention for children who display extreme behaviour in association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorder' (July 2002). Additionally, it follows the policies and guidance of Worcestershire Children's First.

This supports 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. A statement about the school's Behaviour policy will be made to parents on request. This statement will include information on the use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils, including the fact that parental consent is not required for the use of physical interventions.

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 the school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required. The school acknowledges that physical techniques are only part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff:

- I. Clearly understand their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary, and
- II. are provided with appropriate training to support children and staff with these difficult situations.

It should be emphasised that if used at all, restraint (referred to in this document as positive handling) should be seen in the context of a further positive action of care and concern. In line with DfES advice and guidance 2003, it is used as a 'last resort' option and in the most extreme cases, other strategies will always have been attempted first.

Reasonable force

The use of reasonable force to control and restrain pupils' enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following: Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act (2006) enables staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Placing themselves at risk
- Placing other pupils or staff at risk
- Behaviour leading to serious damage to property or committing a criminal offence

Engaging in behaviour that is prejudicial to maintaining the good order and discipline at St Barnabas or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in the classroom, during a teaching session or elsewhere within school (including authorised out of school activities.)

Examples of situations where reasonable force may be used: -

- Action is necessary in self-defence or because of **imminent risk of injury**. Examples: Pupil attacks a member of staff, another pupil, attempts self-injury, pupils are fighting. Pupil running in classroom or corridor in a way that is likely to cause injury to self or others. Pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school and who would be judged to be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school.
- There is a **serious and developing risk of damage to property**, including the pupil's own property. Examples: Pupil is causing or about to cause deliberate damage or vandalism. Pupil is causing or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, rough play, misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- Where pupil's behaviour is **seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline**. Examples: Pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom. Pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

NB *Wherever possible early support from colleagues will be sought. Single handed intervention increases the risk of injury to both parties and does not provide the person intervening with the support of a colleague acting as a critical friend.*

Individual members of staff cannot be required or directed to use physical restraint. However, as teaching and nonteaching staff work in 'loco parentis' and should always operate with an appropriate '**Duty of Care**', should the school's policy not be adhered to by individuals, it is not unforeseeable that claims of negligence could be levied against them.

The application of any form of physical control places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Schools CANNOT use force as a punishment: it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. Schools cannot use chastisement as a punishment, in line with ensuring safeguarding for our children.

Definitions of Positive Handling

This policy does more than simply outline the use of positive handling in school. It aims to provide a transparent overview of how we use physical contact to both care for and, where appropriate control our pupils. Based on the principles of moving from least intrusive to more restrictive holding, we have divided interaction into two definable areas: physical contact and reasonable force.

Physical Contact

- Situations in which physical interaction occurs between staff and pupils to either care for pupils who may be distressed or have severe, complex or profound learning disabilities, or in subject areas such as physical education in order to promote inclusive learning opportunities and deliver the National Curriculum and other therapies and activities to ensure access and inclusion.
- Physical guidance and prompts will be a routine part of programmes and activities for those pupils who require modelling and physical support to assist their learning. Physical contact may also be necessary during intimate care, moving and handling and other activities such as First Aid.
- As part of a planned routine of intimate care it is appropriate for staff to work with the child: Staff ratios of 1:1 and 1:2, according to the individual needs of the pupil. This would be outlined in a personal plan. Consideration of the student's dignity should be given with regard to age and gender when establishing which members of the staff team should carry out intimate care with which students. This particularly applies when older students and younger staff are involved.
- In addition, staff will also use positive touch to comfort pupils in order to teach them more appropriate ways of seeking attention. Where possible, staff will endeavour to use 'safe hugs' and the 'friendly hold' as defined in Team Teach training.

Reasonable Force

No legal definition of reasonable force within a school's context exists, however for the purpose of this policy and the implementation in school:

'Reasonable Force uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property'.

Reasonable force is usually used either to control, for physical intervention, or to restrain. (DfE, July 2013, pg.4 and Allen, 2012 pg.9) 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.

1. *Control* - Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom. The Team Teach techniques implemented here will include 'turn, gather, guide' and 'the friendly hold'.
2. *Physical intervention* - This is used to describe the use of "minimal force to briefly prompt, guide, contain or direct free movement, in circumstances in which there is no extended or extreme resistance. For some individuals, these may not be regarded as significant incidents, and, in some settings, may not require recording and reporting." (Allen, 2012, p. 9)
3. *Restraint* - 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. Whenever possible, the following Team Teach techniques will be used, 'single elbow hold', 'figure of 4 hold', 'double elbow hold', 'T Wrap', 'Team Teach breakaways' and 'half shield'."

Reasonable force used should be proportionate to the age, gender, special educational needs, medical conditions, and state of physical, emotional and intellectual development of the young person.

The scale and nature of any positive handling at school must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual and the nature of the harm they might cause; it cannot be used to respond to misbehaviour unless there is a risk of harm or the breakdown of good order.

Team Teach techniques

All Team Teach techniques are accredited and authorised for staff to use by the Head.

The following strategies are employed as a means by which to deal proactively with challenging behaviours and so ensure that restrictive physical interventions are used as a last resort and only when absolutely necessary. Where it is found that a young person's challenging behaviour presents a foreseeable risk and that restrictive physical interventions are necessary then a Behaviour Support Plan (including positive handling plan) will be drawn

up. (Appendix 1) Where appropriate, Behaviour Support Plans will be designed through multi agency collaboration.

Some or all of these strategies will appear in a young person's Behaviour Support Plan;

- *De-escalation, diffusion and distraction activities*
- *Reassurance*
- *Calm talking/communication*
- *Help script for pupil*
- *Clear, firm, verbal instructions to offer or direct options, which may include:*
 - Supervised time out of the situation*
 - Withdrawal of class/school privileges*
- *Positive handling techniques such as prompts, guides and escorts that are taught through Team-Teach training*

Behaviour management strategies are discussed with parents and children (if appropriate) and an indication of the positive handling techniques (Prompts, guides and escorts) that may be used.

Risk Assessments are completed against each child when physical restraint may need to be used in the context of the identified target behaviour(s) and environments in which they occur. The assessment should identify the benefits and the risks associated with the strategies being proposed.

Authorised staff

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006, cited in DfE, July, 2013) It can also apply to people whom the Head has temporarily put in charge of pupils, such as volunteers or parents. (DfE, July 2013, pg. 4)

The Head is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given, in what circumstances and settings they may use force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. Support Services and other agencies will have their own policies for Care and Control of pupils. When working within school it is the Head's responsibility to ensure that colleagues from Support Services are aware of school policy and practice.

Training

Team-Teach training is affiliated to The General Services Association and its courses have been accredited (2006, 2009, 2012) by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities and The Institute of Conflict Management (2015). In line with Local Authority Guidance and in agreement with the DoWMAT, this school is committed

to implementing the accredited Team Teach Approach. Further information in relation to Team Teach can be found at <https://www.teamteach.co.uk/>

This school is committed to training appropriate staff and ensuring training is renewed within the correct time frame.

Action after an incident

In addition, procedures will be put in place to ensure that appropriate support is provided for staff and children, and that following an incident pupil/staff relationships are rebuilt and repaired to ensure that a positive learning environment is maintained.

After every incident/Crisis, the process that should take place for positive listening, learning and debriefing are to support staff and children. Relationships should be rebuilt and repaired to ensure that a positive learning environment is maintained.

- Reflection: What did we do?
- Repair: Is there anything we can do to repair the relationship?
- Re-build: What we can do next time-learning opportunities.

The Head / SLT 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 the pupil's Behaviour Support Plan (including positive handling plan)
- Risk Assessment
- Schools Behaviour Policy/Care and Control Policy
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Procedure
- Health and Safety
- Suspensions Procedure

The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken. In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

Recording and Reporting

- All staff will follow the schools recording and reporting procedure. Staff will receive training and guidance in the completion of recording and reporting documentation for this school.
- Should an injury occur as a result of an incident at school, immediate steps will be taken to secure appropriate medical attention. This will be reported and recorded in accordance with Worcestershire policy.

- All incidents that result in restraint (where a child has to be held) will be recorded in detail using The Bound Log Book, or if a Positive Handling Agreement is in place, then a record of the incident will be recorded and the Positive Handling Agreement reviewed accordingly.
- Restraint is “the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering the client” (DOH 4/93 Section 5.2).
- The member of staff concerned will report the matter orally to the Headteacher or a senior member of staff as soon as possible. The incident will be recorded in the Bound Book by staff at the earliest opportunity.
- The Headteacher or deputy will tell parents about the incident by the end of the school day. However, if parents cannot be reached a letter will be sent to inform them of the incident and offer them the opportunity to discuss the matter.
- A log will be kept of any occasion when positive handling is used (except minor or trivial incidences).
- The incident will be recorded on Arbor
- When positive handling has been used and pupils have been held using techniques, the wrap, single, double elbows or the shield, the Bound Log Book will also be completed and signed by the member(s) of staff involved. Reports will also be completed and attached from other members of staff present and the pupil(s) involved.
- The Bound Book will be reviewed by the Head teacher and person with responsibility for Special Needs or Health and Safety termly to consider control measures and possible training or further training needs etc.

Debriefing Following Serious Incident

- Pupils and members of staff will be checked for any sign of injury and first aid will be administered if required.
- The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise him/her. When the pupil regains complete composure, an appropriate member of staff will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain the reason for it.
- All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff will provide support to the member of staff involved.

Complaints

Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the DoWMAT's Complaints Policy, Managing Allegations against Staff. If necessary, staff disciplinary procedures may be used to respond to any concerns of misconduct.

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Next review date: September 2026