



Positive Handling Policy



St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School

COMMITTEE: Local Academy Committee

DATE APPROVED:

POLICY REVIEW DATE: May 2022

Contents

1.1 Aims

1.2 Legislation and guidance

1.3 Definition of Positive Handling at

2.1 Why use Positive Handling?

3.1 Alternative strategies

3.2 Use of Positive Handling

3.3 Actions after an incident

4. Risk Assessments

5. Complaints

6. Contact details for raising concerns

7. Monitoring arrangements

St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School aims to:

To offer a broad and balanced curriculum as we strive to prepare our children for life in modern Britain.

- To develop children's joy and understanding of the Catholic faith enriching their lives with an understanding of the way Jesus showed us to live our lives.
- To provide a happy, secure and caring environment enabling high-quality education to flourish.
- To build in our children high self-esteem and a strong sense of well-being within a loving atmosphere, developing spiritually and emotionally in partnership with the home, parish and local community.
- To provide equal access to the curriculum sharing opportunities to explore, experiment and learn.

In our Trust we aim to create a sense of belonging in our schools and ensure that each child feels secure, connected and loved.

Not all children feel this way all the time and when this happens we would want to support them back to dignity in a positive way. Staff at St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. Only staff trained in positive handling strategy techniques will undertake Positive Handling.

1.1 Aims

Staff at St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety / well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. Our policy on positive handling should therefore be read in conjunction with DfE guidance on the use of reasonable force

The specific aims of this policy are:

- 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.

1.2 Legislation and guidance

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used **only** in the last resort.

Under the Children Order 1995, it is only permissible as described under the heading "Physical Control".

Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It enables trained staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

1.3 Definition of Positive Handling at St Thomas More Catholic Secondary School

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself/herself or others or seriously damaging property.

2.1 Why use Positive Handling?

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. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of their emotions and behaviour. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories.

Staff should always act within the School's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and wellbeing. Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence.

However, at the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

In some circumstances, staff may use reasonable force to restrain a pupil to prevent them:

- Causing disorder
- Hurting themselves or others
- Damaging property

Incidents of physical restraint must:

- **Always be used as a last resort**
- Be applied using the minimum amount of force and for the minimum amount of time possible
- Be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned
- Never be used as a form of punishment
- Be recorded and reported to parents

3.1 Alternative strategies

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (eg if a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:

- listening to the voice of the child to understand the behaviour
- state choices/consequences
- count down
- use chill out space
- praise partial compliance
- a repeated instruction until the pupil complies
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with our school's policy on behaviour.

3.2 Use of Positive Handling

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment. Named or trained staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied.

However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary. In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate and effective positive handling should be a **last resort**.

When positive handling becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Shout at the pupil
- Attempt to reason with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in sexual areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck or across the chest
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

3.3 Actions after an incident

Positive handling often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil.

An appropriate member of the pastoral team should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised.

An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed. If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a Pastoral Support Plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the pupil and their parents.

Reflection work will take place with the child when they are ready to do so – this is in line with our Behaviour Policy. The pastoral team will also work with the child and appropriate staff to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately in the **Bound and Numbered Book** and on **SIMS**. All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available.

A member of the pastoral team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

4 Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- A plan will be drawn up with the child, parents, class team and Pastoral Team so that everyone is clear what will be done to support the child

5 Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and social services department under child protection procedures. It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the content of this policy.

6 Contact details for raising concerns

If you have any concerns regarding the safeguarding of any children please contact the Designated Safeguarding Team

Mr Hopkins – DSL

Mrs Soraghan – DDSL

Mr Bonner – Head teacher

Please see the school website for contact details.

7 Monitoring arrangements

This policy and information report will be reviewed by Mr John Hopkins Assistant Head (Inclusion) **every year**. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year.

It will be approved by the governing board.

Appendix 1

Examples of when it is acceptable to use Positive Handling:

You may use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to leave the room
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or stop a fight in the playground
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

Appendix 2

Other forms of physical contact

It is not illegal to touch a pupil.

There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary, such as if you:

- Comfort a distressed pupil
- Congratulate or praise a pupil
- Demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- Demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- Give first aid
- Support with dressing/un dressing if the child is not able to do this for themselves