


St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Positive Handling Policy



“Growing through God we Learn, Laugh and Love”

	Policy Date	September 2021
	Policy Review Cycle	Every 3 Years
	Date of Next Review	November 2024
	Who reviewed this policy?	Head Teacher and Governors

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1. Aims

Our school aims to ensure that:

- All members of the school community are kept safe.
- Any physical intervention that school staff have to undertake is proportionate, reasonable and necessary.
- There are consistent and safe practices in the use of handling, force and restraint.
- There are clear reporting and restoration practices in place in the school so that reflective practice with regard to physical intervention is purposeful.

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education: [The Use of Reasonable Force 2013](#). It is based on Section 550A of the Education Act (1996), which outline schools' powers to restrain pupils.

(1) A member of the staff of a school may use, in relation to any pupil at the school, such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely -

- (a) Committing any offence
- (b) causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself), or

(c) engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise.

(2) Subsection (1) applies where a member of the staff of a school is -

(a) on the premises of the school, or .

(b) elsewhere at a time when, as a member of its staff, he has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned; .

but it does not authorise anything to be done in relation to a pupil which constitutes the giving of corporal punishment within the meaning of section 548.

3. Definitions

Handling – refers to any physical intervention applied by a member of staff where it necessary to make physical contact with a student in order to manage their conduct or ensure their own or others safety. Handling strategies may be restrictive or non-restrictive and include, guiding, supporting, holding and, in the most extreme cases, restraining.

Use of Reasonable Force – is the application of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force required to achieve the required outcome from the handling strategy employed (see above) without further endangering the student, member of staff or others present at the time of physical intervention.

Restraint - is the positive application of force in order to actively prevent a child from causing significant injury* to him/herself or others or seriously damaging property.

*Significant Injury would include: actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others by willful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning. It must be shown that on any occasion where physical restraint is used there were strong indicators that if immediate action had not been taken, significant injury would have followed.

4. Partnership with Parents

Parents working in partnership with the school to consistently reinforce the school's expectations is an important factor in every child's success. At St John Fisher Primary we will work in partnership with parents to ensure that expectations are clear and parents can reinforce them with their children. This includes ensuring that parents are kept informed about decisions made in response to a child's misbehaviour so that we can work together in the best interests of pupils to ensure expectations for behaviour are made clear.

The school is responsible for communicating to pupils, parents and staff its expectations of standards of conduct. A range of policies and procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and appropriate conduct. These are:

- Behaviour Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Home-School Agreement

Following an incident of physical intervention parents can expect to be debriefed by staff so that they have a full understanding of the incident that took place. They can also expect to have input into the preparation or amendment of their child's Physical Handling Plan (PHP)

5. Implementation of Physical Intervention

All members of staff working with students at the school are authorised to handle, use reasonable force or restrain students if/when such physical intervention is necessary in order to fulfil their duty of care to the child/ren.

No member of staff is required to employ any physical intervention strategy if they are not comfortable or confident to do so effectively.

No member of staff should intervene physically if they have reason to believe that to do so would worsen the situation/incident that is taking place.

In all circumstances where physical intervention is or may become required, members of staff should ensure that adult assistance is requested before intervention, although it is understood that circumstances may lead to the need for intervention prior to the assistance arriving.

Staff considering handling, use of reasonable force or restraint must provide opportunity for the student to alter their behaviour/actions before employing a physical intervention strategy and should continue to make instructions to the student and details of their intended interventions clear.

The method of physical intervention employed must use the minimum reasonable force for the minimum length of time

6. Recording Physical Interventions

ALL incidents of handling MUST be recorded on CPOMS as separate incidents, providing clear details on the circumstances including:

- the rationale for holding,
- duration and the outcome;
- Whether things improved or worsened as a result of the hold

Each incident must then log the actions taken including:

- debrief with a trained member of SLT
- Restorative action taken
- How the incident was communicated with parents.

This information will be used to update the child's individual positive handling plan.

If the child or any staff are harmed in any way as a direct or indirect consequence of any actions taken, this must be logged and reflected upon.

Records will kept and stored until the child reaches the age of 75.

7. De-Escalation

This school recognises the importance of proactive identification of need, meeting individual needs and de-escalation strategies. Our de-escalation strategies include (but are not limited to) those listed below:

- Matching of tasks and teaching styles to individual needs;
- Use of staff proximity
- Verbal advice & support
- Distraction
- Reassurance
- Humour
- Listening
- Success reminded
- Planned ignoring

- Take-up time
- Giving space
- Time-out
- Negotiation
- Limited choices
- Agreeing/acknowledgement/apologising
- Supportive touch
- Logical consequences
- Removing audience
- Change of adult
- Jobs/responsibilities

These are deployed on a case-by-case basis using knowledge of the child's needs and emotions to guide the choice of strategy.

8. Physical Handling Plans

We undertake dynamic risk assessments of our pupils. If we consider that a child is at risk of requiring physical intervention, we will proactively draw up a physical handling plan (PHP). In order to do this, we will consult with parents and may consult with other professionals in order to ensure that it is an effective document, representing the child's needs.

Once a child has had an incident requiring physical intervention, their PHP will be updated to ensure that it reflects current thinking about their triggers, effective de-escalation strategies and to ensure that any physical intervention takes account of previous experience of what works for them.

9. Searching Students

On occasions a member of staff may have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is in possession of an item or items which contravene school regulations and could potentially cause harm to the student or others. Under these circumstances The Education Act 2011 extends the power of staff to search students without their consent. **Any prohibited items found in pupils' possession will be confiscated.** These items will not be returned to pupils. We will also confiscate any item which is harmful or detrimental to school discipline. These items will be returned to pupils after discussion with senior leaders and parents, if appropriate.

Searching and screening pupils is conducted in line with the DfE's [latest guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).

Searches will be conducted by two members of staff, at least one of whom will be the same gender as the student. Students will be offered the opportunity to have their parents/carers present.

St John Fisher Primary does not endorse and will not undertake a physical search of any students' person. Where necessary a student will be asked to remove his/her coat and/or blazer, empty all pockets, open their bags and in some circumstances remove their shoes and socks. Possessions and items of apparel that have been removed may then be searched by the staff present.

If undesirable items are discovered the school will use its power of confiscation to retain the offending item(s). Parents/carers, if not present, will be contacted to explain what has been found and any subsequent sanctions that have been applied. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be

invited to retrieve the offending property and asked to ensure that they are not brought to school again.

In the event that illegal items are discovered then the Police will be informed immediately.

10. Staff Training

Staff will undertake Team Teach Positive Handling training every 3 years

11. Allegations against staff

Under the guidance found in [DfE Use of Reasonable Force](#) , school staff have a power to use force and lawful use of the power provides a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action and there is no requirement for an automatic use of suspension when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.

The effective use of physical handling plans, swift and accurate reporting of any physical handling incidents, Restoration Meetings and debriefs should mitigate the risk of allegations against staff.

If an allegation is made and the allegation meets the threshold of harm (See 'Allegations or Concerns Raised Against School staff, Supply Staff and Other Adults in School' section of the Child Protection Policy and [Guidance for Safer Working Practice Section 17](#)) early contact with the LADO will be made in order to provide direction and clarity for any investigation. If the allegation is considered 'low level' i.e., it does not meet the threshold for harm, it will be responded to in line with the guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 4 Section 2 and the school's Child Protection Policy.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The Head Teacher monitors the number of physical interventions every term and reports back to the Governors. They also liaise with the local authority to ensure suitable training is undertaken by staff.

This policy will be reviewed by the Head Teacher every 3 years in line with the training. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

13. Links with other policies

This exclusions policy is linked to our

- Behaviour policy
- SEN policy and information report

<http://www.st-johnfisherprimary.co.uk/page/policies/24522>

14. Complaints

A clear restraint 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 context in which they apply.

Appendix 1 – Report Writing Advice

Intervention report writing: DO's and DON'T's	
Do set the context of the incident explaining the antecedent. Put as much information into this as possible as this will allow staff to build a profile and identify triggers.	Don't just write about the time in which staff were physical managing the learner
Do clearly set out which staff intervened and on which side/limb. And for how long (including staff change overs)	Don't just identify staff involved.
Do give a rationale as to why it was REASONABLE, PROPORTIONATE and NECESSARY to physically manage a learner.	Don't add in how you felt, ensure that decision making was rooted in professional judgement and in order to maintain a high level of duty of care.
Do ensure that the reasoning for physical intervention links to Maintaining Good Order, Damage to property or Risk to themselves or others.	
Do debrief the learner, and when appropriate family and ensure that documentation is signed to evidence that the learner agrees with the account of the incident.	Don't use the debrief just to talk through the incident. This is the time to develop the support plan for the learner and improve the pre-invention work to reduce the need for de-escalation or physical management.
Do keep support plans as a working document that reflects the emerging and changing needs of the learner.	Don't file the plan away. Plans are only as good as the people who use and develop them.
Terminology	Change to
Grabbed wrist	Bandaged wrist
Cornered	Used staff proximity
Stopped legs/arms	To reduce the risk of injury movement or legs/arms was restricted by...
Gently tried to move them	Used contingent touch

Phrases you may use...	
In line with his/her support plan	Learner was coached and support by... (strategies/staff)
Learner was showing signs of frustration due to ...	In order to maintain good order it was deemed reasonable/necessary to physically intervene
Due to the continued/increased level of aggression it was proportionate to increase the intervention to a...	The learner seemed in crisis due to...
Applied a Team Teach approved (technique)	REMEMBER: Guide – Minimal resistance Control – Moderate resistance Restraint – Rigorous resistance

Personalised Behaviour Inclusion Plan		
Child's Name:	Class:	Date of Plan
Key member of staff 1	Key member of staff 2	Review Date

Stage 0: Differentiated pre-emptive strategies supporting inclusion	
1.	
2.	
3.	

What does the behaviour look like?		
Stage 1 Anxiety Behaviours	Stage 2 Defensive Behaviours	Stage 3 Crisis Behaviours
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•

What are common triggers?
•
•
•
•

De-Escalation Skills	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Avoid	Notes
Verbal advice and support					
Giving space					
Reassurance					
Help scripts					
Negotiation					
Choices					
Humour					
Consequences					
Planned ignoring					
Take up time					
Time-out					
Supportive touch					
Transfer adult					
Success reminded					
Simple listening					
Acknowledgement					
Apologising					
Agreeing					
Removing audience					

Others					
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Appendix 3 – Example Personalised Behaviour Inclusion Plan (Personal Handling Plan or PHP)

Personalised Behaviour Inclusion Plan		
Child's Name: Joe	Class: 4	Date of Plan: 01/09/2021
Key member of staff 1 Mrs Jones	Key member of staff 2 Mr Smith	Review Date: 01/12/2021

Stage 0: Differentiated pre-emptive strategies supporting inclusion	
1.	Work is always differentiated to meet need
2.	Soft landing every day
3.	'Safe space' identified and routine practised with Joe

What does the behaviour look like?		
Stage 1 Anxiety Behaviours	Stage 2 Defensive Behaviours	Stage 3 Crisis Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clicking tongue Tapping desk Wriggling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shouting out Refusing to work Head on desk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal aggression to staff Can throw things Difficult to catch (running)

What are common triggers?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not being able to do the work set Change of adult in the room or change of routine Sitting by Dylan

De-Escalation Skills	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Avoid	Notes
Verbal advice and support	x	x			Kind words and refocusing can work at Stage 1
Giving space	x				Don't give space at Stage 3 – risk to others
Reassurance	x				
Help scripts	x	x			Joe knows that the 'help script' means that he needs to calm down and sometimes takes this cue.
Negotiation				x	Don't negotiate – does not work for Joe
Choices	x				Joe can cope with simple choice when he is starting to escalate.
Humour				x	Avoid at all times, especially sarcasm
Consequences				x	Joe does not respond well to the use of consequences. Has his own rewards/sanctions because of his identified SMH needs – use these.
Planned ignoring	x				Only works if used VERY early on
Take up time	x	x			Works well for Joe is 'demands' are planned for.
Time-out	x	x	x		Joe has a safe-space. He knows where it is and when to use it.
Supportive touch			x		Joe appreciates contingent touch when he is very escalated. A weighted blanket is also available for this.

Transfer adult	x	x			Try to get Mrs Jones or Mr Smith engaged with Joe at the earliest opportunity.
Success reminded	x	x	x		Joe LOVES praise
Simple listening	x				
Acknowledgement	x	x	x		See the 'help script' to support Joe
Apologising				x	
Agreeing				x	
Removing audience	x	x	x		Joe can become very self-conscious and become more agitated if he thinks others are looking at him. Advise him to seek his safe-space if needed.
Others	x	x			Joe likes to be given responsibility. At Stage 1 & 2 giving him the chance to take a break from the classroom can be very useful. This can either be to his safe-space or on a message to the office.