

St Monica's Catholic Primary School



Positive Handling Policy

Approved by:	Full Governing Board	Date: March 2024
Signed	James Gouldbourne Mr Ryan McLoughlin	
Last reviewed on:	March 2024	
Next review due by:	March 2026	

MISSION STATEMENT

"Success for All within a Christ-Centred Community"

Aims

In our school we create a calm environment to minimise incidents that may require any physical intervention. We de-escalate incidents when they do arise. We only use physical interventions when the risks involved of doing so are outweighed by the risks of not doing so.

Positive Behaviour Management

All staff and volunteers adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to build self-esteem, and promote a safe environment for students and staff. All staff work in partnership with one another and pupils to:

- Find out why this child behaves as he or she does
- Understand the factors that influence this child's behaviour
- Identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing

This approach helps to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It reduces the incidence of extreme behaviours and makes sure that the use of physical intervention is rare.

What is physical intervention ('reasonable force')?

The use of force is illegal if the physical circumstances do not warrant it. The force used should always be the minimum needed to regain and ensure safety and control for everyone involved or present. The Positive Handling Policy should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Child protection/Safeguarding Policy.

In what circumstances can physical intervention be used?

- To prevent a pupil causing, or being at risk of causing, injury or damage to themselves or others, whether by accident, rough behaviour or by misuse of materials or objects
- To prevent a pupil committing a criminal offence
- To prevent a pupil committing deliberate serious damage or vandalism
- To prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil
- To prevent behaviour which is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline

The decision to use physical intervention will be taken in the context of the level of risk presented by the behaviour, the seriousness of the incident and the relative risks of the use of physical intervention compared with any available alternative. The use of physical intervention will take into account the characteristics of the pupil, including their age, gender, SEN, physical needs or disability, developmental

level or cultural issues.

The Last Resort Principle

At St. Monica's, we pro-actively foster positive relationships and only use reasonable force when there is no realistic alternative. This means that we expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. We expect staff to think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

There might be some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equal effective alternatives (for instance, a child is about to run in the road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives such as the use of assertiveness skills:

- Use a distracter such as a whistle or loud bell to interrupt the behaviour long enough for other methods of verbal control
- Withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- Other techniques designed to defuse a situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour, in which case the incident could be dealt with later when emotions are running less high
- The employment of other sanctions consistent with St Monica's policy on behaviour

Where physical interventions are needed to prevent injury to the student, other students or staff, or to prevent serious damage, these should be for the minimum length of time possible and using the least possible force. All staff must consider whether they are using reasonable force. 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

- Take into account any special needs a pupil may have
- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Utilise Team Teach strategies if trained (see Team Teach section)
- If you are not trained in Team Teach, seek assistance from a member of staff who is trained
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff as soon as 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
- 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, lying face down or pulling arms across the child's chest (Appendix – B)
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan.

The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past.

Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, gender, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in a Pastoral Support Plan or SEND support form.

Staff Training

It is the policy of this school that all staff working closely with pupils are trained in the proactive and responsive positive handling strategies and, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy. In cases where a Positive Handling Plan is in operation, selected staff will be trained in any physical interventions to be used (Team Teach).

These staff will be trained by the accredited provider and will be the only staff authorised to use the intervention. It is the school's policy to have staff trained in Team Teach strategies for de-escalation and positive handling.

General Advice for Staff

- Be sure that you are aware of and complying with the school policy for behaviour and discipline and positive handling procedures.
- It is better to defuse situations wherever possible, as this prevents them from escalating to a level where force is necessary
- Send for the assistance of another member of staff as soon as possible
- All those involved should be debriefed after incidents to explore more positive/effective responses to future difficult situations

Team Teach

Only staff trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategy techniques of TEAM TEACH should use physical intervention techniques with children when necessary. Further details of the TEAM TEACH approach can be found on the TEAM TEACH website. The website address is www.team-teach.co.uk.

The term positive handling includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

The school takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors to the school.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables a school's staff to use such force as is reasonable. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force.

Team Teach

Team Teach is a de-escalation and positive handling strategy. Staff undergo a course led by qualified trainers with a single day refresher course undertaken every three years.

Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible. Here at St Monica's, we will ensure as many staff as possible are trained in Team Teach and keep detailed records on training dates.

Steps to be taken before using Team Teach physical controls

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning
- Give clear directions for the pupil to stop
- Remind the pupil about rules and likely outcomes
- Remove an audience and/or take the vulnerable pupil to a safe place
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons
- Use positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.
- Use de-escalation methods in order to reduce the risk of physical intervention being needed

Team Teach Restraint

At St Monica's school we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. We expect staff to risk assess and choose the safest alternative. This also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it **reduces rather than increases** risk.

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Team Teach physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming him/herself or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property.
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing this.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint. These staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Physical restraint should never be used to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property.
- The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity.

In addition, whilst or before intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. 'I am doing this to keep you safe'.

Responding to unforeseen emergencies

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. An unforeseen event may require an emergency response. After that event, staff have a duty to plan ahead and prepare a new risk assessment.

Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Plans

Risk assessments are required for pupils who exhibit **extreme** behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong.

When considering a pupil's behaviour, staff will think about the following questions

Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?

- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective should be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be

ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered along with the child's Educational Health care Plan (EHCP) and any other planning document relevant to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.

Post Incident Debrief

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of our school to offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that pupils and parents have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other peoples' perspectives.

It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the needs of all staff. As individuals we all vary in how much support we need after an unpleasant incident. Generally a member of senior staff would expect to talk to staff and children involved (if appropriate) in any incidents involving violence. If members of staff need time to rest or compose themselves, then the Headteacher will make arrangements for the class group to be supported.

Recording

- All incidents of unacceptable behaviour should be recorded electronically on CPOMS.
- All serious incidents or incidents involving restraint will be:
 - Recorded in detail in CPOMS
 - Include all information about attempts to de-escalate the situation
 - Include full explanation of any positive handling strategies used
 - Recorded in a face to face interview with the headteacher and a member of SLT

Parents will be invited to meet with the headteacher, where a complete review of the incident and information will be shared. The Positive Handling Plan will be reviewed, or put into action.

Within these recording strategies, all details must be recorded by witnesses within twenty-four hours and signed by at least two members of staff. The Headteacher needs to be informed.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required.

Parents

When there is concern about a child, parents will be invited to contribute to a risk assessment and ratify this alongside the school management team.

Positive Handling Plan.

Written parental agreement will form part of this. Parents will be informed of the school's policies. Parents will be informed following serious incidents.

Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints will follow the school's complaints procedure.

Appendix 1 List of those qualified to use TEAM TEACH techniques.

Appendix 2 Blank positive handling plan including RA

Policy written: **February 2024**

Policy reviewed: March 2024

Next review date: **March 2026**

APPENDIX 1

March 2024:

Staff untrained in Team Teach are:

Sarah Gilbertson

Vicky Jo Gillbanks

APPENDIX 2

St Monica's POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN

Name of child	DOB	Year group
Date plan started	Date plan discontinued:	
<u>Effective strategies previously used:</u>		
<u>Strategies not recommended:</u>		
<u>Physical techniques used effectively:</u>		
<u>Physical techniques used which proved ineffective or problematic</u>		
<u>Headteacher signature</u>		
<u>Parent Signature</u>		

Date	Anticipated risk	Strategy to use	Effectiveness
------	------------------	-----------------	---------------

--	--	--	--