

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

To be read in conjunction with:

Behaviour Policy
Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
Keeping Children Safe in Education
DfE Guidance on Use of Reasonable Force in Schools

Rationale

This policy is firmly based on the College Mission Statement. Specifically, through this policy the College seeks to *'promote an atmosphere in which all members of the community feel comfortable'*. We are fully committed to equal opportunities and believe that every member of the school community has the right to realise their potential in a safe and happy environment.

Aims of the Policy

This policy seeks to ensure the provision of a safe environment for pupils, staff, parents and visitors. Governors regard the need for physical intervention as something they hope can be avoided but they understand that, in extreme cases, it may be necessary to use reasonable force to either restrain or control pupils. It may be necessary for all staff to use positive handling strategies on rare occasions; however, staff should only use strategies when not putting themselves at risk of harm.

This policy has been set out in accordance with the 'Use of Reasonable Force' guidance issued by the Department for Education 2013.

This guidance states that all staff may use reasonable force to:

- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves or someone else through physical outbursts.
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground
- 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

Legal Position

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

- Committing any offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself)
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school (including when pupils are on a school trip or educated off site)
- Schools cannot use force as punishment: it is always unlawful to do so

What is Reasonable Force?

As defined by 'Use of Reasonable Force - Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies Department for Education July 2013':

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most staff 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 pupil 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, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

Positive Handling

No legal definition of Positive Handling exists; however, for the purpose of this policy, and its implementation at St Edward's College, positive handling is defined as: *the use of the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself/ herself, others or property.*

The College recognises that this may be necessary; however, where possible, designated members of staff should be called upon in the event of an incident, as soon as possible. This would include members of the College Leadership Team and SEND team.

Parents / Carers will be informed when positive handling has been used.

All members of staff will be aware that Positive Handling can take several forms. At different ages, it could be appropriate to involve:

1. **Physical Contact**

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, e.g. in the care of pupils with learning disabilities; in PE; or to comfort pupils.

2. **Passive Physical Intervention (PPI)**

The most commonly used forms of physical intervention are escorting and holding. These depend upon the degree of compliance from the child as to whether they constitute 'restrictive'. The development of trusting, confident relationships is of high priority so that children are accepting of the use of the friendly escort and calming holding to support their own efforts to manage their behaviour. This positive handling holds rarely need force and are not 'restraint'.

3. **Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)**

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a last resort. All such incidents must be recorded and logged in the Restrictive Physical Intervention Report Form (Appendix 1).

Staff should use RPI as opposed to PPI as a last resort after:

- appropriate de-escalation techniques have failed to help the child to control him/herself
- instant risk assessment by staff leads them to believe that injury, or serious damage to property, is an immediate danger
- knowledge of the child's history and behaviour pattern leads staff to believe that speedy removal from the room is necessary to prevent escalation or breakdown of the session or other pupils behaving in a similar manner;
- the pupil has been cautioned that his/her continued choice of behaviour may lead to restraint

Where possible, an additional adult should be called upon to assist during the restraint of a child or intervention between two or more children.

Principles Relating to the Use of Positive Handling

Staff should acknowledge their legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Staff should aim to use a trauma informed approach with pupils.

- Positive Handling must only be used as a last resort when other strategies have failed. It must serve to defuse or prevent a violent, or potentially violent, situation. It

must not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate risk to people or property.

- Staff should have good grounds for believing that immediate action (Positive Handling) is necessary to prevent a pupil from injuring him/herself or others or causing serious damage to property.
- Where possible staff should take steps in advance to avoid the need for positive handling, e.g. through dialogue and diversion where appropriate. The pupil should be warned orally that positive handling will be used unless s/he desists.
- Where possible designated female staff should be summoned as assistance in the instance of female pupils requiring restraint, and male staff should be summoned as assistance in the instance of male pupils requiring restraint. Calling for support and assistance provides support and witnesses.
- When it becomes necessary to positively handle a pupil, the member of staff must, if possible, continue to talk to the pupil in a calm manner, offering choices and time for the pupil to become calm.
- The age and competence of the pupil must be taken into account in deciding what degree of intervention is necessary. Only the minimum force necessary, to prevent physical injury or damage, should be applied. Particular care must be taken to avoid inflicting any unnecessary pain or injury.
- Staff who have a physical disability should automatically seek help from another member of staff. This also applies to members of staff at any stage during a pregnancy.

Positive handling must not involve deliberately painful or dangerous procedures. It must:

- Never interfere with breathing, blood supply or genital areas;
- Whenever possible avoid holding the head, throat or fingers.
- Be discontinued as soon as the situation is deemed safe.
- As soon as it is safe, restraint must be gradually relaxed as the pupil regains self-control.
- A pupil must never be asked to restrain another pupil.

Operational / Procedural Points Relating to the Use of Positive Handling

- The circumstances and reason for using positive handling must be recorded as soon as possible (as per the Restrictive Physical Intervention Report Form in Appendix 1) The pupil's views should also be recorded as soon as possible
- Following the incident, the pupil should be advised of the reasons why it was necessary to restrain him/her. Pupils will be interviewed about the reasons that led to the incident and the circumstances that followed.
- Staff should be provided with opportunities to discuss incidents involving positive handling and their subsequent feelings. Where it is clear that the staff need further advice/training, the Principal should take prompt action to see that it is provided.

Parents/carers will be informed when positive handling has been used and will be given the opportunity to discuss the matter with the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

All pupils will:

- Behave in accordance with the expectations set out in the College Behaviour Policy.
- Cooperate with members of staff, following reasonable requests where other members of the school community are placed at risk

All members of staff will:

- Remember that the child concerned is always owed a duty of care and that the least physical intervention is always the most desired course of action
- Ensure that they do not put themselves at risk and place their safety and that of other staff and pupils as their priority
- Report all incidents promptly and efficiently

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for reviewing this Positive Handling Policy in conjunction with the Governing Body. The Headteacher will also approve this policy and recommend to the Governing Body.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body will also review this Positive Handling Policy in conjunction with the Principal and monitor the policy's effectiveness, holding the Principal to account for its implementation.

Staff Training

Updates regarding this Policy will be included within Basic Awareness Safeguarding Training.

Appendix One

ST EDWARD'S COLLEGE

RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION REPORT FORM (on Firefly)

Fill in this form immediately after the occurrence of any incident and forward to the Principal / Deputy Principal / DSL FIREFLY

Name of pupil:

Year:

Where did the incident occur?

When did the incident occur?

How did the incident begin?

Was anyone else involved?

Did anyone else see what happened?

Was there damage to property or an assault on a pupil or staff during the incident?

What did you do to try to defuse the situation before using restraint?

Describe the ways in which the pupil was positively handled?

For how long was the pupil restrained?

Were other staff involved? Please describe what they did

Was anyone injured?

YES / NO If yes, give details

Have parents / carers been contacted?