

OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC ACADEMIES TRUST

ST JOHN RIGBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

*God's will be done through work and play, as we follow Jesus day by day*



## Positive Handling Policy DRAFT

**Status:** In line with OLICAT Safeguarding Policy & SJR Positive Relationships & Behaviours Policy & DFE Guidance: Restrictive Intervention 2026

**Date of Review:** Spring 2026

**Approved by:** LAC (Governing Body) **Date:** Awaiting approval

**Date of Next Review:** Spring 2027 (or sooner if guidance changes)



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## **RATIONALE**

At St John Rigby, we believe the development of positive behaviour and relationships are central to all that we do.

Our school's culture and mission are based on the Catholic teaching principles which promote empathy, respect, dignity, self-esteem, self-discipline, and awareness of appropriate behaviours that support healthy relationships for later life.

Our school's ethos and values are manifested through the behaviour of all our members. We believe a calm, safe and supportive environment engages our children and young people to attend, fully participate, learn and thrive. We strive to create a **sense of belonging** in our school and ensure that each child feels **secure, connected** and **loved**.

Not all children feel this way all of the time and may find it difficult to regulate themselves physically and emotionally. When this happens, we would want to support them back to dignity in a positive way. Staff at St John Rigby Catholic Primary School have a duty to intervene in order to prevent children from hurting themselves or others. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy, which supports our Positive Behaviour & Relationships policy and is underpinned by the Department for Education's updated guidance.

The Department for Education sets statutory expectations for the use of restrictive interventions in schools. The current DfE guidance is titled Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (effective 1 April 2026). This guidance explains the legal basis for the school's authority to use reasonable force, clarifies leaders' and governing bodies' duties (including monitoring and reporting), and requires schools to implement reasonable adjustments and specific safeguards for pupils with SEND. Staff must act in line with that guidance, this policy, the school's safeguarding procedures and the law.

This policy communicates our aims and expectations of how we will support our children with dignity in times of emotional difficulty and ensures staff have confidence through clear guidance to follow.

## WHAT ARE OUR KEY PRINCIPLES AND AIMS?

John Rigby is a community based upon the strong Catholic values of Faith, Hope, Forgiveness, Love and Trust. The ethos of our school is that it promotes inclusion and the valuing of each individual, encouraging self-esteem, self-discipline, and mutual respect.

Our mission statement lies at the heart of all we do and underpins our overarching core aims:



- To ensure **God's will** is achieved by empowering our children to develop as happy, safe, confident and successful learners who are able to make informed choices that are in their own and others best interests.
- To enable children to **work** with a joy and love for learning, acquiring the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to make a positive contribution to society.
- To enable children to **play** with an inquisitive and exploratory mind as they imagine, collaborate and create. They will take ownership of their learning journey and know that limitations are also opportunities for growth, showing courage to sometimes be wrong.
- To inspire children to grow, **day by day**, in their knowledge and understanding of the virtues to live by, reflecting our Gospel values of Faith, Hope, Forgiveness, Love, and Trust, whilst continuing to flourish and discover their unique God given potential.

At St John Rigby we are committed to a positive behaviour policy which encourages children to make positive behaviour choices. Our approach to school life considers how a child's environment directly impacts on optimal child development; including achievement, wellbeing and behaviours (*Urie Bronfenbrenner c1979*) and we actively seek to establish an environment that:

- i) supports our Catholic Character Education, **Follow Jesus day by day**, and
- ii) ensures we are **Ready, Respectful** and **Safe** at all times

We recognise that the majority of our children are happy, safe and behave very well, and that 'all behaviour is communication'. Understanding that children are communicating through their behaviour gives adults the opportunity to respond differently. When children feel valued, respected and have their needs met, there is no longer a reason to use challenging behaviour to communicate.

However, on rare occasions, circumstances may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff. Staff at St John Rigby Catholic Primary School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the last, in a range of strategies available, to support children experiencing difficulty with their emotions, as well as securing children's and adult's safety and well-being.

The specific aims of this policy are:

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all children 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.

We aim to ensure that our community is valued, where all members should be able to work, learn and achieve their full potential in a calm and orderly environment where everyone is treated with compassion and mutual respect.

Our policy for physical intervention (Positive Handling) is based upon the following principles:

- Physical intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed;
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required;
- Physical intervention must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned;
- Incidents must be recorded and reported to the Head teacher as soon as possible;
- Parents/Carers will be informed on the day of each incident.

Our policy on Positive Handling should therefore be read in conjunction with our *Positive Behaviour & Relationships* and the *Safeguarding and Child Protection* policies.

## WHAT IS THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE?

The legal basis for the use of reasonable force remains common law and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (and related Orders), but the Department for Education's statutory guidance sets out how schools must interpret and apply that power in practice.

The school follows:

- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools — Department for Education (effective 1 April 2026).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 — Department for Education (effective 1 September 2025).
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation — Department for Education.

Where statutory guidance is updated, the school will amend this policy to remain compliant. The Headteacher and governing body will ensure that staff know their legal responsibilities and receive appropriate training and support.

## WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF POSITIVE HANDLING AT ST JOHN RIGBY?

At St John Rigby, we aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in managing situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and within our context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the child in order to maintain dignity and respect, as well as ensure minimal risk of injury to children and staff.

With this in mind St John Rigby has adopted the term '**Positive Handling**' to describe such interventions, promoting a graduated approach to the control of extreme behaviours by adopting the least intrusive intervention, for the shortest period of time

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

The term '**reasonable force**' covers the broad range of actions that involves a degree of physical contact with a child, proportional to the threat or risk presented.

**Force** is usually used either to control or restrain.

**Control** can range from **passive physical intervention** such as standing between two children or blocking a child's path, to **active physical intervention** such as guiding a child to safety by the arm.

More extreme physical intervention such as **restraint** would only be used to hold back physically or to bring a child under control in order to prevent serious risk of violence or injury.

## WHAT IS BEST PRACTICE WHEN USING POSITIVE HANDLING?

At St John Rigby, we seek to promote an inclusive and supportive environment, underpinned by positive behaviour and relationships development. Our approach to is to positively reinforce desired behaviours and attitude, raise self-esteem and mutual respect, and encourage children to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour, wherever possible.

When a child's standard of behaviour falls below that which it is reasonable to expect, or which has not responded to supportive intervention, schools have the powers to intervene, as well as the legal right to confiscate inappropriate items, as per their behaviour policy.

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and intervention with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the child to regain self-control. Every non-physical strategy should be used to manage behaviour positively in order to prevent deterioration of a situation (See Appendix 1: Principles of Effective Intervention).

Staff should always act within the School's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or a staff member physically positioning themselves 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. Direct physical contact should be a **last resort** and **never used as a form of punishment**.

Incidents of positive handling must:

- Ensure the degree of force is proportion to the circumstances and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.
- Be applied using the minimum level and duration of force necessary to achieve the desired result, such as to restore safety.
- 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

Staff intervening with children will seek assistance from other members of staff as early as possible, since single-handed intervention increases the risk of injury to both parties and does not provide a witness.

Staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a child will have a responsibility to provide a presence and to offer support and assistance should this be required. Where possible, staff who have not been involved in the initial confrontation leading up to an incident may be in a better position to intervene or restrain the child if this proves necessary.

A child's behaviour may be also adversely affected by the presence of an audience. Wherever possible, the audience will be removed, or if this is not possible, the child and member(s) of staff will withdraw to a quiet but not completely private, place (e.g. two members of staff should be present or a door left open so that others are aware of the situation).

Physical intervention can take a number of forms - the following approaches are regarded as reasonable, in appropriate circumstances:

- Physically interposing between children.
- Blocking or standing in the way of a child's path.
- Steering or leading a child away from an incident using a 'friendly' hold.
- Escorting a child by the hand or arm
- Guiding a child by placing a hand in the centre of their back
- Gentle pushing, restricted to situations where reasonable force is needed to resist a child's movement, rather than a forceful push that might cause the child to fall over
- Holding for security and to reduce anxiety where there is potential risk, even if the child is not yet out of control. This is best used when the child is anxious or confused and its purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation.
- In extreme cases, more restrictive holds may be used.

Staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted by the child as aggression.

### **Restraint (Restrictive Physical Intervention)**

The use of restrictive physical intervention to physically hold back a child or to bring a child under control can be

**Partial:** restricting and preventing particular movements, or

**Total:** complete immobilisation.

**When restrictive physical intervention becomes absolutely necessary, the procedure below must always be followed:**

- Give the child clear warning and offer an escape route from the situation, for example through de-escalation, calming or following instructions;
- Once the restrictive physical intervention is judged necessary it should happen quickly, smoothly and confidently
- Summon help immediately – this could be by sending a pupil for another adult
- Tell the child being restrained, in a calm and gentle manner that the reason for the intervention is to keep them and/or others safe.
- Use the minimum force necessary to control the situation. Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Always remain calm and talk in a conciliatory tone. Ignore any abuse and let the high emotional state it run its course;

- Tell the child what they must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Once things begin to calm, it can be coupled with significant changes in restrictive physical intervention - Relax restraint in response to the pupil's compliance
- Cease the restraint if there are any signs of distress e.g. change of colour, breathing or vomiting
- At a later stage, talk through the situation and discuss the behaviours that caused the whole episode.
- Complete an incident report and contact parents/carers

**It is important that staff do not:**

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Engage in prolonged verbal exchanges or attempt to reason with the pupil
- Shout aggressively at the child
- Involve other children in the restraint
- Touch or hold the child in sexual areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint or pull hair
- Straddle the child
- Use a face down hold
- Hold in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck or across the chest
- Slap, punch or kick the child

**Important Considerations for Children with SEND:**

Any physical intervention will take into consideration the age and competence of the child and will be the least restrictive alternative. In doing so the action must take proper account of any particular special educational need and/or disability that a child may have.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 schools have two key duties:

- Not to treat a disabled pupil less favourably, for a reason relating to their disability, than someone to whom that reason does not apply, without justification; and
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled children at a substantial disadvantage to children who are not disabled (known as the reasonable adjustments duty).

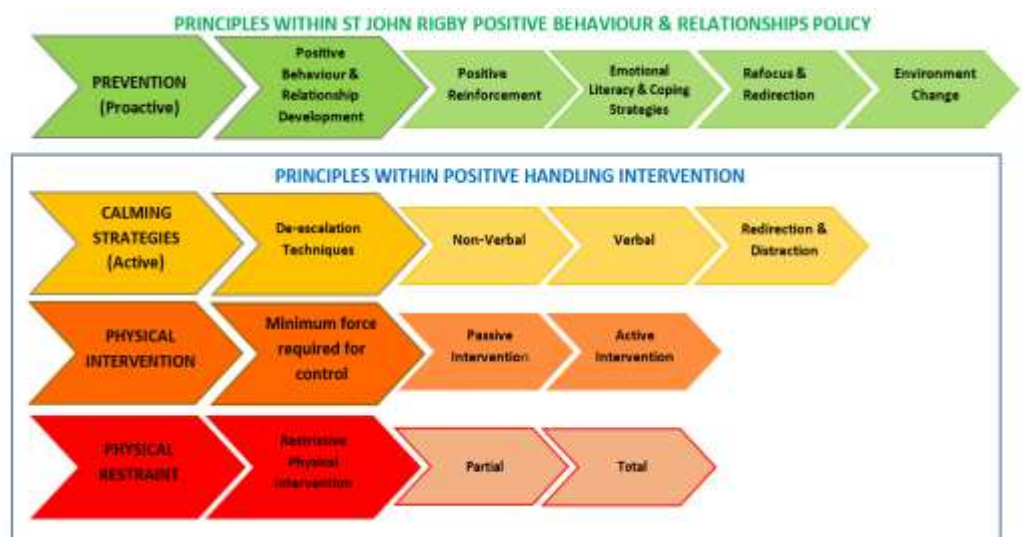
Any child who has been assessed as being at greater risk of requiring restrictive physical intervention will need an individual Positive Handling Plan, which has been agreed with parents/carers (and child where possible), outlining the techniques that should be used and those that should normally not be used. Staff supporting pupils with SEN, including behavioural difficulties, will require training to effectively support children in their care, including recognising triggers, de-escalation strategies and effective techniques, whilst ensuring safety at all times.

**WHEN WOULD WE USE POSITIVE HANDLING?**

Positive Handling and Physical intervention should only be used when all other strategies have failed to de-escalate the situation and for the purposes of maintaining a safe environment.

The diagram illustrates the key principles of effective interventions, and the factors to consider in order to implement these.

All non-physical intervention should be applied first and any intervention used should be commensurate with the risk or behaviour presented. (Appendix 1: Principles of Effective Intervention).



Positive handling should be used to avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm themselves. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of their emotions and behaviour. There are also 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).

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate, and staff will need to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the context of preventing and managing risk. This could include, but is not limited to:

- Child or young person attacking a member of staff (including self-protection) or another child;
- Child or young person fighting;
- Child or young person engaging in, or on the verge of, committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- Child or young person causing, or at risk of causing, unintentional injury or damage by rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- Child or young person persistently refusing to follow an instruction to leave a classroom;
- Child or young person behaves in such a way that seriously disrupts a lesson, school event or visit
- Child or young person is at risk of harming themselves through physical uncontrolled outbursts

Refusal of a pupil to remain in a particular place is not enough on its own to justify force. It would be justifiable however, where allowing a pupil to leave would:

- entail serious risks to the pupil's safety (considering age and understanding), to the safety of other pupils or staff, or of damage to property or
- lead to behaviour that prejudices good order and discipline, such as disrupting other lessons

### **The Last Resort Principle**

At St John Rigby 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 and 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 however, in many circumstances there are alternatives such as the use of assertiveness skills, distraction or the employment of other consequences consistent with St John Rigby's policy on positive behaviour and relationship development.

### **Searching Pupils**

Ensuring school staff and children feel safe and secure is vital to establishing calm and supportive environments conducive to learning. Using searching, screening and confiscation powers appropriately is an important way to ensure everyone's welfare is protected and helps schools establish an environment where everyone is safe.

On occasions a member of staff may have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in possession of prohibited items, or items which contravene school regulations, and could potentially cause harm to the child themselves or others.

The DfE guidance on [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#) outlines the power of staff to search students in these situations. Only the Headteacher, or staff authorised by the Headteacher, are able to commit a search and the Safeguarding Team should be informed. (Please refer to the schools Positive Behaviour & Relationships Policy for full information).

The authorised member of staff should always seek the co-operation of the child before conducting a search. If the child refuses to co-operate, the member of staff should assess whether it is appropriate to use proportionate force to carry out a search for prohibited items; any such decision must follow the principles set out in this policy and in the DfE restrictive-interventions guidance and must be recorded.

## WHO WOULD USE POSITIVE HANDLING?

All members of the school staff have a legal power to intervene under the guidance of this policy and are authorised to use positive handling strategies, using reasonable force when necessary, to prevent children from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

Staff who are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, are acting in 'loco parentis' and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

Staff considering positive 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 details of their intended interventions clear. The degree of force should be in proportion to the circumstances and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

It is relevant to note that failure to respond in such circumstances which merit it can be as serious as overreacting. In many circumstances, it is not a safer option for a teacher or member of staff to do nothing or to take very limited action, when to take action could swiftly restore safety. This action may simply involve alerting a third party.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence.

However, staff are not expected to place themselves in situations, or to intervene to restore safety, where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

### Staff Training

It is not expected that all staff will need detailed training in the use of restrictive intervention. However, schools should ensure that staff are aware of the principles and practices associated with best practice for Positive Handling, including the principles of de-escalation, safe escorting and recording of incidents.

All staff are expected to:

- Be sure they are aware of and comply with the school policy for behaviour and discipline and positive handling procedures.
- Recognise that 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, using the agreed call-out protocol
- Be de-briefed after an incident they are involved with in order to explore more positive/effective responses to future difficult situations

Staff who are regularly involved with pupils assessed as at higher risk of restrictive intervention (for example those named on a Positive Handling Plan or with significant SEND-related risk) will receive accredited training in approved restrictive-intervention techniques. The school will keep a named list of staff who have completed accredited training and the training provider and date.

Refresher training or review will be provided at least annually for trained staff, and sooner if an incident, change of legislation, or a pupil's needs require it. Training records, providers and dates will be maintained centrally by the Headteacher / Inclusion Lead.

## WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOLLOWING 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 child.

A member of the Leadership 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. A member of the Leadership team will contact parents/carers as soon as possible after an incident (unless parents/carers are present), 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 any concerns.

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

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a Positive Behaviour Support Plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SENDCO.

### **Recording and reporting of incidents**

All incidents where restrictive intervention or the use of force is used, or perceived to have been used, must be recorded as soon as possible on CPOMS.

It is not necessary to record every minor incident of contact with a child, e.g. guiding a child away from a situation that didn't go any further, but where a member of staff perceives that contact was restrictive, or of a reasonable force, or the intervention was received negatively, they are advised to record the circumstances.

All incidents should be recorded as soon as possible on **CPOMS**. Records must include:

- clear description of the behaviour and immediate context,
- alternatives and de-escalation strategies attempted,
- exact nature of the intervention (technique used), names of staff involved and witnesses,
- start / end times and duration of the intervention,
- any injuries (to pupil or staff), first-aid given and actions taken,
- the pupil's account (when able), parental contact record and the outcome of any follow-up support or risk-reduction actions.

The Headteacher (or Inclusion Lead) will review all incident records promptly, ensure parents/carers are informed on the same day where possible, and confirm any safeguarding or disciplinary follow-up required.

The school will hold a debrief with the pupil and staff involved, led by a senior leader, and record outcomes and next steps, including updates to the pupil's Positive Handling Plan or risk assessment where necessary.

### **Risk Assessments**

Where a pupil is assessed as being at increased risk of behaviours that may require restrictive intervention (for example because of SEND, medical condition or previous incidents), an individual Positive Handling Plan (PHP) and risk assessment will be produced.

The PHP will be agreed with the child where appropriate, parents/carers, the class teacher and the SENDCO / Inclusion Lead and will be reviewed at least annually or after any relevant incident.

PHPs will specify reasonable adjustments, preventative strategies, identified triggers, de-escalation approaches, staffing expectations and the restrictive techniques (if any) that may be used — and those that must not be used. PHPs will be stored on the pupil's file and shared with staff who support the pupil.

The school will ensure reasonable adjustments are made so that pupils with SEND are not disproportionately affected by restrictive-intervention practice.

### **HOW WILL COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS BE ADDRESSED?**

A clear Positive Handling Policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents/carers and governors should help to avoid complaints and allegation. 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.

All complaint raised will be managed under the agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff (Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff). If parents/carers wish to raise a complaint, they should follow the Complaints procedure or discuss their concerns regarding the safeguarding with the Designated Safeguarding Team (please see the school website for full details on complaints and safeguarding).

## HOW WILL WE MONITOR IF THIS POLICY IS WORKING?

The consistent and fair implementation of the measures outlined in this policy is central to an effective whole-school approach to positive behaviour and relationship development and an environment in which everybody feels safe, secure and valued. Consistent implementation helps to create a predictable environment.

To ensure we achieve our school's mission and Core Aims, the impact of this policy will be constantly evaluated. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of the school's policy and behaviour tracking system on a regular basis, by:

- Reviewing reports on CPOMS to identify patterns of behaviour
- Checking referrals to the inclusion team have followed the intervention and escalation process.
- Pupil conferencing to gain children's voice and feedback on policy implementation and impact.
- Regular meetings with the Pastoral & Inclusion Team to discuss behaviour concerns and effectiveness of the policy.
- Reviewing Individual student risk assessments annually.

Use of physical intervention is monitored in order to help staff learn from experience, promote the wellbeing of the children, and provide a basis for appropriate support. Monitoring will also enable the school to determine what specialist help is needed for children and to assess the appropriateness of the child's placement at the school.

### Governance and oversight

The Headteacher will provide the LAC (local governing committee) / Trust Inclusion Lead with anonymised termly data on restrictive interventions and related safeguarding incidents, including analysis by pupil characteristic (SEND, PP, gender, age, EAL) to check for disproportionate impact.

The LAC / trustees will routinely review these reports, ask for assurance on training and PHPs, and ensure the school's approach meets statutory expectations and equality duties.

## HOW DO WE MONITOR RACE, GENDER AND DISABILITY EQUALITY?

This policy will ensure that there are implications for race, gender and disability equality in so far as the school will need to ensure that all children of whatever ethnic background or gender or disability feel safe. It will not disadvantage any particular group - all students, regardless of background or ability will be treated equally. Good relations will be promoted by celebrating diversity, recognising that we are all made in God's image, and by improving self-esteem of all students. Implications of this policy will be monitored by the Pastoral Team/Inclusion Lead.

## WHAT KEY INFORMATION SUPPORTS THIS POLICY?

This policy has been written to reflect the following guidance and statutory expectations:

- Department for Education — Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (effective 1 April 2026).
- Department for Education — Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 (effective 1 September 2025).
- Department for Education — Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.
- DfE / statutory SEND guidance and the SEND Code of Practice.

These documents provide the statutory and practical context for our approach; staff should refer to them through GOV.UK or their trust/local-authority safeguarding pages.

This policy is also supported within the following:

- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Leading Positive Behaviour & Relationships (Staff)

## Appendix 1: Principles of Effective Intervention: Positive Handling



### De-Escalation Techniques

Underpinning the success of managing the diverse needs that will be present in each class is the skill of the teacher in intervening early to de-escalate situations calmly when they arise.

Reasoning with an angry child is not always possible, the aim of de-escalation is to reduce the level of agitation so that at an appropriate time discussion becomes an option and a better outcome can be achieved.

De-escalation techniques are most successful when used early, before the child or young person becomes physically challenging or dysregulated.

#### Things to avoid:

- Making threats or promises you cannot carry through, such as threatening to exclude the child;
- Being defensive or take it personally. What is being said may seem insulting and directed at you, but this level of aggression is not really about you;
- Using sarcasm or humiliate the child.

### Non-verbal Strategies

- Appear calm and self-assured.
- Maintain a neutral facial expression.
- Allow space.
- Control your breathing.
- Show you are listening to their voice

### Verbal Strategies

- Lower your voice and keep your tone even but assertive.
- State choice/consequence
- Acknowledging the child's feeling
- Use words/phrases that de-escalate, such as - I wonder if...
  - Let's try...
  - It seems like...
  - Maybe we can...
- Tell the child what you want them to do rather than what you do not want them to do.
- Offer support through self-regulation exercises.

### Redirection, Distraction and Diversion are extremely useful.

When a child is aggressive, they are responding with their own fight-or-flight instincts and not thinking about their actions.

Engage their thinking brain, through distraction or diversion perhaps by asking them to come with you so you can talk, moving away from others around or by changing the subject or commenting on something that is happening outside the window.

- Praise partial compliance
- Offer use of chill out space
- Walk & talk
- Withdraw attention (audience)
- Use humour (where appropriate)



### Physical Intervention Techniques

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and intervention with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the child to regain self-control.

There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact or, dependant on risk, direct physical contact, which should only be used as a **last resort**.

#### Incidents of physical intervention must:

- Ensure the degree of force is proportion to the circumstances and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.
- Be applied using the minimum level and duration of force
- Be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned

**Always give clear warning of your intention and offer an escape route from the situation, for example through verbal de-escalation or calming techniques**

#### Things to avoid:

- Acting in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Engaging in prolonged verbal exchanges
- Touching or holding the child in sexual areas
- Twisting/forcing limbs back against a joint
- Involving other children – wherever possible, remove the audience. Other children involved can be picked up later.

### Passive Intervention Strategies

- Blocking or standing in the way of a child's path
- Physically interposing between children or a child and an object
- Non-contact guiding (herding) away from the situation

### Active Intervention Strategies

- Steering or leading a child away from an incident using a 'friendly' hold.
- Escorting or leading a child by the hand or arm
- Guiding a child by placing a hand in the centre of their back or on their shoulder
- Gentle pushing, restricted to situations where reasonable force is needed to resist a child's movement, rather than a forceful push that might cause the child to fall over



**Restrictive Physical Intervention Techniques**  
 More extreme physical intervention such as **restraint** would only be used to hold a child back physically or to bring a child under control in order to prevent serious risk of violence or injury. This intervention should only be used if all other strategies have been ineffective, and as a **last resort, or if immediate intervention is required where there is no equally effective alternative** (e.g. if a child is about to run across a road).

**Incidents of restrictive physical intervention must:**

- Be applied using the minimum level and duration of force and/or restriction
- Be used in a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned

**Always:**

- **summon adult help immediately.**
- **tell the child being restrained, in a calm and gentle manner that the reason for the intervention is to keep them and/or others safe and what they must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)**
- **comfort and ignore abuse; let the high emotional state run its course**
- **relax restraint in response to the child's compliance or cease the restraint if there are any signs of severe distress**

**Partial Restraint**  
 Restricting or preventing a particular movement e.g.

- Firmly holding a child's arm that is attempting to hit or thrash out at someone
- Holding a child back that may be attempting to run off into a road

**Total Restraint**  
 Restrain that fully immobilises a child

- Holding a child for security or to prevent from going anywhere one adult each side.

**It is Not Acceptable to:**

- Use a face down hold
- Straddle a child
- Hold in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck or across the chest
- Hold a child by wrapping their arms around their chest
- Slap, punch or kick

**Appendix 2:****Positive Handling Plan (PHP)**

Use this plan where a pupil is assessed as being at increased risk of behaviour that may require restrictive intervention. Store on the pupil's file, upload to CPOMS (or school MIS), and share only with staff who need to know. Review after any relevant incident and at least annually.

<b>SECTION A: PUPIL INFORMATION</b>			
<b>Pupil Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>	
<b>D.O.B</b>	<b>UPN:</b>		<b>SEND Status:</b>
<b>Medical Conditions/Allergies:</b>		<b>Multi-agency or safeguarding involvement:</b>	
<b>Primary Contact:</b>		<b>Contact Number (s):</b>	
<b>Relationship:</b>			

<b>SECTION B: RISK SUMMARY</b>	
Name of Author & Role:	Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]
Rational: Provide brief overview of why this plan is needed and any details of trigger incidents	
Identified Risk: o Risk to pupil:  o Risk to others:  o Risk to property:	
Likelihood: [Low / Medium / High]	Severity: [Low / Medium / High]
Observable Triggers/ Antecedents (with examples):	

<b>SECTION C: PREVENTION &amp; ADJUSTMENT</b>
Universal classroom strategies (always used):
Reasonable adjustments (linked to SEND or medical needs):
High-risk times/locations requiring supervision:
<b>DE-ESCALATION (non-physical) – Required Order</b> (Staff must attempt these before any physical intervention unless immediate danger)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [Strategy 1 — precise wording / script]</li> <li>2. [Strategy 2 — precise wording / script]</li> <li>3. [Strategy 3 — personalised resource e.g. sensory, quiet space]</li> <li>4. When to remove audience / call for help: [criteria]</li> </ol>

**SECTION D: AGREED PHYSICAL INTERVENTION (Least restrictive first)**

Permitted techniques (name + brief description + purpose + limits):

- Technique 1: [Name] — [description / purpose / limits]
- Technique 2: [Name] — [description / purpose / limits]

Prohibited techniques (explicit), including:

- No face-down holds; no holds that restrict breathing; no neck holds; no twisting of limbs
- 

Conditions making physical intervention permissible:

[e.g. immediate, serious risk to pupil/others; non-physical options tried & failed; etc.]

**SECTION E: STAFF AUTHORISED TO INTERVENE**

Names, roles and training evidence (provider & date):

**Emergency note:** staff not named should not use techniques here except where life/serious injury is at immediate risk; any such action must be recorded and reviewed.

**SECTION F: PARENT/PUPIL COMMUNICATION**

Date plan discussed with parent/carer: [DD/MM/YYYY]

Parent/carer views / consent summary: [text]

Date pupil consulted (if appropriate) : [DD/MM/YYYY]

Pupil views: [text]:

Agreed incident contact protocol (who calls / timescale):

**SECTION G: CONSENT/SIGN OFF**

Parent/Carer Signature:

Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]

Print Name:

Pupil Signature (where appropriate):

Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]

Print Name:

Next Scheduled Review (max 12 months): [DD/MM/YYYY]

Reviews after any incident must be completed within 2 weeks of the incident.

**Headteacher / Inclusion Lead assurance: "I confirm interventions are the least restrictive necessary; staff named have appropriate training; parents have been consulted."**

Inclusion Lead/SENDSCO Signature:

Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]

Headteacher Signature:

Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]

## POST INCIDENT DEBRIEF & REVIEW

Lead by: (Name / Role):

Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]

Names of others present/roles:

### SECTION A: POST INCIDENT SUPPORT & RESTORATIVE STEPS

Immediate actions (first aid, safe space, inform DSL): [text]

Staff debrief (who / when): [name / within 24–72hrs]

Pupil debrief and restorative conversation (who / when): [name / within 24–72hrs]

Learning recovery / reintegration steps: [text]

Update required to PHP / risk assessment? [Y / N — action & date]

CPOMS LOG ID / Reference number:

### SECTION B: REVIEW & ESCALATION

Escalation triggers (e.g. increase frequency / severity, new medical info): [List]

Is an escalation meeting required? [Yes / No]

Rational:

Who will convene escalation meeting: [Inclusion Lead / HT / SENDCO — contact]

### MULTI-AGENCY / SAFEGUARDING

Escalation plans (CAF / CIN / CP / EHCP)? [Yes / No — details]

Agencies involved & contact details: [List]

Actions requested from external agencies: [List / dates]

### **Appendix 3: Other Forms of Physical Contact**

It is not illegal to appropriately touch a pupil.

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

- Hold the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- Comfort a distressed pupil
- Congratulate or praise a pupil
- A pupil approaches you for comfort
- 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

All staff must be aware that for some children touching may be particularly unwelcome for cultural or personal reasons. Staff must be sensitive to such situations. Staff should also ensure they do not touch or hold a pupil in a way that might be considered inappropriate, in line with the Schools Safeguarding Policy.