

# St John's Church of England School

***'I can do everything through Christ, who  
gives me strength'***

*Philippians 4:13*



## Positive Handling Policy

Reviewed – Feb 2023

Date to be reviewed – Autumn 2025

## **Our Vision**

**.....I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength'**

**Phil 4:13**

At St John's we foster an ethos deeply rooted in the Bible, underpinned by faith and committed to educational excellence. In our community we respect that everyone is uniquely made in the image of God. We grow together in wisdom, compassion, strength and instil a sense of hope for all to flourish. We make a difference.

## **Core Values**

**Faith** – is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

**Strength** – Faith in God presents us with the strength to build and progress in our life and the lives of others

**Compassion** – We are fair, we care and show understanding towards others.

**Wisdom** – Building confidence, discipline and knowledge to fully develop our talents in all areas of our lives.

**Hope** – Coping wisely with situations that will help guide us into fulfilling our aspirations.

## **Statement of Intent**

Physical Education (PE) contributes to educational excellence of all children by helping them to lead full and valuable lives through engaging in purposeful and high-quality activity. It promotes active and healthy lifestyles, physical skills, development and knowledge of the body in action. PE enables children to develop in confidence, perseverance, wisdom, positive competitiveness and organization. Children must engage in a programme of PE that encourages fitness, improves their strength and teaches them the rules of games. They must show compassion to others. PE is an integral part of school practices allowing all children in the school to gain a sense of achievement and develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others. Children will uphold values of faith and hope when learning new skills and persevere through physical activity.

The policy has been developed in response to The Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 93, which reinforces, supersedes and replaces previous guidance. It also takes notice of joint guidance issued by the DEF and Department of Health, and follows the guidance for 'The Use of Reasonable Force in Schools' (July 2013).

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff, who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for care and control.

This policy outlines our approach towards physical contact between adults and children at St John's CE Primary School and should be read in conjunction with other school policies and guidance relating to interaction between adults and pupils, i.e. the SEN, Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies.

At St John's CE Primary School, we are a caring community where the emotional and physical wellbeing of the children is paramount. Teachers and staff are in loco parentis during the school day and therefore in some circumstances, appropriate physical contact is a perfectly normal part of the relationship between a member of staff and a pupil, e.g. to offer comfort or reassurance if a child is unwell or upset).

At St John's CE Primary School, we are committed to a positive behaviour ethos which has been derived from our school vision and values. We encourage children to make positive and reflective behaviour choices. On extremely rare occasions, circumstances may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff. Our policy for physical intervention is based upon the following principles:-

- Physical intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate re-regulation or de-escalation 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 a member of the Leadership Team as soon as possible.
- Parents will be informed of each incident.

## **Guiding Principles**

### **1.1 Legal Framework**

Positive Handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 allows any member of staff to use force, not just those authorised by the Headteacher. To use such force as is reasonable in circumstances where the pupil may need to be prevented from engaging in behaviours which are likely to cause injury to themselves, others or damage to property. The guidance extends this to maintaining good order and discipline, for both on-site and off-site activities.

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 states:

Power of members of staff to use force

(1) A person to whom this section applies may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing a 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) Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Additionally all persons have powers to use force under Common Law and Section 3(1)(a) Criminal Law Act 1967. This would include if a child was in danger of hurting someone else or themselves or intent on damaging property.

Key Points of the DfE Behaviour and discipline in schools: guidance for headteachers and school staff, January 2016 state:

- Teachers have power to discipline pupils for misbehaviour which occurs in school and, in some circumstances, outside of school.
- The power to discipline also applies to all paid staff (unless the Headteacher says otherwise) with responsibility for pupils, such as teaching assistants.
- Headteachers, proprietors and governing bodies must ensure they have a strong behaviour policy to support staff in managing behaviour, including the use of rewards and sanctions.
- Key points of the DfE Use of reasonable force Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies, July 2013 state:
  - School staff members have a power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.
  - Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
  - Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power.

There is no legal definition of reasonable force. Section 3(1) (a) Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (eg, physical assault) being committed. All persons also have common law powers to use reasonable force. Any person that has an honestly held belief that they or another is in imminent danger may use reasonable force as necessary to avert danger or save life. Reasonable force must be a matter of personal judgement. All teachers have a professional 'duty of care' within their job description which is underwritten by paragraph 58.7 of School teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2005. See Appendix 1 for examples of when it might be appropriate to use reasonable force.

## **1.2 What does it mean to restrain a child?**

Positive Handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property. The proper use of Positive Handling requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining.

The decision to use Positive Handling as restrictive physical intervention must take account of the circumstances and be based on an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention compared with the risks of not employing a restrictive intervention. The physical intervention must also only employ a reasonable amount of force – that is the force needed to avert injury or damage to property, or to prevent a breakdown in discipline – applied for the shortest period of time.

### **1.3 Why use restraint?**

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. Positive Handling skilfully applied may be eased by degrees as the child calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

## **2.1 General aims**

The staff at St John's CE School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/wellbeing and also to maintain good order and discipline.

Our policy on the use of reasonable force is part of our overall pastoral care procedure and closely related to our policies on managing pupil behaviour in the 'Behaviour Policy' and also in the council's 'Safeguarding Children' procedures. Reference should also be made to the school's Child Protection Policy.

## **2.2 The aims**

- To protect every person in the school community from harm
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention that 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
- To use the degree of force necessary to accomplish positive handling
- To give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from pupils or others
- To maintain accurate records of incidents where Positive Handling has been employed

## **3.1 Risk assessment**

Although most young people in St John's CE School will never require any form of Positive Handling, staff may have to deal with some young people who exhibit disturbed and distressing behaviour. It is therefore necessary to carry out risk assessment. We will attempt to reduce risk by giving consideration to:-

- The environment
- Knowing a pupil's identified triggers
- Body language
- The way we talk
- The way we act
- Utilising strategies identified in a behaviour plan if applicable
- Utilising preventative strategies recommended by professionals (Educational Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Counsellor, ASD Advisory teacher)

## **3.2 Environmental Risk Assessment**

We will complete a risk analysis within the school and put in place strategies to minimise these risks in identified locations.

## **3.3 Individual Risk Assessments**

The school's respect for the rights of the individual takes into consideration the context of the 'right to life' as outlined in Article 2 of The Human Rights Act (1998) and The United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991). The school's ethos and the guidance in this policy is based on the presumption that every adult and child is entitled to:-

- Respect for his/her private life
- The right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment
- The right to liberty and security
- The right not to be discriminated against in his/her enjoyment of those rights

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

- Managing the pupil (eg reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate
- If Positive Handling is likely to be necessary this should be included in the pupil's SEN Support Plan or ABC Behaviour Plan
- In the case of looked after children, together with information de-escalation strategies, the manner in which the pupil will be held, how support can be summoned if needed, any medical factors to be considered, a formal risk assessment will also need to be carried out.

More detailed examples of risk assessment and preventative steps can be found in Appendix 2.

#### **4.1 Procedures**

In the event of Positive Handling having been used it is important to consider the strategies, which are deemed acceptable, and the recording procedures that should be in place. Please see St. John's CE School Physical Intervention Report Form Appendix 3

#### **4.2 Action steps**

1. Tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so
2. Summon another adult
3. Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident
4. Make it clear that restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary
5. Appropriate follow up action should be taken, which may include:-
  - a. Providing medical support
  - b. Providing respite for those involved – remove to agreed room

A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem.

If a child runs off, an adult should follow at a safe distance (for some children this could become a game so staff must use best judgement and consult with SLT if unsure about reoccurring

behaviours). An adult may need to give chase if it is judged that a child could run into danger or hurt themselves. Under the common law power, reasonable force could be needed to avert danger.

If a child leaves the school premises the next step will be determined by the age or maturity of the child. It may be appropriate to telephone the parents of older children to inform them that their child has left the school site. In all other circumstances the child should be brought back into school.

#### **4.3 Recording**

Staff should record (**appendix 3**) all incidents of restraint in accordance with School Policy and report these to the headteacher.

Details should include:-

- Name of pupil(s)
- Staff member(s) involved
- Factors necessitating physical intervention
- The strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention
- How physical intervention was effected
- Outcome of restraint
- Any other action taken in the management of the incident

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded.



## **5.1 Complaints**

We all have a duty of care to the young people in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by the staff, and should help to avoid complaints from parents. It will not 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.

Staff, subjected to physical violence or assault, have the right to be supported in making a formal complaint to the police and, if necessary, taking private action against an assailant.

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

We will review this policy regularly.

Remember that adhering to the principles and procedures referred to in this policy statement is part of effective practice and should minimise risk to young people in our care and enhance our own self protection.

## **6.1 Statement for parents**

In keeping with our home/school partnership, we will inform all parents/carers of our policy on positive handling.

The statement will highlight:-

- Our emphasis on care and protection for everyone within our school community
- Our belief that restraint will be needed on very rare occasions
- Our endeavour to handle situations with care and responsibility
- Our intent to apply follow up and repair strategies

The statement will outline:-

- When staff are authorised to use reasonable physical intervention
- What steps will be taken after an incident has been dealt with
- The responsibilities of staff, pupils and parents/carers in resolving situations

## **Appendix 1 - When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?**

1. Committing an offence
2. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself) or
3. 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

Examples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are:-

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- Pupils fighting
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:-

- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom
- A pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

## **Appendix 2 – Strategies**

All teachers need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps, which they can take to defuse and calm a situation.

- Move calmly and confidently
- Make simple, clear statements
- Intervene early
- Try to maintain eye contact
- If necessary summon help before the problem escalates (red card system)
- Remove audience from the immediate location
- Regulate, respond, reason

**Two members of staff are required to use positive handling techniques, unless the staff member dynamically assesses that it is so urgent that they need to use force to immediately avert the danger.**

Assistance should always be sought when dealing with:-

- A physically large pupil
- More than one pupil
- When the teacher believes that they may be at risk of injury

The method of restraint employed must use the reasonable force for the reasonable time and must observe the following requirements:-

### **Restraint must NOT:-**

- Involve hitting the pupil
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- Restrict the pupil's breathing
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas

During any incident the restrainer should:-

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- Cause the reasonable level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:-

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- Using more restrictive holds (in extreme circumstances)

## **Some Do's and Don'ts**

### **DO**

- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Summon help
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Provide a soft surface if possible
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil
- Hold the pupil's arms at his/her sides

### **DON'T**

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking even if the pupil does not reply
- Straddle the pupil
- Push arms up the back
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints

The Department for Education guidance

The following document advises that certain restraint techniques present an unacceptable risk when used on children and young people.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/444051/Use\\_of\\_reasonable\\_force\\_advice\\_Reviewed\\_July\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf)

The techniques in question are:

- the 'seated double embrace' which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing;
  - the 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest; and
  - the 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose.
- Use of prone position (face down on the floor) or T Supine position (on their back) should not be performed

Staff will not perform these techniques because the school has a positive duty to the preservation of life and complies with Article 2, Human Rights Act.

**St. John's CE School Physical Intervention Report Form**

This recording form is to be used following any application of physical intervention. Please complete a separate form for each young person with whom staff physically intervened. Please refer to Positive Handling Policy.

Copies of the completed form to be sent as soon as possible to:

- Mrs Hester, Head teacher

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section A: Details of those involved                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1. Name of young person involved in physical intervention                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2. Name of staff applying physical intervention                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 3. Names of witnesses                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 4. Location of incident                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 5. Date and time of incident                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 6. Date and time reported to Leadership and Management Team                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 7. Date and time reported to parents / carers                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 8. Was the incident reported to: (tick any that apply)<br>Healthy and Safety <input type="checkbox"/><br>Children's Services <input type="checkbox"/><br>CAMHS <input type="checkbox"/><br>Police <input type="checkbox"/><br>Other _____ |

9. Were staff involved in the incident trained in positive handling techniques?

Section B: Details of the event

1. What events led up to and may have triggered the incident? Give some information about the young person's recent behaviour patterns / emotional state.

2. Describe the incident

3. What de-escalation techniques were used? (Tick any that apply)

Communication ☐

Reassurance ☐

Distraction/redirection ☐

Removal of audience ☐

Ignoring ☐

Change of staff or setting ☐

Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why was intervention deemed necessary? (Tick any that apply)

The young person was at risk of:

Causing injury to self ☐

Causing injury to others ☐

Causing significant damage which is likely to have serious emotional effect or create a physical danger ☐

Running away and putting themselves or others at risk of harm ☐

5. Describe any marks or injuries sustained by any person as a result of the incident.

If none, tick here ☐

6. Describe any action taken in relation to injuries sustained.

If none needed, tick here ☐

7. Describe any serious damage to property.

If none, tick here ☐

8. Did anyone use a physical intervention technique? If yes, tick which techniques were used and indicate how long each hold was applied for.

Physical Intervention techniques:

|                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Prompting          | Duration |
| Two person escort  | Duration |
| Two person holding | Duration |

|                                                |          |
|------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Double Wrist Hold                              | Duration |
| Cupped fist hold                               | Duration |
| Straight arm hold                              | Duration |
| Kneeling rest position                         | Duration |
| Seated rest position                           | Duration |
| Dealing with kicking in a seated rest position | Duration |
| Disengaging from a seated position             | Duration |

See Positive Handling policy for use of reasonable force.

#### Section C: Aftermath to incident

1. Date, time and key points from the debrief of young person. Include the young person's views of the incident.

2. Date, time and key points from the debrief of staff involved.

3. Date, time and key points from the debrief of witnesses.

4. Does any action need to be taken to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence?



Name of reporting staff member (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of reporting staff member \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of reporting manager (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of reporting manager \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 4 – Training**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that staff are fully informed of the school policy and understand what authorisation entails.

- i. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to arrange and /or approve training or guidance to staff, possibly through a senior member of staff
- ii. An up to date list of authorised staff should be maintained within school and teachers should know who they are
- iii. There are no government approved training techniques for Positive Handling. The Headteacher may wish to consult with the Local Authority if any particular course of training is to be embarked upon
- iv. Additional advice and support on managing behaviour can be provided through the Educational Psychology Service

## **Appendix 5 – Staff trained to deliver positive handling**

Currently 8 members of staff are trained including 2 members of SLT.

## **References used in drawing up this policy:**

### **DfE Use of Reasonable Force 2013**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/444051/Use\\_of\\_reasonable\\_force\\_advice\\_Reviewed\\_July\\_2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf)

### **The Human Rights Act (1998)**

### **DfEE Circular 10/98**

### **Harrow Policy on the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (Nov 2006)**