



# St Elisabeth's CE Primary School

## Positive Handling Policy

## Positive Handling

Date	Review Date	Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENDSCO)	Nominated Governor
		P. Charlesworth	L.Revill

### Introduction

At St Elisabeth's CE, the majority of our pupils respond positively to the behaviour systems in place. However, we recognise that in some cases, positive handling may need to be used for the well-being and safety of all our pupils and staff.

This policy has been written to support all staff who come into contact with pupils who may need some form of positive handling.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Pupil Behaviour and Discipline Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### Aim

At St Elisabeth's CE, physical interventions are seen as only a very small part of a holistic approach to meeting the varied needs of some of our pupils, including the need/right to be safe from harm (from themselves or others).

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff at St Elisabeth's CE:

- understand that the aim of positive handling is not punishment or control but to support safe learning for everyone.
- understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where use of physical intervention is necessary.
- are trained in the understanding and use of de-escalation strategies and well supported in dealing with challenging situations.

Everyone attending or working at St Elisabeth's CE has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity
- be treated with respect and dignity
- learn and work in a safe environment
- be provided with a framework so that all staff who come into contact with pupils are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the context of positive handling.
- be informed about the school's complaints procedure

## **Definitions**

### **1. Positive Handling**

Positive Handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. Positive handling is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment and deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion and de-escalation. Positive Handling at St Elisabeth's CE is seen as a proactive response to meet individual pupil needs and any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way that staff exercise their responsibilities and the range of behaviour change support strategies used.

Behaviour Support Plans are used at St Elisabeth's CE to plan for the positive management of pupils' behaviour. They identify positive prevention strategies and how a pupil may need to be supported in a crisis. The focus of these plans is to keep everyone safe whilst ultimately teaching/supporting a pupil to change their behaviour to a more positive alternative.

### **2. Physical Contact**

There are situations in which appropriate physical contact occurs between staff and pupils e.g. comforting a pupil, supporting a pupil with changing. This is always done within public view, sensitively carried out and age/person-appropriate. At all times, especially whilst assisting a pupil with their personal care, staff should use discretion to preserve the dignity of those pupils needing help/support.

### **3. Physical Intervention (PI)**

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder where the pupil is compliant. This technique cannot be emphasised enough and in the hands of a skillful practitioner many pupils can be deflected from a potentially volatile situation into a less confrontational situation.

### **4. Physical Control/Restraint/Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)**

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. If anyone is injured, an accident/incident report must also be completed. For a serious incident this must be reported to a member of the SMT as soon as practicably possible. The pupil's parents will be informed of any significant incident concerning their child as soon as is practicable after the incident.

**The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a restraint/RPI.** Restraint is defined by Team Teach as the positive application of force by staff, in order to overcome rigorous resistance; completely directing, deciding and controlling a person's free movement.

### **Prevention and De-escalation**

Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment. The proactive/preventative strategies section of a pupil's Behaviour Support Plan will outline specific ways to help prevent incidents with the individual pupil. Good classroom organisation, clear boundaries that are consistently maintained and interesting lessons, that engage pupils' positively in their learning, will be effective in preventing incidents with almost all pupils.

De-escalation techniques should be used wherever possible and appropriate to defuse a situation and prevent an incident from occurring – a non-confrontational, calm but assertive approach is generally the most effective. Diverting the pupil's attention and distracting them from the "trigger", or a third person intervening can also help to prevent incidents. Where possible, these should all be used before resorting to restrictive physical interventions, unless safety is at risk. Reasonable force will only be used when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not intervening in this manner.

### **Primary Prevention (Proactive)**

This is achieved by:-

- Use of visually presented information to support understanding and promote functional communication.
- An understanding of and the provision for the sensory needs of pupils.
- Creating opportunities for communication, choice and achievement.
- Exploring pupils' preferences relating to the way/s in which they are managed.
- Developing staff expertise through a programme of Continuous Professional Development.
- The deployment of appropriate staffing numbers.
- The deployment of appropriately trained and competent staff.
- Focus on the importance of structure and environment.

## **Secondary Prevention (Active)**

This involves the recognition of the early stages of a behavioural sequence or pattern that is likely to develop into heightened anxiety and over-arousal and employing 'defusion' techniques to avert any further escalation.

## **Tertiary prevention (Reactive)**

This involves agreed strategies including, as a last resort, use of RPI to deal with crisis behaviour to maintain safety and welfare of the pupil and others. Where there is clear documented evidence that particular sequences of behaviour escalate rapidly into anxiety and challenging behaviour, the use of a restrictive physical intervention (RPI) at an early stage in the sequence may, potentially, be justified if it is clear that:

- Primary prevention has not been effective, and
- The risks associated with **NOT** using a RPI are greater than the risks of using a RPI

## **Types of Incident**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- self - injuring
- causing injury to others
- committing a criminal offence
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within school (this includes authorised out-of-school activities).
- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline.

Where a pupil's behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- A calming activity should be offered/made available to the pupil, including the option to withdraw from the task/activity.
- A clear positive statement (or use of visuals) should be given to tell the pupil what it is that you want them to do.
- Positive reinforcement, praise and reward should be provided to the pupil for any attempt to calm down and/or behave appropriately, however small the effort.
- Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible summon assistance.
- Physical intervention - positive handling using Team Teach techniques to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.

### Using Reasonable Force

No legal definition of reasonable force exists; however, for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it within St Elisabeth's CE:

- Positive Handling uses the **minimum** degree of force necessary for the **shortest period of time** to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property.
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be **proportionate** to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- Where possible staff would be expected to follow the pupil's Behaviour Support Plan in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour.
- If this was unsuccessful and the situation continues to escalate staff would then be expected to employ other Team Teach techniques that they have been trained in.

Any use of force by staff outside of the Team Teach training framework would need to be judged on whether it was reasonable, proportionate and necessary in the particular circumstances concerned.

All the techniques taught take account of a young person's;

- age
- gender
- level of physical, emotional and intellectual development
- special needs
- social context

They also provide a gradual, graded system of response.

## **Acceptable measures of physical intervention (PI)**

The use of Team Teach PI techniques can be justified if:

- (a) it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident;
- (b) it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent;
- (c) it is carried out as the minimum needed to achieve the desired result;
- (d) the age, understanding and gender of the pupil are taken into account;
- (e) it is likely to achieve the desired result.

Wherever possible assistance should be sought from another member of staff before intervening.

This form of physical intervention may involve staff:

- escorting a pupil;
- shepherding a pupil away;
- supportively holding a pupil to keep them or others safe until they have regained control of themselves or can be supported to an area to calm down.

## **Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPI)**

In some circumstances, trained staff may need to use more restrictive holds - Team Teach RPI techniques. Acceptable methods are taught as part of the training procedures made available to appropriate staff. Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall positive and caring ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities, and the behaviour change support strategies used. Staff may need to rotate roles and have a break if the incident is prolonged - you should follow the pupil's Behaviour Support Plan at all times acting in the best interests of the child.

It is acknowledged that with some disengagement techniques pupils may encounter some minimal discomfort when appropriate release techniques are used. However, this is very brief, transient and poses less of a risk than the behaviour they are showing, e.g. biting, head butting.

Named staff are trained in First Aid. Any of these may be called upon to implement First Aid or to seek further guidance from in the event of an injury or physical distress arising as a result of a physical intervention.

## **Risk Assessment and deciding whether to use Restrictive Physical Interventions**

It may be necessary to make a judgement about the relative risks and potential benefits arising from activities which might provoke challenging behaviours, compared with the impact on the pupil's overall quality of life if such activities are not allowed. Both challenging behaviour and restrictive physical interventions will involve a risk – to both staff and pupils. A risk assessment aims to balance these risks. The aim of the individual pupil's Behaviour Support Plan, and of this policy, is to reduce the risks associated with pupils' challenging behaviour as far as is reasonably practicable – both the risks that are associated with the behaviour itself and the risk of managing that behaviour. The risks of employing an intervention should be lower than the risks of not doing so.

A Challenging Behaviour Risk Assessment can be carried out if it is foreseeable that a pupil's behaviour may pose a risk to staff or pupils. This may result in a Behaviour Support Plan being devised. This will be done by the teacher in discussion with the staff team working with the pupil and SMT consulted.

Where possible any staff suitably authorised to use physical intervention will be involved in RPI. All staff authorised to use physical intervention with pupils will receive training in Team Teach techniques as a risk reduction strategy and receive information about the risk to pupils of positional asphyxia. There are very clear protocols delivered during training to minimise the risk of harm to pupils and to ensure that appropriate safeguards are implemented.

Any intervention needs to be **reasonable... proportionate... and ... necessary.**

### **Planned and emergency physical interventions**

A **planned intervention** is one that is described/ outlined in the pupil's Behaviour Support Plan. This should cover most interventions, as possible scenarios will be identified through risk assessment and planned for when the Behaviour Support Plan is drawn up. These interventions may include the use of Team Teach techniques.

An **emergency physical intervention** may be necessary if a situation arises that was not foreseen or is uncharacteristic of the pupil. Members of staff retain their duty of care to pupils and any response, even in an emergency, must be **proportionate to the circumstances**. Staff should use the minimum force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety, consistent with the training that they have received. Wherever possible assistance will be sought from another member of staff. Following any such incident, a Behaviour Support Plan will be devised (or the existing

plan amended) to support effective responses to any such situations which may arise in the future.

### **Time out, withdrawal and seclusion**

**Time out:** This involves restricting the pupil's access to positive reinforcements as part of the behavioural programme in a room or area which they may freely leave. It is a specific behaviour management technique and does not necessarily literally mean time spent out of the class/group, but rather refers to a withdrawal of attention and/or things they find rewarding (it could be as simple as turning away from a child who is attention seeking, or positioning a child away from the class/group). This withdrawal of attention could also be achieved by sending a pupil to another class/group or a quiet area.

**Withdrawal:** which involves removing the person from a situation which causes anxiety, high arousal levels or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This can mean removing a child from the class/group to allow them time to calm down or to prevent a situation from escalating. They may need time away from staff and pupils (either on their own or in another class/group) in order to break the cycle/pattern of their behaviour or to reduce their level of anxiety/distress. This "quiet time" could be time in the playground, a quiet room, or sitting in an office supervised by other staff including the Head of School.

**Seclusion:** Is when a person is forced to spend time alone against their will. This involves restricting a person's freedom of movement and should be considered a form of physical intervention. The use of seclusion usually requires statutory powers unless in an emergency and so should only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

### **Staff Training**

Training at some level will be available for **all** staff at St Elisabeth's CE and All designated staff are trained in skills to help them to defuse situations before behaviour becomes challenging and how to de-escalate incidents should they arise.

For some staff this is enhanced by Team Teach training in the use of positive handling and it is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure this training is kept up to date. No member of staff will be expected to use Team Teach techniques without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken in the event of an incident. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of on-going staff development. This distinction in training and certification is considered a sensible risk-assessed approach to managing the training needs of all staff and is supported by Team Teach Ltd.

## **Authorised staff**

All teachers, support staff and therapists that the Head of School has authorised to have control or charge of pupils, automatically have the statutory power to use reasonable force within the context of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the subsequent guidance 'The Use of Force to Control and Restrain Pupils' 2010 and 'Behaviour and discipline in schools' DfE 2012. Supply staff must ensure that they are familiar with this school's policy. Appropriate guidance will be given if they have not undertaken Team Teach training.

## **Implications of the policy**

The application of any form of physical support/intervention inevitably carries an attached risk of unintended harm and this places staff and the school at risk of potential litigation. Staff have a responsibility to follow this policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. Staff need to be aware that they are responsible for:

- keeping pupils' Behaviour Support Plans up to date and sharing these with parents.
- assessing risks (dynamic risk assessment) related to individual circumstances which may arise in the course of their day-to-day duties.
- making judgements about when the use of force is necessary and the degree of force which may be regarded as necessary to manage a situation.

Staff are required to justify their decisions in writing through the recording and reporting procedures outlined later in this document.

## **Recording/Reporting incidents**

All incidents of RPI will be recorded on a Positive Handling Record Form for RPI (see Appendix 1). All serious incidents should be reported to the Head of School or a member of the SMT as soon as is practicably possible but at least at the end of the day.

All incidents recorded will be reported to parents. Where there is any concern over the appropriateness of a response the Head of School, Chair of Governors, or the LA Safeguarding Officer may refer the incident to the Manchester Children's Safeguarding Board for clarification and/or investigation.

Whilst the physical interventions are intended to reduce risk, there is always risk when two or more people engage to use force to protect, release or restrain. Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the pupil and staff, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur

accidentally and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that pupils and staff remain safe.

Any such injury will be reported using the Accident/Near Miss Investigation Report for pupil injury or an Accident/Near Miss Dangerous Occurrence form for staff as well as a skin map if necessary. Any injuries to pupils as a result of incidents involving restraint will be reported in line with locally agreed LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) procedures.

### **Monitoring incidents**

Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Head of School to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour may require the restrictive physical intervention/s and/or an adjustment to the provision made for them at the school.

Monitoring of incidents will take place on a regular basis by the Head of School and the results will inform planning to meet individual pupil and school needs. To safeguard pupils and ensure transparency, the Head of School will present a regular summary of incidents to the Governing Body.

### **Health and Safety of Staff**

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, employees have a responsibility to report any circumstances which give rise to an increased risk to their Health and Safety.

Staff who have, or acquire, permanently or temporarily, any medical condition that may impact on their ability to carry out pupils' Behaviour Support Plans have a duty to report these to the Head of School immediately as there may be an impact on their own safety and that of colleagues and/or pupils.

### **Complaints**

The availability of a clear policy about the use of reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Where the nature of any complaint made by a pupil, parent or other person in relation to the use of RPI within the school indicates that an allegation of mishandling by a member of staff is being made, which complies with the criteria as recognised by Stockport Local Authority Safeguarding Board, the matter may be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in accordance with LA procedures.

In such circumstances the investigation of the complaint/allegation and any resulting action in respect of child protection, disciplinary or other

procedures will be carried out in accordance with the guidance received from the LA.

### **Whistle Blowing**

Whilst the training in Team Teach provided to relevant staff encourages the use of help protocols and reflective practice, it is acknowledged that under some circumstances, physical intervention can be misapplied. Staff are reminded that part of their duty of care to pupils includes the requirement to report any such matters which cause them concern in relation to pupil management and welfare. Any such concerns, (short of immediate Child Protection concerns which should, of course, be passed to the Police /LADO), should be raised with the Head of School or with the Chair of Governors in order to allow concerns to be addressed and practice improved.

### **Linked Policies**

▪ Complaints Procedure			
▪ Pupil Behaviour & Discipline			
▪ Safeguarding and Child Protection			
▪ Staff Code of Conduct			
<b>Head of School:</b>	Bev Burrows	<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Chair of Governing Body:</b>	Lee Jamieson	<b>Date:</b>	

**Positive Handling Record Form for  
Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)**

Date of Incident	
Name(s) of staff involved	
Name(s) of pupil(s) involved	
Year Group(s) of pupil(s) involved	
Name(s) of other staff who witnessed incident	

**Brief Description of Incident**

*(Please be objective and factual, outlining how the incident began and progressed, details of pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, steps taken to defuse/calm the situation, degree of force used, how applied and for how long.*

*Please continue on a separate sheet, if necessary.*

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<b>Reason that RPI was necessary</b>
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<b>Outcome following restraint</b>
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<b>Details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil, member of staff or any damage to property (please indicate if an Accident/Near Miss Investigation form and/or skin map was filled out).</b>
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Name of staff member recording incident	
Signature of staff member	
Date	