



‘Together We Can, With Christ By Our side’

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

Compliance statement

Every policy is reviewed at regular intervals and where applicable, as stipulated by law.

Each policy is also available in additional formats including Braille and in additional languages upon request, within reasonable timescales as stipulated by the school.

Review date: January 2022 Next review: January 2023 Ethos

At St Joseph's School, positive handling is used as a last resort in a situation when the behaviour of the child is deemed to be a danger to him/herself, to other children or adults or where serious damage to property is likely to ensue. 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.

The Legal Framework

Positive handling should be limited to emergencies and used only in the last resort. Under the Children Order 1995, it is only permissible as described under the heading "Physical Control". Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It enables trained staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

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

It is always unlawful to use physical force as a punishment

Aims

To protect every person in the school community from harm.

To protect all pupils 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.

Physical interventions might include:

- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Leading a pupil away from a situation by holding their hand or arm or by placing a hand in the centre of their back
- Physically interposing between pupils

Teachers must avoid anything that might reasonably cause injury or touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. Staff must always remember that well-intentioned actions can sometimes be misconstrued and must therefore carefully consider the appropriateness of their actions.

Staff should endeavour to:

- find out why this child behaves as he or she does
- understand the factors that influence this child's behaviour
- identify early warning signs that indicate behaviours are developing

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form that could be seen, as a punishment. It must be remembered that the child concerned is still owed a duty of care and that the least physical intervention is still the most desirable course of action. The adults involved owe themselves a duty of care to ensure that they are not placed in a position of harm by their actions.

If positive handling is deemed necessary, after all other strategies have been used

- Any restraint is an act of care and control, using the minimum amount of force for the minimum amount of time; the aim being to allow the child to regain control as quickly as possible
- advise the child calmly and repeatedly about what they are going to do and why
- Always talk through the actions carried out in order to reassure and inform the child
- Make it clear that restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary
- Whenever possible at least 2 members of staff will be present during an incident of restraint to ensure the safety of the child and staff. Staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a pupil will have a responsibility to provide a presence and to offer support and assistance should this be required.

- Any incident of restraint must be reported to the Head Teacher immediately
- Any incident of restraint is recorded as soon as possible after the event.
- A child who has been restrained is always counselled as soon as he/she is calm, on why it was necessary to restrain him/her
- In the event of a child having to be restrained, we will inform parents as soon as is reasonably possible preferably face to face or alternatively by telephone

Risk Assessments

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

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate