



Positive Handling Policy

Date of Policy	Review Date	Policy Written by:	Date Shared with Staff	Date Shared with Local School Board
December 2024	No later than two years following publication of the policy	Mrs Katie Gray (Assistant Headteacher)	December 2024	December 2024

This Policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The Legal Framework Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil).
- Causing personal injury or damage to property.
- 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.

The staff to which this power applies are:

- Any member of staff at the school, who are specifically trained that is arranged by Spalding St Paul's Primary School.
- Any other person whom the Headteacher has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This can also include people to whom the Headteacher has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits). Who have had team teach training arranged by Spalding St Paul's Primary School.
- This does not include any pupils.

Definition of Positive Handling at Spalding St Paul's Primary School

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming themselves or others or seriously damaging property. Positive handling is always a last resort, distraction techniques should be deployed first where ever possible.

Specific Aims of the Positive Handling Policy

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. To raise awareness of who is able to support with positive handling in school.

Why Use Positive Handling?

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. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the School's policy on behaviour, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. This should only ever be used as a last resort, distraction techniques, calming techniques and a fresh staff members face should all be used first where ever possible to support the child.

Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are to take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

Alternative Strategies

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. if a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:

- the broken record in which an instruction is repeated until the pupil complies

- use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with the School's policy on behaviour.

The use of positive handling

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of reestablishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. This should be a measure used for as little time as possible and only for the reasons of the safety of the pupil requiring the measure, other pupils and staff being at risk of being hurt or significant damage to property. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment. Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. This will have been delivered to staff in specific training as to what reasonable force is and what specific measures are able to be used. This is the only physical contact that should be used, there are measures that can be used such as blocking students' pathways if this is going to prevent them from leaving the premises or stopping them from being aggressive towards others.

In all circumstances other methods such as distraction techniques should be used if appropriate or effective positive handling should be a last resort. When positive handling becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why using very minimal language
- Use the minimum force necessary, following the team teach training staff members have received
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint or engage in conversation with them
- Touch or hold the pupil in inappropriate areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Hurt the pupil in anyway such as Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

The recording of positive handling situations

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 pupil. The Headteacher, or in their absence, 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, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a Behaviour management Plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SEND Co-ordinator and the Inclusion team.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately on COPMS (the school's data management system). All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available. A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, 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 it.

Risk Assessments

If we become 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. This plan will then be shared with all staff who are working with the pupil to raise awareness and ensure consistency with staff supporting. Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary), what the pupil likes and the best ways to engage with the pupil.
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take and raising their awareness of the positive handling procedures for their child.
- 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 from external agencies.
Implementing a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP).

Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. 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. It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and Local School Board about these procedures and the context in which they apply. If this occurs our complaints policy would be followed.

