

St. Peter's Catholic Primary School

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY



Policy	Positive Handling Policy
Date	September 2025
Date of review	September 2026
Signed Chair of Governors	Sarah Adeyemi
Signed Headteacher	C Scott

We, the family of St Peter's, united in faith by God, love, learn and grow together.

INTRODUCTION

At St. Peter's RC Primary School, we strive to create an environment in which both children and adults feel happy, safe, secure and valued. We aim to ensure a whole school approach to behaviour known and understood by all staff, children, parents and outside agencies. Staff at this school are trained to look after the children in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent children from hurting themselves or others. The use of force upon any child by a member of staff is a serious matter and should only be considered as a last resort. However, the law is clear and the Governing Body has a responsibility to all concerned, to support any member of staff who as a last resort uses reasonable force in accordance with the law and this policy. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to physically intervene, they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy.

We believe in a fair and progressive society where people show:

Perseverance: Knowing that hard work and determination can lead us to be able to make progress.

Respect: Showing a willingness to understand, learn and benefit from the aspects that make each of us unique people.

Integrity: Being honest and having strong moral principles that you refuse to change

Compassion: An empathic understanding of a person's feelings, accompanied by altruism, or a desire to act on that person's behalf

Enthusiasm: Having a positive mindset to allow us to believe in ourselves and make our school community a shared environment of belief and determination.

These school values are at the heart of what we do and correlate with our British Values

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are **reasonable, proportionate** and **absolutely necessary**.

This policy is designed to serve the best interests of children and to reduce risk of harm to school staff. It is based on legislation and advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- [Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff Feb 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance September 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance September 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [DfE advice template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

It is also based on the [SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#), which outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils

- Sections 88 to 94 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk), which requires schools to regulate pupils' behaviour and publish a behaviour policy and written statement of behaviour principles, and give schools the authority to confiscate pupils' property
- DfE guidance explaining that maintained schools must publish their behaviour policy online

At St. Peter's RC Primary School, we aim:

- To develop in children a sense of acceptance of responsibility for their own actions in order to promote positive behaviour choices.
- To create conditions for a learning community in which effective engagement can take place, in which there is mutual respect between all members, and where there is proper concern and ownership for the environment.
- To provide positive role models of behaviour in our dealings with children and other adults in order to inculcate positive behavioural values.
- To create a positive ethos by being well prepared, gearing work and teaching methods to children's needs, giving children constructive feedback and maintaining an attractive and tidy environment.

However, we also acknowledge that there are times when poor behaviour choices may require staff intervention to ensure the safety of the child, other children and staff and that this may require the use of physical interventions.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that reasonable force may be used to prevent a child from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- injuring themselves or others;
- committing a criminal offence;
- causing damage to property
- engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom or elsewhere.

The DfE Use of Reasonable Force Guidance allows all staff at a school to use reasonable force to keep children safe. It also allows other adults in the school to use physical interventions which are **reasonable, proportionate and necessary** to ensure the safety of children. Those might include classroom assistants, care workers, midday supervisors, specialist support assistants, escorts, caretakers or voluntary helpers, including people accompanying children on visits, exchanges or holidays organised by the school.

At St. Peter's RC Primary School, 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. **Only staff who have received appropriate Team Teach training are authorised to use positive handling techniques and where a plan has been agreed for any child. All staff have a duty of care to keep children safe but a few individuals will have planned interventions.**

Staff will always consider carefully whether physical intervention is necessary. Staff will always try to de-escalate and calm a situation through other strategies before using physical techniques. Advice and support will also be sought from outside agencies when necessary. Refer to DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

SCHOOL EXPECTATION

St Peter's RC Primary School takes seriously its duty of care towards children, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a child who is endangering themselves or others, damaging property or to maintain good order and discipline, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

All interventions at St Peter's RC School are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage children to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence unacceptable behaviour and taking steps to divert any behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Children are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans/ Team Teach Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute.

ALTERNATIVES TO PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can keep calm by acting calm.

Communication

-stance- posture- gesture- facial expression- intonation- scripts

Give clear directions for children to stop. For example, 'Stop ..., thank you.'

Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.

Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.

Awareness and Assessment

-reading behaviour-anticipating what might happen next-knowledge of handling plans

Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help

Listening and Learning

-give time and space-allow pauses for take up time-give them a way out-recover, rebuild and restore positive relationships.

Making safe

-objects-space-hotspots-safety responses

Remove an audience or take vulnerable children to a safer place.

Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.

Use positive touch to guide or escort children to somewhere less pressured.

Non-restrictive physical contact includes:

- a caring C guide
- a help hug
- a friendly hold
- a turn, gather, guide

MODIFICATIONS TO ENVIRONMENT

St Peter's RC School will make reasonable adjustments to the environment and routines to keep children and staff safe and to ensure that everyone have equal access. Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some children may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour, in general it is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. For example:

- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils, compasses and darts) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry child who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Is the design arrangements or furniture safe and appropriate for children who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated child?
- Are protocols in place to encourage angry children to take themselves to a calming and safer place?

HELP PROTOCOLS

The expectation at St Peter's RC School is that all staff should support one another. Our attitude is to encourage staff to feel confident in offering help, and to enable a culture in which accepting help is not seen a weakness. Seeking help is seen as a sign of professional strength. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over.

It is advised that wherever possible, another member of staff is present if staff need to use reasonable force in order to assist and/or act as support. Supporting a colleague means helping colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies or offering support when necessary.

Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. At St Peter's RC School, we use the 'more help' scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

For example,

Offer: 'Help is available...' Response: 'You can help me by...' Offer: 'More help...' Response: 'What do you suggest...'

In a real situation the conversation might go something like: 'Mrs Brown, can I help...?' 'Thank you, Ms. Abbott, you

can help by getting Edward a cool drink/ sitting here with Edward whilst I get him a cool drink/ asking if Mr Jones could spare us a moment etc.'

Accepting help requires telling colleagues exactly what they are required to do.

WELL CHOSEN WORDS

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When children are becoming angry, they may not want to have a conversation or want to listen to what an adult has to say. Telling people to calm down can actually make a child worse. Pointing out what they have done wrong can also make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

THE LAST RESORT PRINCIPAL

At St. Peter's RC Primary School, we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative and for the shortest amount of time possible. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct either a dynamic risk assessment or use the written risk assessment associated with the child. We expect staff to think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces rather than increases risk.

Any response to challenging behaviour should be reasonable, proportionate and necessary. St Peter's RC School uses physical restraint as an act of care and control, NOT punishment. Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing the child is in immediate danger of harming themselves or another person, in danger of seriously damaging property or not maintaining good order or discipline.
- Only the minimum intervention necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure a minimum of two Team-Teach trained members of staff present before applying the restraint. Other staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, the restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Physical restraint should not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger to people and property.
- After the event, the restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity

In all instances we choose the safest alternative.

POSSIBILITY OF ACCIDENTAL INJURY

Sr Peter's RC School is open and honest and recognises that minimal discomfort may be associated with some of the approved disengagement techniques employed during physical intervention. There is a possibility of accidental injury occurring during physical intervention e.g., bruising to a limb.

During any incident when restrictive physical intervention becomes necessary staff will:

- Tell a child to stop doing what they are doing and explain it is unsafe
- Use simple and clear language
- Explain to the child that you are going to intervene physically to keep them safe
- Wherever possible, seek assistance from another member of staff to witness and support
- Use the least restrictive hold, for the minimum amount of time, using therapeutic language
- Continue to use all available verbal and non-verbal support and de-escalation strategies
- Remind the child that you are holding them to keep them safe
- Protect the child's dignity
- Ensure that their hold is reasonable, necessary and proportionate

Staff will never:

- Act in anger (involve another member of staff if you fear loss of control)
- Use physical intervention or force in order to inflict any pain e.g.
- Hold a child around the neck, by the collar or in any way that could restrict breathing
- Get involved in prolonged verbal exchanges with the child
- Involve other children when using restrictive physical interventions
- Use holds that have not been taught or are not authorised by Team Teach
- Use restrictive physical intervention or intervention as punishment or to gain compliance

RISK ASSESSMENT

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with children who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the child/ren concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training.

Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

Dynamic risk assessment is done in real time. It involves stopping, thinking and evaluating the likely options before deciding which to choose. At St Peter's RC School, we ask: *'What would you want somebody else to do in circumstances if that was your child or loved one?'*

It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

Formal Risk Assessment

Formal risk assessments are written down. Risk assessments are required for children who exhibit challenging behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. Parents will be involved with the writing of the risk assessment.

When considering a child's behaviour, staff and parents will think about the following questions

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this child's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct the risk assessment?

- Have we provided a written plan?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

Staff may also need to make an individual risk assessment where it is known that intervention is more likely to be necessary to restrain a particular child, such as a child who is considered to be at greatest risk of needing positive handling interventions due to their special educational need (SEN) or disability.

Plans should be compatible with a child's EHCP and properly documented in the school records. An individual risk assessment is essential for children whose SEND are associated with:

- Communication impairments that make them less responsive to verbal communication
- Physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments
- Conditions that make them fragile, such as haemophilia, brittle bone syndrome or epilepsy
- Dependence on equipment such as wheelchairs, breathing or feeding tubes.

POSITIVE HANDLING PLANS (PHP)

Where a risk has been identified a Positive Handling Plan (PHP) is required to justify the use of physical intervention under the Team Teach framework. All children who have been identified as presenting a risk, should have a PHP/TTP. The plan details any strategies (*reference Team Teach workbook page 30*) which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended.

Examples of this are where a child has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective, they should be named on the plan, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Plans should be considered alongside the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and any other planning documents which relate to the child. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in their IEP.

Parents will be involved in the writing of a plan.

REASONABLE AND PROPORTIONATE

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the child?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions, it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

UNREASONABLE USE OF FORCE

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should children be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs).

TEAM TEACH and TRAINING

It is the policy of St Peter's that all staff working closely with children are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy. All training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with DfES and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found in the St Peter's Team Teach workbook and on the Team Teach website (www.team-teach.co.uk).

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our clients. Once trained, staff should practice regularly guidance of trained SLT and bring any problems or concerns to them.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the school. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which seems to involve the least risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school and policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non-physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important to.

When considering a child's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this child's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

GETTING HELP

At this school the following support structures are in place:

- IEP's, Behaviour Support plans and Risk Assessments are kept on file in each classroom to ensure all relevant information about each child is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Daily briefing sessions in the morning to update relevant staff on current issues and share information.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a child.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the child(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Daily debrief sessions for all staff to share experiences, concerns and access support from each other, led by a member of the SLT.
- Termly refresher meetings in the Team Teach strategies and techniques for all staff, and continuous review by SLT to inform these.

RESPONDING TO UNFORESEEN EMERGENCIES

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences. The key principles are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a **verbal warning**.

Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school. In general, if staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice.

Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong.

THE POST INCIDENT SUPPORT STRUCTURE FOR CHILDREN AND STAFF

After any incident a full debrief should take place so that learning can inform practice. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that children have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. Following an incident, it is the policy of St Peter's RC School to offer support to all involved. This process is aimed towards making things better in the future. The TELL acronym stands for Timing, Environment, Listening and Learning.

Time

-when the child is ready -ensure there is sufficient time for the process- do not rush

Environment

-comfortable-neutral-no disturbances-chairs same height-no artificial barriers

Listen

-observe body language -build rapport- non-judgmental-listen with your eyes

Learn

-no blame-share perspectives- work together- restore

Generally, a member of senior staff would expect to talk to staff and children involved in any incidents involving any restraint. If the staff or children need time to rest or compose themselves, then senior leaders will make arrangements for this to happen.

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the plan, the school Behaviour Policy or this policy.

SUPPORT FOR STAFF

When a member of staff has been involved in an incident that has resulted in them being physically hurt or subjected to trauma that person should be released from the classroom for an appropriate period of time.

Senior members of staff will make themselves available to provide emotional/practical support for individuals or teams who have experienced a particularly challenging situation during the course of the day.

Staff must also support each other whenever difficult incidents occur. It is important that if a colleague encounters another who is managing a difficult situation s/he should be non-judgemental and should unobtrusively offer help.

As a rule, it must always be respected that the person primarily involved in an incident is the “number one” and remains in control of the intervention until such time as he/she hands over the lead position to another member of staff. It is therefore the responsibility of staff to recognise when to hand over a situation to a colleague. **Being able to relinquish control will be seen as a strength and must never be viewed as a failure.**

COMPLAINTS

It is not uncommon for children to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. Children should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and children alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

TRAINING

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. St Peter's RC School has adopted the Team Teach Model of training. All training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with DfES and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our clients. Once trained, staff should practice regularly guidance of trained SLT and bring any problems or concerns to them.

RECORDING

Whenever overpowering force is used the incident must be recorded using the approved forms. The incident/Concerns book (bound book) is kept in the Headteacher's Office, and the incident sheets are kept in folders in the staff room. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours. The details recorded on the forms are then typed into the school software for recording incidents and kept confidentially on electronic files, as well as written into the bound book.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording forms carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for 75 years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed. A record is written into the Incident Book (bound book). This refers to supporting sheets and other relevant information.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The school incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

This policy will also be reviewed by Managers in school annually before also being reviewed by Governors.