



DIOCESE OF CHESTER

ASTBURY ST MARY'S
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Positive Handling Policy 2023



Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

There are different levels of touch used by staff with pupils in our schools. Many of these are part of normal human interaction. They range from touch which gives informal reassurance or guidance (e.g. holding a young pupil's hand, supporting during a gymnastics lessons or providing first aid) to *positive handling*, using *restrictive physical intervention*, which requires a more formal response to a pupil's behaviour if it is:

- • Threatening, dangerous, aggressive or out of control
- • Likely to damage her/himself or others or property
- • Likely to lead to an offence being committed or to the breakdown of good order/discipline

It is not appropriate to use restrictive positive handling techniques for behaviours which do not meet these criteria; e.g. for pupils who refuse to obey an instruction but are not generally presenting as dangerous to themselves or others.

Positive handling through restrictive intervention, takes the use of touch beyond the school's regular behaviour management policy and can potentially lead to questions or even concerns about its practice.

Positive handling describes the full range of safer handling skills used to de-escalate, defuse and divert in order to prevent violence and reduce the risk of injury to staff and children.

Positive handling is underpinned by documentation which, in addition to allowing access to education for all, supports the child and aims to provide security and safety, allowing for recovery, repair and reflection for all concerned.

All strategies to deal with challenging behaviour are based on providing the maximum amount of care, control and therapeutic support.

The Safer Handling ethos is to avoid humans having to hold / handle or move other humans in the first place!

Training

School has staff who are trained in positive handling led by Safer Handling trainers (<https://www.safer-handling.co.uk/>). The purpose of Safer Handling training is to support adults' understanding and management of challenging behaviour, teaching physical techniques within a holistic de-escalation approach, in order to encourage the promotion of socially acceptable behaviours for all concerned. In the hierarchy of law, all staff members are responsible to make a decision about whether to act or omit to act using the following two questions: Is positive handling necessary and proportionate and therefore reasonable? What could happen if I choose not to act?

All staff working with pupils need to know how to set and maintain appropriate boundaries and expectations so that behaviour does not escalate.

Similarly, all staff need to be aware of pupil relationships and other emotional factors which might upset or anger a pupil so that their behaviour gets out of hand.

It is about how adults show restraint rather than apply it!

What does positive handling look like?

The range of positive handling techniques is as wide as the types of behaviour they are intended to manage.

A situation may simply require the adult to point, guide or walk alongside a pupil or it may require full restrictive intervention if the behaviour appears dangerous.

Much can be done ahead of physical intervention through verbal coaxing and persuasive techniques as well as some practical matters such as moving other pupils to a place of safety and removing any object nearby which could be used as weapon.

Where restrictive physical intervention is required, the most important consideration is that the pupil should be calmed and soothed as soon as possible, using the safest and gentlest means of holding them, so that the situation is de-escalated quickly.

The aim must be to lower the pupil's anxiety levels during the restraint by offering constant verbal reassurance that they will not be physically injured.

The adult should keep talking, explain what is happening and why, what will happen next and how it will stop.

Any physical intervention should be in place for the least amount of time possible. As soon it is safe to do so, the adult should let go and allow the pupil further time to calm.

Adults should be fully aware of how to keep a pupil healthy and safe during any positive handling (e.g. no negative impact on the pupil's breathing) and, similarly, their own safety so they do not place themselves in dangerous situations (e.g. avoiding standing where they could be kicked or head-butted).

Where possible (unless the pupil is very new to school), any pupil's additional needs should be known to the adults concerned and positive handling should be managed accordingly.

Unless there are very urgent reasons, there should be two adults present to manage restrictive intervention. Seclusion should only be used as briefly as possible; e.g. whilst waiting for the second adult to arrive.

Additional support

At this school the following support structures are in place:

- Other staff to be able to have a change of face
- Nurture support plans and risk assessments to ensure staff have relevant knowledge about the pupil
- Updates to plans following incidents, discussed and shared with staff and parents / carers
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) and staff involved, reflecting on how the crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Refresher discussions/practice in the Safer Handling strategies and techniques for trained staff, and continuous review by senior leadership team to inform these.

Positive handling plans

All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a nurture and support plan and risk assessment. The plan details any:

- Behaviour triggers
- Effective strategies
- Staff scripts
- Strategies to avoid

Nurture support plans are written in association with parents / carers and the child, if appropriate. They are continually reviewed and altered depending on the child's changing needs. The senior leadership team will regularly review the list of children requiring a positive handling plan.

Challenging behaviour risk assessments

All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a challenging behaviour risk assessment. The risk assessment details:

- Summary of incidents
- Behaviours that cause a concern
- Triggers to behaviours
- People most likely to be at risk
- Control measures to reduce the risk
- Interventions to manage the risks

Responding to unforeseen emergencies

The school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations which may cause the need for a physical intervention. The key principals are that any physical intervention should follow a dynamic risk assessment and 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

The post-incident support structure for pupils and staff

People take time to recover from a serious incident. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if necessary. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's system (injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice). Time needs to be found for both staff and pupils for recovery and for the possible psychological consequences that will follow a distressing incident as well as the time needed to repair relationships. The school will use all other adults (except those attached to pupils with complex needs) to support and cover a class while staff are given recovery time. ***The outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.***

Complaints

The school has a formal complaints procedure, which outlines how the staff, parents and young people can express their concerns appropriately: this includes complaints regarding inappropriate physical interventions. 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. If the complaint is about the Head teacher then the procedure in the complaints policy should be followed.

Recording

Whenever a physical intervention is used the incident must be recorded on CPOMS. Tick 'Behaviour' then 'positive handling' and include 1) which technique has been used (for example, single, double, guide – flat hands / caring C, side) 2) where on the pupil did you hold and 3) the time used for the handling. Use ABC (Antecedent / Behaviour / Consequence) to record. All staff

involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should, if possible, be completed within 24 hours. Data entered is kept indefinitely in case it forms part of an investigation.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Head teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. They will also carry out a termly analysis of physical intervention incidents and issues which will be reported to governors. School incident data is open to external monitoring and evaluation. Incidents involving the Head teacher will be reviewed by the Chair of Governors and reported to CDAT who will instigate further action as required.

Approved for Issue
To be approved by governors.

Chair of Governors

Date

Headteacher

Date