

ST MICHAEL'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Positive Handling Policy

School Mission Statement



St Michael's RC Primary School is a Catholic family of faith, following the teaching of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community become caring, independent and resilient individuals who fulfil their potential.

"I came so that you may have life, life in all its fullness" John 10:10

Introduction

St Michael's RC Primary School aims to promote positive behaviours through shared and modelled values and expectations and the consistent application of our behaviour management policy, but we also recognise that there is a need, reflected in common law, to intervene when there is an obvious risk to safety to its pupils, staff and property.

St Michael's RC Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare will deal professionally with any incidents involving aggressive or hazardous behaviour, **and only use positive handling as a last resort**, in line with DCSF and Medway Council advice. If used at all, it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.

This policy must be read and implemented in conjunction with the whole school behaviour policy and approach to behaviour management.

The Education Act 1996 (Section 551A) states that it is lawful for teachers and other authorised staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from committing an offence, causing injury or damage or disrupting the good order and discipline of the school. Teachers are not contractually obliged to carry out restraint procedures and they are not contractually obliged to undertake training in any restraint procedures. This policy applies to all staff who are authorised to use positive handling.

All staff authorised to positively handle children and young people must be aware that they must not:

- Use corporal punishment
- Use pain to gain compliance
- Deprive the person of food or drink

- Require the person to wear inappropriate clothes
- Humiliate/degrade the child or young person

Our approach to best practice

The best practice regarding positive handling outlined below should be considered alongside other relevant policies in the school, specifically those policies involving behaviour, bullying, child protection and health and safety.

In line with the Education Act 1966 (Section 550A) in the following situations, staff must judge whether or not positive handling would be reasonable or appropriate:

- risk to the safety of staff, pupils or visitors, or
- where there is a risk of serious damage to property, or
- where a pupil's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline, or
- where a pupil is committing a criminal offence

The judgement will take into account the circumstances of the incident. All staff should be aware that the use of positive handling in response to a clear or developing danger or injury will always be used to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation.

Staff will view positive handling of pupils as **a last resort** for the purpose of maintaining a safe environment. Staff will understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment that is calm and supportive, especially when dealing with pupils who may have emotional and behavioural needs, which may increase their aggression.

Practice regarding specific incidents

Any physical action taken will take into consideration the age and competence of the child and will be the least detrimental alternative.

Staff intervening with children will seek assistance from other members of staff as early as possible, since single-handed intervention increases the risk of injury to both parties and does not provide a witness.

Any member of staff, recognising that a situation is escalating to a point of demanding positive handling, yet feeling unable to carry this out, must, as part of their duty of care, clearly tell the pupil(s) to stop the behaviour and should seek help by any means available.

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.

Staff who have not been involved in the initial confrontation leading up to an incident may be in a better position to intervene or restrain the pupil if this proves necessary.

A pupil's behaviour may be adversely affected by the presence of an audience. Wherever possible, the audience will be removed, or if this is not possible, the pupil and member(s) of staff will withdraw to a quiet, **but not completely private**, place eg two members of staff should be present or a door left open so that others are aware of the situation.

Staff will be aware of the need to tell the pupil being restrained, in a calm and gentle manner, that the reason for the intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the pupil calms down, he/she will be released.

Positive Handling

Examples of situations where positive handling may be appropriate include:

- a pupil attacks member of staff or another pupil
- pupils are fighting
- pupils are engaging in, or on the verge of, committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- a pupil is persistently refusing to leave the classroom
- a pupil behaving such that the lesson is being seriously disrupted

The following approaches are regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances:

- holding for security and to reduce anxiety where there is potential risk, even if the pupil is not yet out of control. This is best used when the pupil is anxious or confused. Its purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation. Staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted by the pupil as aggression
- physically interposing between pupils
- blocking a pupil's path
- escorting a pupil by the hand or arm

The following holds should **not** be used:

- holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe
- slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- twisting or forcing limbs against the joint
- tripping a pupil
- holding a pupil by the hair or ear
- holding a pupil face down on the ground

Recording an incident

All incidents that result in non-routine interventions will be recorded on a 'Serious Incident Form.' These are bright yellow in colour and will be kept in a file and

numbered. A copy of this will be kept on the pupil's file and retained in line with LEA guidance on keeping educational records.

Incident forms should be completed and signed by all involved members of staff within 24 hours of the incident.

The school will log and report any injuries to pupils or staff in accordance with RIDDOR (HSE Regulations 1995).

Pupils who are identified as likely to require positive handling as part of their behaviour management will require an Individual Behaviour Plan alongside their Individual Education Plan. This is drawn up in response to the risk posed by the pupil's behaviour and is shared with all staff, parents/carers and the pupil if appropriate.

Debriefing Arrangements

The pupil and the member of staff will be checked for any signs of injury after the incident and first aid will be administered to anyone who requires it. This will be logged in the first aid record book and with HSE if necessary.

The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise him/her. When the pupil regains complete composure, a senior member of staff (or her/his nominee) will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain the reason for its occurrence. The pupil will be given the opportunity to explain things from her/his point of view. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish the relationship between the pupil and the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.

In cases where it is not possible to speak to the pupil on the same day as the incident occurred, debrief will take place as soon as possible after the pupil returns to school.

All members of staff involved will be allowed a period of debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff (or her/his nominee) will provide support to the member(s) of staff involved.

The Headteacher will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity of any incidents where positive handling has been used. The Headteacher will ensure the recording process is underway and review each incident to ensure that any necessary lessons are learned.

Parents will be informed (see paragraph Arrangements for Informing Parents).

Governors will be informed of the number of incidents where positive handling has been used, on an annual basis.

Authorisation of staff to use positive handling

We recognise that positive handling will be seldom used and it is a last resort to maintaining a safe environment.

Staff authorised to use positive handling have been trained using TEAM TEACH techniques.

In the event of a complaint being received by the school in relation to the use of physical force by staff, the matter will be investigated in accordance with DCSF Circular 10/95 – Protecting Children from Abuse and in accordance with Medway Council guidance.

Arrangements for informing parents

Parents will be informed of the school’s policy regarding positive handling in the following ways:

- a section about the school’s legal obligation to maintain a safe environment and the possible use of positive handling (as a very last resort) with pupils will be included in the school prospectus and will be available on the school’s website
- parents will be informed after a non-planned incident where positive handling is used with their child.

Review date:

Policy written by: Jane Thomas
Inclusions Leader
Date: June 2015.

Formally adopted by Governing Body of St Michael’s RC Primary School on:

Date

Signed Chair of Governors

Signed Headteacher

