



CHRIST the KING

Catholic Primary School and Nursery with
The Ark, a Specialist Resource

“Loving Learning Growing together as Christ’s family”



Positive Handling Policy

Management of policy

Policy owner	Diocese/HT/Bursar/FGB
Approval level:	FGB
Date of next review	October 2026
Review cycle	Annually
Type of Policy:	Statutory
Statutory Guidance	

Positive Handling Policy

Some staff have received training in how to hold young people safely to reduce risks related to difficult, disturbing and sometimes dangerous behaviours. This training is called Team-Teach. The training has evolved from a residential care and educational background and is recognised as best practice. The physical techniques in Team-Teach provide a gradual, graded system of response. Unless Team-Teach trained, staff should not be using any physical intervention unless there is a risk of significant harm to the child themselves, other children around them or staff. Significant harm is when there is a risk of hospitalisation.

The Legal Framework

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations 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:

- Preventing a student causing harm to themselves
- Preventing a student committing a criminal offence
- Preventing the student causing harm to another person, this may include other staff, adults, volunteers or members of the public.
- Preventing any behaviour which is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school.

The expectation is that staff will try all other behaviour management strategies before they physically intervene. The use of physical interventions must never be used as a punishment and always be a last resort.

Definition of Positive Handling at Christ the King Catholic Primary School

Positive handling is the positive application of reasonable force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself/herself or others or seriously damaging property.

General Policy Aims

Staff at Christ the King Catholic Primary School recognise that the use of reasonable force is the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety / well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. Our policy on positive handling should therefore be read in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding, Behaviour and Safe Touch policies, paying particular notice to de-escalation strategies.

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.



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 and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and should, therefore, 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. Staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

De-escalation Techniques

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 to support pupils with their behaviour by:

- holding positive views of the children and developing positive relationships with them based on mutual respect and shared boundaries
- creating an environment in which students and staff feel safe and secure
- ensuring staff have the appropriate skills to effectively support students
- supporting students, as far as is possible, to understand their behaviour and learn alternative ways of expressing themselves or achieving their desired aim through alternative methods
- involving listening and taking account of the views held by students
- distraction techniques to interrupt the behaviour
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- use of appropriate humour
- avoidance of confrontation
- steering away with open arms to avoid confrontations
- removal of other children from the area if a child is causing disruption
- maintain the dignity of all children involved and try to get them to a quiet safe area
- summon support of another adult, but don't go yourself, send a pupil
- don't stop a pupil from leaving a situation, e.g. by locking or blocking the way out
- encouraging effective and consistent support from the family unit or carers

Use of Positive Handling

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 which could be seen as a punishment.

What constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. There are some forms of physical intervention, which may

involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary. In all circumstances other methods 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
- Use the minimum force necessary
- 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
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- 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
- Attempt to reason with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in sexual 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, tummy, slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

The use of physical interventions should only be considered within the context of risk, be proportionate to that risk and appropriate given the age, understanding, gender and size of the child. Physical interventions are the last resort if all other de-escalation techniques fail.

Actions After An Incident

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. **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 a Therapeutic Plan, which may include work with the pastoral support worker, or other strategies agreed by the professionals present.

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 CPOMs, using a Positive Handling Report Form (attached as an appendix). A full account will be required, including the antecedent, the behaviour and the consequence (ABC). An appropriate member of staff or a member of the leadership team will speak with parents (either on the phone or face to face) 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. 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

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 Brighter Futures for Children under child protection procedures. It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

Further information on Teach-Teach is available at www.team-teach.co.uk.

This policy was revised in October 2025 and will be reviewed annually. It is to be read in conjunction with the Child Protections and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy and Safe Touch Policy.

APPENDIX: Positive Handling Recording Form.

Christ The King Catholic Primary School Positive Handling Report Form

Name of Pupil					
Name of staff involved					
Date			Time of incident		
Activity			Area		
Reason for intervention	Removed from lesson as causing significant disruption to learning	Risk of harm being caused to someone else	Risk of causing harm to self	Causing significant damage to property or buildings	Absconding
Antecedent Describe exactly what happened before incident, early warning signs, triggers etc.					
Describe exactly what behaviours you witnessed					
De-escalation Techniques used: Verbal advice & support ☐ Distraction ☐ CALM script ☐ CALM body language ☐ Planned Ignoring ☐ Contingent touch ☐ Time out (offered) ☐ Time out (directed) ☐ Limits set time ☐ Involve new person ☐ Flexible negotiation ☐ Appropriate humour ☐ Choices offered Step away ☐ Reminders of success ☐ Reassurance ☐ Clear firm direction ☐					
Holds, guides, escorts used	Friendly hold	Single elbow	Double elbow	Steering away	
	Hold in chairs Single elbow	Hold in chairs T wrap	T wrap	T wrap to floor	
	Clothing disengagement	Arm disengagement	Hair disengagement	Bite disengagement	



