
**Totley All Saints
Church of England Primary School**

Positive Handling Policy



*“I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full.”*

John 10:10

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Positive Handling Policy



Policy Statement:

At Totley All Saints, we aim to provide a caring environment where every child can thrive and is supported to achieve their unique & amazing potential as a child of God. As such, this means that all staff are fully committed to the safety & wellbeing of all of our pupils.

At our school, all staff are trained to look after the pupils in their care & have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. 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 intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request.

Introduction:

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' in national Guidance (DCFS document Circular 10/98 (Section 550A of the Education Act 1996) as well as the DCFS 'Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff'):

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/15434/1/guidance%20on%20the%20use%20of%20restrictive%20physical%20interventions.pdf>

A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Pupils with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Executive Headteacher / Head of School may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to:

- prevent injury to people,
- damage to property or
- the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance at Totley All Saints. It should be considered alongside the most recent LA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are **reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary**.

School Expectations:

The Leadership Team and governors take seriously its duty of care towards pupils, 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 by the management. This policy has a clear focus:

- 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.

Positive Behaviour Management:

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management & use 'Team-Teach' principles. The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourages pupils 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 bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Where this is necessary, pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

Alternatives to Physical Controls:

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

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils 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 pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

Modifications to Environment:

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils 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) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry pupil 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?
- Are the design or furniture arrangements safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage angry pupils to take themselves to a safer place?

Help Protocols:

The expectation at Totley All Saints is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff will always offer help and will always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case that person is needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

Well Chosen Words:

A well chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can

actually wind them up. Pointing out what they have done wrong can 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 Totley All Saints, we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. 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:

“If necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predictable future.”

Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – “The Control of Children in the Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act 1989” – London: H M S O

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

Proactive Physical Interventions:

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling Plan. Examples of this are where a pupil 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 risk, rather than increasing it.

Reasonable and Proportionate:

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable, proportionate & necessary. Staff 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, proportionate & necessary, 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 pupil?
- 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, e.g. pulling a pupils wrist or pulling them with clothing such as hoods or collars. 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 pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment. Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a pupil secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

Team Teach:

It is the policy of Totley All Saints that, where necessary, key staff working closely with vulnerable pupils are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of 'Team Teach'. This is to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the school Behaviour Policy. (please see: www.team-teach.co.uk for more information).

Health and Safety:

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to anyone in school, 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 too.

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

- Can we anticipate a health and safety risk related to this pupil'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?

Risk Assessment:

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils 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 pupils 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 &, preferably, when they have had 'Team Teach' training. 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 instance, the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

Getting Help:

At Totley All Saints, the following support structures are in place:

- One Page Profiles, behaviour Plans and Positive Handling Plans kept on file in each classroom to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.

- Weekly briefing sessions to update 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 pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Training / refresher courses in the Team Teach strategies and techniques for staff.

Positive Handling Plans (Appendix 1):

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans may also result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in a Pastoral Support Plan or One Page Profile.

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, proportionate & necessary, they will be supported.

The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff:

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. 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. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

Complaints:

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal complaints procedure. Pupils 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 pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the Executive Headteacher / Head of School as should any concerns regarding health and safety.

Training:

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Executive Headteacher / Head of School who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. This 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 DfE 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.

Recording (Appendix 2):

Whenever force is used the incident must be recorded using the appropriate Record of Restraint Form. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours. The forms should be given to the Executive Headteacher / Head of School who should be informed of any force used.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form 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 up to 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Executive Headteacher / Head of School will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. All forms are open to external monitoring and evaluation.

Follow Up:

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, behaviour management policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures.

APPENDIX 1

Positive Handling Plan

The best interests of the child must be top priority in all decisions & actions that affect children – Article 3
Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity & their rights - Article 28



Pupil Name:	Year Group:	Date of Production of Plan:	Date of review of Plan:
EHC / SEN Support:	Member(s) of staff involved:		
Additional information: e.g. medical info, any specific equipment required, access requirements			
Trigger Behaviours: e.g. situations, behaviours, activities leading to this plan being necessary			
Pupil Targets			
Target	Success Criteria	Review / Evaluation	

Support Strategies

Outline of support strategies which, where & when possible, should be used
BEFORE positive handling is required

Strategy	Date/Time	Strategy	Date/Time
Verbal prompts & advice		Planned positive distractions	
Positive reinforcement		Positive touch	
Tactical Ignoring		Time out offered / directed	
Negotiation / partial agreement		Choice / limits / consequences	
Details of any other strategies used: (Classroom management / peer support, etc.)			

Preferred Handling Strategies

Technique	Standing / sitting	Number of staff	Breakaway techniques

Repair & Rebuild Strategies Following an Incident

What care is to be provided? What learning opportunities exist for the child? How will the child be reintegrated back into class / school?

Evaluation

To be completed as part of the review process

	Signatures	Date
Person completing the Positive Handling Plan Please print names		
All other staff involved in the writing of the Positive Handling Plan Please print names		
SENCo: Please print name		
Parent / carer if applicable Please print name/s		

APPENDIX 2

Record of Restraint

The best interests of the child must be top priority in all decisions & actions that affect children – Article 3
Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity & their rights - Article 28



Pupil Name:	Year Group:	Date of incident:	Time of incident:
Member(s) of staff involved:	Adult witnesses to restraint:	Pupil witnesses to restraint:	
Why did the restraint take place? Risk to: <input type="checkbox"/> Self <input type="checkbox"/> Others <input type="checkbox"/> Property <input type="checkbox"/> Good Order	Outline of event leading to restraint:		
Strategies used to support pupils before restraint: <input type="checkbox"/> Humour <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal support <input type="checkbox"/> Clear directions <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation <input type="checkbox"/> Limited choices <input type="checkbox"/> Distraction <input type="checkbox"/> Diversion <input type="checkbox"/> Reassurance <input type="checkbox"/> Planned ignoring <input type="checkbox"/> Calm talking <input type="checkbox"/> Calm stance <input type="checkbox"/> Patience <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal offered <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal directed <input type="checkbox"/> Swap adult <input type="checkbox"/> Consequences reminder <input type="checkbox"/> Success reminder			
Outline of incident & of restraint (including restraint method used):			
Outcome of restraint:			
Description of any injury(ies) sustained by injured pupil and any subsequent treatment: <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Other			

<p>Medical Check</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Offered</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Accepted</p>	<p>External agencies informed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medical staff</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Parents/carers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Police</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social Care</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> LADO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	<p>Staff de-brief And training support</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Required</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Required</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Additional training required</p>
<p>Date parent/carer informed of incident:</p> <p>Time:</p>	<p>By whom informed:</p>	<p>Outline of parent/carer response:</p>
<p>Signature of staff completing report:</p> <p>Date:</p>		
<p>Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action:</p>		