



Positive Handling Policy

Knighton Church in Wales

November 2023

SignedDate (Chair of Governors)

SignedDate (Headteacher)

The Legal Framework

Positive Handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a 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 teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to a person or damage to the property of any person.
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

(Examples of possible situations are given in Appendix 1)

Definition of positive handling at Knighton Church in Wales Primary School:

Positive Handling is the application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming themselves or others or seriously damaging property.

General policy aims.

Knighton Primary School staff recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety and well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.

Presently, the likelihood of serious violent situations occurring in our school are low and all staff have received training in distraction techniques using Incredible Years and Emotion Coaching training. Our County Safeguarding Officer has also informed us that more specific positive handling training is not necessary. Our policy on positive handling should therefore be read in conjunction with our Positive Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

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 that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- To provide adequate information and support 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. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

Alternative strategies

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. When a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. the use of assertiveness skills such as:

- the broken record in which an instruction is repeated until the pupil complies
- use of a distraction to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened

- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)

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.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, although there is no absolute definition of this, as 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 and effective positive handling should be a last resort.

When positive handling becomes necessary:

DO

- o Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- o Use the minimum force necessary
- o Involve another member of staff if possible
- o Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the positive handling (this may need frequent repetition)
- o Use simple and clear language
- o Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- o Relax your positive handling in response to the pupil's compliance

DON'T

- o Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- o Attempt to reason with the pupil
- o Involve other pupils in the positive handling
- o Touch or hold the pupil in sexual areas
- o Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- o Bend fingers or pull hair
- o Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- o Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil
- o Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)

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. The adult who has positively handled a child should be given time away from the situation where possible- for example in the staffroom. A member of the leadership team should be informed verbally of any incident as soon as possible and all interventions should be recorded in the school's Record of Positive Handling Book, which is kept in a locked cupboard in the Acting Head's classroom. The recording of the incident could be completed by the adult who has restrained a child during their time away. When filling in the 'Record of Positive Handling' form, staff should endeavour to record facts and avoid making emotional comments.

All incidents should be recorded immediately. All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available. A member of the Senior Leadership Team (or Specialist Centre staff if appropriate) will contact parents/carers 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.

The senior leadership team 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/carers informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behaviour plan, which may include a Guardian Angels meeting, counselling or Team Around the Family meetings with parents/carers.

Any behaviour plan should always be discussed and agreed with the parent/carers.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

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)
- Involvement of parents/carers 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
- 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/carers, should help to avoid complaints from parents/carers. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however. Our Complaints Procedure is published on the school website or available as a hard copy from the school office.

Appendix 1

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?

Examples of situations that may require positive handling are when:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- pupils fighting
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others
- a pupil absconding from a class or trying to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)

Appendix 2

RECORD OF POSITIVE HANDLING

Date of incident: Time of incident:.....

Pupil Name:

Member(s) of staff involved:.....

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Adult witnesses to positive handling:.....

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Pupil witnesses to positive handling:.....

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Outline of event leading to positive handling:.....

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Outline of incident of positive handling (including positive handling method used)

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Outcome of positive handling

Description of any injury sustained and any subsequent treatment:.....

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Date /time parent/carer informed of incident:

By whom informed:.....

Outline of parent/carer response:.....

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Signatures of staff completing report:

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Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action:.....

Appendix 3: Record of positive handling log.

[illegible]