



## **ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

# **Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy**

### **Mission Statement**

"I called you by your name, you are mine." (Isaiah 43:1)

The mission of our school is to provide a learning environment in which all children and staff can reach their potential in an atmosphere of kindness, empathy, honesty, gratitude, courage and love.

All our work is inspired by the teachings of Christ and His Church.

Working in partnership with parents/carers, we aim to enhance and celebrate the moral, physical, social and emotional development of all children entrusted to us.

We are an inclusive community so we welcome and embrace individuals of all abilities and cultural backgrounds; teaching our children to be understanding of the world they are growing up in and learn how to live alongside, and respect a diverse range of people.

### **Equality Statement**

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil or member of staff and it helps to promote equality at St. Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils and staff with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Date reviewed: September 2025

To be reviewed: September 2026

## **Purpose of this policy**

Good professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of children in school respond positively to the behaviour management of the staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all children and staff. It is also acknowledged that in **exceptional** circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of positive handling may be required.

The purpose of this policy is to describe St. Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School's approach to the management of relatively rare situations when children present extremely challenging behaviour which may require some form of physical intervention from adults.

## **This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies and guidance:**

- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- The [DFE Guidance Use of Reasonable Force \(July 2013\)](#) has been used to inform this policy. Awaiting updated guidance.
- HM Government: [Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention: Children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties in health and social care services and special education settings](#) Published: 27 June 2019

The DfE held a consultation on proposed changes to its 'use of reasonable force' guidance, which closed in April 2025. When the new guidance is published we'll update our policy to reflect this.

## **Introduction:**

St Augustine of Canterbury is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We therefore recognise that there is a need, reflected in common law, ***to physically intervene when there is an obvious risk to the safety of its pupils, staff or property.***

The application of any form of positive handling places staff and children in a vulnerable situation. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies where possible in order to prevent the need for positive handling. **Positive handling will only be used as a last resort when all behaviour strategies have failed or when children, staff or property are at risk.**

## **School Expectations:**

In our school we create a calm environment to minimise incidents that may require any physical intervention. We de-escalate incidents when they do arise. We only use physical interventions when the risks involved of doing so are outweighed by the risks of not doing so.

## **Positive Behaviour Management:**

All staff adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to build self-esteem, and promote a safe environment for children and staff. All staff work in partnership with those who know the children to help those concerned:

- Find out why this child behaves as they do.
- Understand the factors that influence the child's behaviour
- Identify early warning signs/triggers that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing.

This approach helps to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It reduces the incidences of extreme behaviours and makes sure that the use of physical intervention is rare.

Everyone attending or working at St Augustine of Canterbury has the right to:

- A recognition of their unique identity
- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Learn and work in a safe environment
- Be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse

Parents/Carers and their children attending St Augustine of Canterbury have a right to:

- Individual consideration of children's needs by staff who have responsibility for their care and protection
- Expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies
- Be informed about the school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all children and staff working in the school
- Be informed about complaints procedure

Parents should have committed themselves, through the Home-School agreement, to work in partnership with the school to ensure that the child understands and follows the school's behaviour policy.

This policy aims to give all members of the school community clear guidance so that any physical intervention that they undertake is carried out in a way that supports the values and principles described above. In particular, it aims to describe the circumstances in which restrictive physical intervention is an appropriate response and how staff will fulfil their responsibilities in those circumstances.

### **What is physical intervention/positive handling?**

The use of force is illegal if the physical circumstances do not warrant it. The force used should always be the minimum needed to regain and ensure safety and control for everyone involved or present. This Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

- Bodily contact - where the physical presence of one or more staff is used: e.g. using Team Teach physical contact of Help Hug, Guiding Elbows, Single Elbow, Double Elbow and Figure of Four.

- Environmental -where a change is applied within the environment for example shutting a door or the use of locks or key pads to prevent access to a particular area.

### Definitions of contact

- (a) Physical contact: situations in which proper physical contact takes place between staff and pupils, eg in games/PE or to comfort pupils
- (b) Physical intervention: this may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.
- (c) Positive handling: this will involve the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to pupils, staff or property or if good order is being seriously prejudiced. All such incidents will be recorded and the head teacher will be informed of all incidences of Positive handling use.

All challenging behaviour will be addressed using the guidelines set out in the behaviour policy. Should an incident require further intervention to be needed then staff will use reasonable physical intervention using the minimum degree of contact to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property. Staff must judge whether or not physical intervention would be reasonable and appropriate:

### In what circumstances can physical intervention be used?

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- prevent a pupil causing, or being at risk of causing, injury or damage to themselves or others, whether by accident, rough behaviour or by misuse of materials or objects.
- prevent a pupil committing a criminal offence
- prevent a pupil causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person (including the pupil themselves);
- prevent pupils engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

The decision to use physical intervention will be taken in the context of the level of risk presented by the behaviour, the seriousness of the incident and the relative risks of the use of physical intervention compared with any available alternative. The use of physical intervention will take into account the characteristics of the pupil, including their age, gender, SEN, physical needs or disability, developmental level or cultural issues.

## Team Teach

Team Teach is an accredited, award-winning provider of positive behaviour management training, equipping individuals and teams in a variety of settings to deal with challenging situations and behaviours in ways that lead to desirable outcomes and positive relationships at work or in daily life.

Staff have received training in 'Team Teach'. Team Teach advocates that services include in their policy a statement that reflects the working realities and likely consequences when individuals are involved in an incident involving force.

*"Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent "side-effect" of ensuring that the service user remains safe."*

- George Matthews - Founder

## Training

Members of staff have been trained on Positive Handling following the Team Teach program. **No member of staff will undertake positive handling without appropriate training.** Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible.

The objectives of Team Teach have been adopted by St Augustine of Canterbury, namely:

- To promote the *least intrusive positive handling strategy* and a *continuum of gradual and graded techniques*, with an *emphasis and preference for the use of verbal, non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before positive handling strategies are utilised*.
- To enable services to develop acceptable and authorised responses to disruptive, disturbing, angry and aggressive behaviours in a manner that maintains positive relationships and provides safety for all, by training in Team-Teach
- *To reduce the number of serious incidents involving physical contacts and to emphasise the importance of exhausting behaviour strategies in the first instance.*

St Augustine of Canterbury are committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety will deal professionally with all incidents involving challenging behaviour.

## Steps to be taken before using physical intervention where possible:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using distraction, negotiating and reasoning.
- Give clear directions for the pupil to stop
- Remind the pupil about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove other pupils or take the vulnerable pupil to a safe place.

- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

### Restraint

At St. Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. We expect staff to risk assess and choose the safest alternative. This also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces rather than increases risk. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming themselves or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property.
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing this.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint. These staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Physical restraint should never be used to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property.
- The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity.

In addition, whilst or before intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. 'I am doing this to keep you safe.'

### Responding to unforeseen emergencies

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations which staff have to think on their feet. An unforeseen event may require an emergency response. After that event, staff have a duty to plan ahead and prepare a new risk assessment.

### Risk Assessment

Risk assessments are required for pupils who exhibit **extreme** behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong.

When considering a pupil's behaviour, staff will 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?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?



## **Positive Handling Plan**

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan (see appendix 2). 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 included along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should result from multiprofessional collaboration and be included in a pastoral support or SEND support.

## **Recording**

Where positive handling has been used, a record of the incident will be kept and the head teacher informed see appendix 3. All recording needs to be completed within 24 hours of the incident and needs to include the following:

- Name of pupil
- Date, time and place of incident
- A brief description of the incident and actions taken
- Attempts made to calm the situation
- Names of people who witnessed the situation
- Any damage/harm to persons or property
- Name of person informing parents
- After investigation a summary of actions taken

Parents/Carers will be informed when positive handling has been used.

## **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 child. After incidents have subsided, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries. Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require other than basic first aid. All injuries should be recorded in accordance with school procedures.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural support plan, or other strategies agreed in liaison with the school SENCo and/or other external behavioural support agencies.

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

## **Post Incident Review**

Focus on actions and behaviours:

- Who did what, when, why and how?
- What was the outcome?
- What does it tell us about what we already know about the young person?
- What have we learnt and what or how does this inform our practice?

### **Policy Review and Evaluation**

This policy has been developed in liaison with school staff and governors. It will be reviewed annually, or when relevant national or local guidance indicates additional need.



## Appendix 1

### Positive Handling Plan

Name of child	Date of birth
Year group	
Date of plan started	Date plan discontinued
<u>Effective strategies previously used</u>	
<u>Strategies not recommended</u>	
<u>Physical techniques used effectively</u>	
<u>Physical techniques used which proved problematic or ineffective</u>	

Date	Anticipated risk	Strategy to use	Effectiveness

## Appendix 2

### St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

#### Details of pupil or pupils on whom physical intervention was used

Name of child:	
Date of birth:	
Class:	
Date, time and location of incident	
Details of pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time.	
Details of de-escalation used and warnings given.	
The reason that the use of force was necessary.	
Details of the physical intervention: type, degree of force used and duration.	

<p>Injuries, damage and/or distress sustained (if any), and any action taken as a result.</p> <p>Was anyone injured? Yes/ No</p>	
<p>If yes, was this recorded in the accident book? Yes/ No</p>	
<p>Follow up, including postincident support and any sanction action against pupil.</p>	
<p>Details of other pupils involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of the pupils involved were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reason.</p>	
<p>Details of other staff (including their school role) involved (directly or as witnesses).</p>	
<p>Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies.</p>	
<p>Time and date parents informed.</p>	

Details of any follow-up meetings with the child, their parents or external agencies.	
Name of Staff member:	Signed:
Headteacher:	Signed: