St Paul's
C of E Primary School

A place to belong

Positive Handling Policy

Headteacher:	**Christie Clarke**
Member of Staff Responsible:	**Emma Hartley**
Reviewing Committee:	**FGB**
Effective Date of Use	**4 November 2025**
Date of Review:	**Autumn 2026**
Statutory / Non Statutory:	**Statutory**

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Full Governing Board in Autumn 2024. It is effective from this date and remains in force until the next scheduled full annual review by the Full Governing Body on the 4th November 2025. Where updates are required to reflect changes in statutory guidance or operational procedures (typically effective from 01 September), these will be incorporated through version-controlled amendments. All such updates will be clearly documented and communicated to staff.

Sept 2022

St Paul's C of E Primary School

A Place to Belong

Our Christian Vision

Our school is a family where everyone feels safe, happy and valued, and is supported to achieve their full potential.

We will develop compassionate and caring individuals who depend on one another, are highly motivated, and have a life-long love of learning in preparation for the future.

Our Core Values

All that we do is underpinned by the core Christian values of *Family (Koinonia), Compassion, Perseverance and Forgiveness*

"Though we are many, we form one body, all joined together as members of the whole. We each have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. We must use them wisely."

Romans 12:5-8

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Statement of Intent

St Paul's C of E Primary School believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, managing violence through control and restraint may be necessary.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use positive handling, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to manage conflict when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that actions such as positive handling and reasonable force are used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

St Paul's C of E Primary School

It is important to note that positive handling is rarely used in school and only trained members of staff can positively handle children and only then in an emergency. Positive handling will be discussed with parents if we feel this may need to be used and staff will usually be working with children on a close basis, if not 1:1, to support the child through any means possible for positive handling not to be used.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Children Act 1989
- The Equality Act 2010

1.2. This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force in schools'
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'

1.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Behavioural Policy

1. Roles and Responsibilities

1.4. The governing board is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Evaluating CPOMS to analyse how and when positive handling is used and identify any trends.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

1.5. The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring relevant members of staff use reasonable force in accordance with this policy.
- Ensuring relevant members of staff receive the appropriate training to use reasonable force.
- Ensuring relevant members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling.
- Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the Complaints Policy.
- Maintaining the CPOMS and sharing this information with the governing board regularly for it to be evaluated.
- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes the Positive Handling Report Form.

- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the governing board, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

1.6. The SENCO is responsible for:

- Providing training to members of staff on how to handle pupils with SEND where appropriate.
- Ensuring staff with training understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force.
- Ensuring that staff with training understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions.
- Developing individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable pupils and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these.
- Ensuring that staff with training understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.

2. What is positive handling?

1.7. For the purpose of this policy, 'positive handling' is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting pupils and limiting damage to property.

1.8. Legal framework and national guidance often refers to the 'use of force' – this policy uses the term 'positive handling' whenever possible.

1.9. Positive handling is used in the school to:

- Restrain a pupil who has lost emotional self-control until the situation is diffused.
- Limit the amount of harm that the pupil involved can do to their self or others.
- Demonstrate to pupils that they are within a safe environment in which adults can contain pupils' anger and other erratic emotions.
- Protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.

1.10. Positive handling will be limited to emergency situations and used only as a measure of last resort.

1.11. Where positive handling is required, the school will abide to the following guidance:

- Initial intervention will always be without force.
- Any physical intervention will follow other appropriate actions.
- Staff will take a calm and measured approach in all situations.

1.12. Failure to positively handle a pupil who subsequently gets injured, or injures another pupil, could lead to an accusation of negligence.

1.13. Positive handling will never be invasive, humiliating, flirtatious in nature or take a form which could be seen as punishment.

1.14. Positive handling will 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.

3. What is reasonable force?

1.15. There is no statutory definition of reasonable force; it will always depend on the circumstance of the case.

1.16. The use of reasonable force is only acceptable to control pupils or restrain them.

1.17. 'Control' refers to either passive physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm.

1.18. 'Restraint' refers to physically bringing a pupil under control, such as holding them back. This is typically used in more extreme circumstances, such as to separate two pupils fighting.

1.19. The degree of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. age.

1.20. Staff members will always use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances of the incidents.

1.21. All incidents that involve the use of reasonable force will be reported to the headteacher, recorded in writing and communicated to the pupil's parents.

1.22. The school is able to use reasonable force in situations when:

- Disruptive children must be removed from the classroom and have previously refused to leave.
- Members of staff need to control disruptive pupils on school trips, or similar.
- Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom when doing so would lead to a risk to their safety.
- A pupil is attacking a member of staff or another pupil.
- A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff must intervene to prevent this.

1.23. Physical intervention will never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management in accordance with the school's Behavioural Policy.

4. Use of positive handling and reasonable force

1.24. All members of staff with training will be permitted to use positive handling where they believe it to be appropriate, as long as all necessary precautions and measures beforehand have been are taken.

1.25. Only members of staff with training can positively handle children and the decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances.

1.26. Staff will always calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it was necessary in a non-threatening manner.

1.27. Staff will never give the impression that they are acting out of anger or are punishing the child.

1.28. All staff members will develop strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and situations, which they will use to diffuse and calm a situation.

1.29. In non-urgent situations, staff will always try and deal with a situation through other strategies before using force and positive handling is only used if absolutely necessary.

1.30. Staff members will always avoid acting in a way that could cause injury; however, dependant on the circumstances, this may not always be possible.

1.31. Where a member of staff believes that they are at risk, such as where an injury is likely to occur, they will not intervene in an incident without help and assistance of another staff member.

- Emergency intervention is necessary when there is a high risk of pupils being injured or property being damaged.
- If emergency intervention is required, a member of staff will use other methods of defusing the situation, without physically intervening, until assistance arrives.

1.32. Following the event, the pupil involved may be subject to separate disciplinary procedures, in which strategies should be formed to help avoid reoccurrence of such incidents.

1.33. Where necessary, external agencies, such as the LA or the police if a crime has been committed, will be informed of the incident.

5. SEND

1.34. The school will have due consideration to the risks posed by the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND in terms of positive handling.

1.35. The SENCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1.36. The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy at all times.

1.37. To reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour that can lead to the use reasonable force, the SENCO will establish individual behaviour plans for pupils with SEND.

1.38. The SENCO will liaise with the DSL/Headteacher, in terms of using positive handling on pupils with SEND, and establish how training may need to be amended.

6. Reporting incidents

1.39. A detailed written report will be kept of any incidents where force is used.

1.40. Immediately following an incident, the member(s) of staff involved will verbally report the incident to the headteacher and provide a comprehensive written record of the situation as soon as possible, using CPOMS.

1.41. The written report of the incident must be thorough, including as much detail as possible as to what had happened before, during and after the incident, and describing any injuries incurred due to the event.

1.42. As a staff team, we will always try and reflect on the behaviour that has led to positive handling and learn from the incidents i.e. any triggers or support that could have been put in place prior.

1.43. The headteacher will inform parents of any positive handling and make the decision as to whether it is appropriate to inform the pupil's parents of the details of an incident in writing. If it is appropriate in writing, the following will be adhered to:

- Parents will be informed in writing and a copy of this report will be given to the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.
- The report will inform parents of their right to complain about the use of positive handling and reasonable force.

1.44. If a member of staff witnesses or suspects the use of positive handling or reasonable force, where another member of staff is actively involved in physical intervention, they will report this to the headteacher immediately.

1.45. Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school's Allegations Against Staff Policy.

1.46. The headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

7. Complaints

1.47. All members of staff will be made fully aware of the consequences and legal retributions that can occur following the incorrect use of positive handling and force.

1.48. All complaints regarding the use of positive handling or force will be investigated in a thorough and speedy manner.

1.49. The person making the complaint is responsible to prove that their allegations are true, and therefore, it is not for the member of staff to prove that their actions were made reasonably.

1.50. In extreme circumstances, parents may take civil action or pursue a criminal prosecution.

1.51. In the case where a member of staff has acted within the law, this will provide a defence to any civil or criminal prosecution.

1.52. Members of staff accused of using excessive force will not be automatically suspended as a response to the allegations. The following procedure will be adhered to:

- Careful consideration will be given to whether the case warrants a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved.
- The governing board will always take into account whether a staff member has acted within the law when considering whether or not to take disciplinary action against a staff member involved in an incident.
- Where a member of staff is suspended, the school will ensure that the staff member has access to a named contact that can provide support and guidance.
- The school will provide pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation.

8. Staff training

1.53. The DSL will plan for safeguarding training for all members of staff, which if appropriate will focus on the most effective positive handling strategies and use of reasonable force techniques.

1.54. All staff will be regularly reminded of the positive handling techniques employed by the school, and will communicate these to the pupils they are in contact with.

1.55. Only techniques and strategies that have been previously discussed with the headteacher and DSL, and have been safely demonstrated, will be used.

1.56. Staff will be made aware of subsequent risks of their actions and fully understand when it is appropriate and necessary to use such actions.

9. Monitoring and review

1.57. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher/DSL and governing board, who will consider any necessary changes and communicate the findings of the review to all members of staff.

1.58. The headteacher will review records of the use of positive handling and reasonable force on a termly basis, to analyse the frequency of occurrence and determine what further measures could be taken to prevent these situations from reoccurring.

Positive Handling Report Form to upload to CPOMS

We believe that positive handling and reasonable force should only be used when absolutely necessary. With this in mind, this form has been created to ensure that all incidents of this type are recorded. Incidents must also be documented in the Positive Handling Log.

Name of staff member:	
Name of pupil:	
Date:	
Time:	
Location:	
Name(s) of staff member(s) who witnessed the incident:	
Informed parties (parents, social workers, police etc.):	
Circumstances prior to the incident:	
Details of the incident:	
Details of any negative impact on other pupils:	

Reason(s) for positive handling (please tick):	
Danger to self	☐
Danger to others	☐
Significant damage to property	☐

Details of the intervention:

Any disciplinary additional action taken:

Injuries (if any) to staff members, the pupil concerned or other pupils:

Damage (if any) to property:

Recommendation(s) to avoid future incidents:

Headteacher's signature:	**Date:**
Signature of staff member concerned:	**Date:**