

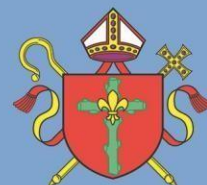


# OUR LADY OF LOURDES

CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

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## Positive Handling Policy February 2025 St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy



## Our Lady of Lourdes Mission Statement:

We are a partnership of Catholic schools.

Our aim is to provide the very best Catholic education for all in our community and so improve life chances through spiritual, academic and social development.

*By placing the person and teachings of Jesus Christ at the centre of all that we do, we will:*

- Follow the example of Our Lady of Lourdes by nurturing everyone in a spirit of compassion, service and healing
- Work together so that we can all achieve our full potential, deepen our faith and realise our God-given talents
- Make the world a better place, especially for the most vulnerable in our society, by doing ***'little things with greatlove'*** St Thérèse of Lisieux

***Joshua 1:9-10 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."***

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## 1. DfE Advice

Aspects appropriate to the use of positive handling within the DfE 'Use of reasonable force'<sup>1</sup> July 2013 publication states schools can use reasonable force to:

- 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.

## 2. What is reasonable Force?

Within the DfE 'Use of reasonable force' July 2013 publication, the term 'reasonable force' covers:

- The broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable' in the circumstances means using no more force than is needed.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

## 3. Definition of Positive Handling

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

## 4. General Policy Aims

Staff at St Mary's Academy recognise that the use of positive handling/reasonable force is the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety and well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. Our policy on positive handling should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Child Protection policies.

## 5. 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 for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes positive handling/reasonable force and to use this only as a last resort to protect pupils and adults within the school community.

## 6. 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 themselves 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

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<sup>1</sup> [DfE advice template](#)

appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the certain 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 wellbeing.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another child, in certain circumstances, may 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.

## 7. Alternative Strategies

At St Mary's Academy we are firmly committed to creating a calm and safe environment which minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of positive handling. The school behaviour system, PSHE and RE curriculum and our school ethos underpins and promotes the human dignity of the individual underpinning how adults manage situations where a pupil may become dysregulated. We will only use positive handling as a last resort and strongly believe in de-escalating any incidents as they arise to prevent them from reaching a crisis point.

Staff are skilled in promoting and rewarding positive behaviour and will utilise various appropriate techniques to support pupils in school. Staff will only use positive handling when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved by not using positive handling.

## 8. Prevention and use of de-escalation strategies

It is recognised that extreme behaviours such as those requiring positive handling can indicate communication of an unmet need from the child. We recognise that there may also be safeguarding, trauma, medical or special educational needs which may lead to children behaving in manners which might require positive handling.

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive or dysregulated way that may require the use of positive handling, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Preventative strategies: training on de-escalation strategies, understanding specific special educational needs, development of risk assessments around the pupil.
- Management of the pupil (e.g. identification of need, strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds, as directed through training, 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 understand pupils'/students' needs and 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.

Guidance outlined in this plan will be followed along with liaison with external agencies to ensure that the best support for the pupil/student is implemented.

## 9. Deciding Whether to Use Positive Handling

Under the Education Act 2006<sup>2</sup>, members of staff are empowered to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from or stop them continuing:

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<sup>2</sup> [Education and Inspections Act 2006 - Explanatory Notes](#)

- committing any offence;
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or,
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

All members of staff will make decisions about when, how and why to use reasonable force.

To help staff in making decisions about using reasonable force the following considerations may be useful:

- whether the consequences of not intervening would have seriously endangered the wellbeing of a person;
- whether the consequences of not intervening would have caused serious and significant damage to property;
- whether the chance of achieving the desired outcome in a nonphysical way was low;
- the age, size, gender, developmental maturity of the persons involved.

Staff are also expected to remember that positive handling is only one option and for behaviours involving extreme levels of risk it may be more appropriate to gain support from other agencies, including the police.

Staff will be kept informed and have a duty to inform others about the plans around specific pupils who can present risks to themselves and others. This may include information about Special Educational Needs, personal circumstance and temporary upset.

## 10. 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. A calm approach is needed, and the adult should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration or to punish the pupil. Intervention should be proportionate to risk and for the minimum amount of time required to establish safety.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective positive handling should be a last resort.

Before intervening physically, the teacher or member of authorised staff, (See Appendix 1) should wherever practicable, tell the pupil to stop and what will happen if he/she does not. The teacher or adult should continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restrain will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

## 11. Using Reasonable Force

When using reasonable force, members of staff should only use the minimum amount of force required in achieving the required outcome.

Staff should, where possible, avoid any type of intervention that is likely to injure a pupil, unless in the most extreme circumstance where there was no viable alternative and pupils or staff are in danger without this. Staff should also avoid using force unless or until another member of staff is present to support, observe or call for assistance, unless there is an emergency situation.

Ideally, prior to intervening physically, staff will have been trained in Physical Intervention and Coping with Risky Behaviours (formerly MAPA), Team Teach or another accredited form of training and follow the guidance issued. Only in emergency situations should staff intervene physically who have not been trained.

## 12. 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 the development of a behavioural provision map, which may involve external agency support or other strategies agreed by the SENCO and parents/carers.

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. (See Appendix 2) All sections of this report should be completed. The report should be uploaded to CPOMS.

A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, 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.

It is recognised that the need to use positive handling is distressing for both the pupil concerned and staff involved. Following the use of positive handling, staff and pupils will be supported and the immediate physical and well-being needs of all parties will be met. Staff will work to ensure that positive relationships are maintained.

## 13. Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a pupil/student is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of positive handling, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises through the development of a personal risk assessment. Such planning will address:

- Preventative strategies: use of de-escalation strategies, identifying potential triggers for dysregulation, understanding specific special educational needs
- 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.

**Risk assessments for individuals will be shared with parents/carers and all relevant adults involved in working directly with the pupil/student.**

## 14. Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should prevent the need complaints from parents. However, it is unlikely to prevent all complaints and a dispute about the use of positive handling by a member of staff might lead to an investigation under the complaints policy and procedures. The complaints policy is available to all staff, pupils, parents and governors on the school website and upon request from the school.

## 15. Monitoring and Evaluation

We will review this policy on a 3-yearly basis

## Appendix 1: Named Staff.

**Authorised, trained (e.g. CRB, Team Teach, Positive Handling or other accredited training) staff names here.**

<b>Staff name:</b>	<b>Training received:</b>	<b>Date of training:</b>



## Appendix 2: Record of the use of Positive Handling.

### Record of the use of Positive Handling:

Date of Incident:

Time of Incident:

Place of incident:

Pupil Name:

DOB:

Member(s) of staff involved:

Adult witnesses to positive handling:

Pupil witnesses to positive handling:

Outline of events leading to positive handling:

Outline of de-escalation strategies implemented prior to positive handling:

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

Outcome of positive handling:

Description of any injury sustained and any subsequent treatment:

Date/time parent/carer informed of incident:

Informed by whom:

Outline of parent/carer response:

Signatures of staff completing report:

Name:..... Signed:.....

Name:..... Signed:.....

Name:..... Signed:.....

Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action: