



St Thomas More VC Academy  
**Positive Handling Policy**



**ST THOMAS  
MORE**  
VC ACADEMY

**Date policy produced:** May 2021  
**Produced by:** St Cuthbert's RC Academy Trust  
**Date policy reviewed:** May 2023

Other related academy policies that support this Positive Handling policy include:- Anti-bullying, Behaviour, Child Protection, Complaints, Educational Visits, First Aid, Health & Safety, Intimate Care, Special Educational Needs & Disability, Staff Code of Conduct, Supporting Children with Medical Needs & Whistle Blowing

## St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust

At St Thomas More VC Academy we do not discriminate against any child or adult on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We embrace the individuality of all our community members and comply fully with the Equality Act 2010.

### **Aims**

This policy has been written to support all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils who may need physical intervention. Staff at St Thomas More VC Academy recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. St Thomas More VC Academy follows the non-statutory guidance; Use of reasonable force; Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013.

### **Objectives**

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our schools. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline by staff, which ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils. It is acknowledged however, that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required. Our Trust understands that physical interventions are only a small part of the whole approach to behaviour management.

### **Minimising the need to use force**

As a school, we are committed to creating a calm and safe environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force.

The school will:

- Create and maintain a calm, orderly and supportive school environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require force arising
- Develop effective relationships between staff and pupils
- Teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings
- De-escalate incidents if they do arise
- Only use force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risk involved in not using force

### **Staff authorised to use Positive Handling/Physical Intervention**

All members of school staff have a duty of care and legal power to use reasonable force.

- This power applies to any member of staff at the school.
- It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit. (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006)

The Headteacher will make every effort to ensure that staff:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- are provided with appropriate specialist training to deal with difficult situations
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However, everyone has the right to defend themselves against attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so. Similarly, in an emergency situation, for example if a pupil was at immediate risk of serious injury or at the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff would be entitled to intervene.

### **Pupils with additional needs/vulnerabilities**

When managing situations involving pupils with SEN and disabilities, medical conditions or mental health problems, the staff must recognise these additional vulnerabilities and consider carefully any associated risks when using physical interventions.

All staff will be kept informed and advised how to deal with particular pupils who present particular risk to themselves or others. If it is deemed there is a likelihood that force will need to be used a positive handling plan (PHP) will be created for the individual pupil. Reasonable adjustments will be made for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). PHPs will be reviewed following any use of physical intervention and necessary alternations made, if required.

### **Using Positive Handling**

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use positive handling/physical interventions and each case must be judged on its circumstance.

Positive Handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. Positive Handling is a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment and deployment of staff. It also involves personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion, and de-escalation. Risk assessments identifies positive prevention strategies and how pupils may need to be supported in a crisis.

#### Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils e.g. in the care of pupils and in order to support their access to a broad and balanced curriculum. It would be reasonable that young children do require opportunities for close contact, as long as this is within public view, sensitively carried out and age appropriate.

#### Positive Handling

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the arm or shoulder where the pupil is compliant. This technique can help deflect from a potentially volatile situation into a less confrontational situation i.e it may be possible to 'defuse' a situation by a timely intervention.

#### Physical Intervention

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. Force must not be used to prevent trivial misbehaviour. Circumstances when Physical Intervention may be necessary included:

- If a pupil is at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- To remove disruptive pupil 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 were 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.

Before using any positive handling staff should:

- Tell the pupil to stop misbehaving
- Communicate in a calm and measured manner
- Never act out of anger or frustration or to punish a pupil
- Make it clear to the pupil that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

**Staff should always avoid touching or restraining a pupil in a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct.**

**Staff are advised that, as far as possible, they should not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe or call for assistance.**

### **Injuries to staff or pupil**

Whilst the physical techniques are intended to reduce risk, there is always a possibility that injuries may occur to either the child or adult. Techniques deployed seek to avoid injuries to the child, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of the technique, but a regrettable infrequent side effect of ensuring that the child remains safe.

Any injuries sustained by either party will be reported and recorded on the Physical Intervention record and school Accident/incident log.

### **Health and Safety**

Under the Health and Safety Act 1974, employees have a responsibility to report any circumstances which give rise to an increased risk to their Health & Safety. Staff who have, or acquire, permanent or temporary medical conditions which may impact on their ability to carry out positive handling must report them to their line manager, SENCo or Headteacher, as there may be an impact on their own safety, or the safety of the pupil.

### **Staff Training**

Reminders of the behaviour policy will be given regularly through staff meetings and briefings. Staff will be offered the opportunity to take part in TEAM TEACH training. If a pupil is displaying challenging behaviour and it is thought they may need physical intervention a positive handling plan will be written, discussed and disseminated to any member of staff who will be supporting the pupil.

### **Recording incidents**

Any incident of positive handling/physical intervention **must** be recorded on the Positive Handling Record Form in Appendix 2 by the main adult/s involved. This completed incident form should then be passed to a senior member of staff responsible for recording and monitoring who, after giving the incident a log number, will upload the incident on to CPOMS. A record of the log number and child's name will be kept securely.

If a Positive Handling Plan (PHP) is in place, it is imperative that the Plan is reviewed, to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Staff monitoring the use of Positive Handling must also examine that the necessary diversion, distraction and de-escalation strategies have been used.

### **Reporting incidents**

After any incident in which force has been used parents should be informed as soon as possible. The Headteacher should also be informed.

### **Post – incident support**

Physical Intervention can be distressing for both staff and pupils it is important both staff and children are given the time and support needed to help them regain their composure.

- The school will decide and involve as appropriate any multi-agency partner e.g. early help, social care, CAMHS.
- Wherever possible, the views of the child, post incident, must be sought understood and recorded.
- Opportunities to repair relationships between staff and pupils affected by the incident will be offered
- In some cases the incident may lead to the fixed term or permanent exclusion of the pupil in line with the behaviour policy.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring of incidents will take place on a regular basis help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures. Senior Leaders will examine all reported incident to review that the intervention was reasonable, proportionate and necessary, plus consider alternative strategies to help reduce or ceased the need for physical management.

### **Physical Contact with pupils in other circumstance**

There may be occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary e.g., sports coaching or giving first aid. Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is being congratulated or praised, or where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. Teachers must use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support. For some pupils touching is particularly unwelcome. Staff must bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentional physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

### **Powers to search pupils without consent**

In addition to general power to use reasonable force, the Headteacher and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following 'prohibited items':

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- pornographic images
- any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used
  - i) to commit an offence,
  - ii) to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil)
- Principal and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.

**School staff can confiscate any prohibited items found as a result of a search.**

The Headteacher must ensure the person carrying out the search is of the same sex as the pupil, and the search must be carried out in the presence of another adult also of the same sex as the pupil. Pupils cannot be required to remove any clothing other than outer garments. If pupil's possessions are searched this must also be done in the presence of another adult. The person carrying out the search is able to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstance for exercising that power.

Furthermore, the Education Act 2011 allows staff to lawfully search electronic devices, without consent or parental permission, if there is a suspicion that the pupil has a device prohibited by school rules, or the staff member has good reason to suspect the device may be used to:

- cause harm,
- disrupt teaching,
- break school rules,
- commit an offence,
- cause personal injury, or
- damage property.

### **Complaints or allegations**

Complaints will be dealt with under the school's complaints procedures however, if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the school will follow the procedures outlined in the child protection policy, and advice sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer, as per Keeping Children Safe in Education – Part 4.

### **COVID 19**

Normal school rules and policies apply with regards to behaviour protocols and supporting pupil in accessing learning. We acknowledge that there may be pupils who are struggling to self-regulate their behaviour due to stress or anxiety caused by the pandemic, which could lead to them displaying behaviours previously not seen. In these circumstances, the SENCo will modify the risk assessments to ensure any new triggers are recorded, plus appropriate actions to be taken to best protect the child and also the member of staff/s who will be supporting them.

If a child's behaviour is placing themselves or others at risk of harm, staff must consider the safest way to de-escalate the situation. This could include:

- Encouraging the child to leave the classroom with a member of staff and be taken to a calm/safe area,
- Safely removing other children from the classroom to a designed area,
- Usage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), especially if the child is extremely distressed and physical contact is required.

Following any incident, where physical intervention has been used, the school should follow the normal procedures, as per the positive handling policy, plus review the risk assessment.

**NON-PHYSICAL CRISES INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES**

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Appear calm and relaxed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Appear afraid and unsure of yourself,</li> <li>◆ Bossy or arrogant</li> <li>◆ Assume an "I don't give a damn about you" attitude</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Keep the pitch and volume of your voice down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Raise your voice</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Feel comfortable with the fact you are in control</li> <li>◆ Project a calm assured feeling that you will see the situation through to a peaceful end no matter what happens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Appear to expect an attack</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Talk with the pupil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Give demands</li> <li>◆ Make demands</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Be matter of fact if the pupil becomes agitated</li> <li>◆ Be sensitive and flexible</li> <li>◆ Be flexible but consistent</li> <li>◆ Be aware of body language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Make threats</li> <li>◆ Maintain continuous eye contact</li> <li>◆ Gesticulate</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Stay close to the pupil and attend to him/her</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Turn your back or leave</li> <li>◆ Invade their personal space</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Be patient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Display emotion</li> <li>◆ Argue</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Acknowledge his/her feelings</li> <li>◆ Leave the pupil an avenue of escape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Corner the pupil physically or psychologically</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Where possible, remain seated as long as the pupil does;</li> <li>◆ Avoid crowding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Get up and move towards the pupil</li> </ul>

**USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN PUPILS  
INCIDENT RECORD**

Staff member(s) involved in the incident:

Reference Number
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<b><u>Details of the pupil or pupils on whom force was used by a member of staff:</u></b>	
Name:	Year Group:
Date of the incident:	Time of the incident:
Location:	
<b><u>Details of witnesses:</u></b>	
Name:	(Staff / Student)
Name:	(Staff / Student)
<b><u>Reason for intervention:</u></b>	
Immediate danger or injury to self <input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid damage to property <input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal threats <input type="checkbox"/>	Immediate danger or injury to others <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting <input type="checkbox"/>
Assault in peer <input type="checkbox"/>	Assault on staff <input type="checkbox"/> Disruption of other students <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Detail any de-escalation techniques used:</u></b>	
Verbal advice & support <input type="checkbox"/>	Calm talking <input type="checkbox"/> Reassurance <input type="checkbox"/>
Removal from the area <input type="checkbox"/>	Non-threatening body language <input type="checkbox"/>
Humour <input type="checkbox"/>	Step away <input type="checkbox"/> Distraction <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Description of the incident:</u></b>	
<b><u>Details of the physical intervention used:</u></b>	
<b><u>Duration of the physical intervention:</u></b>	
<b><u>Detail any injury suffered by the member(s) of staff or student.</u></b>	
Student:	First aid required: Yes / No
Staff:	First aid required Yes / No



<b>Damage to property?</b> If yes, please provide details: <b>Yes / No</b>	
<b>Detail any follow up</b> - including post incident support, disciplinary action required against the student/s, amendments required to the PHP:	
Debrief undertaken with the student(s): <b>Yes</b> <b>No</b>	
Pupil's response to the incident:	
Date & time parents/carers informed of the incident:	
Outline of parents/carers response:	
If necessary, details shared with external agencies (social worker, police, Education Officer)	
Has any complaint/allegation been made against the member of staff? <b>NB</b> details should not be recorded here:	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Report complied by:	Report countersigned by the Head:
Name:	Name:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:
Time:	Time:

**IMPORTANT: - THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED THE SAME DAY**

**Incident Reporting – Bound Book**

Please ensure that when you are completing incident forms you allocate yourself the next sequential incident number and complete all the required information in the Physical Intervention Bound Book

- Reference number
- Date
- Pupil involved
- Reporting staff
- Signature

St Thomas More VC Academy

POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN

Name:

DOB:

**ENVIRONMENTS AND TRIGGERS**

Describe the situations that have led to a dangerous incident in the past.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
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**RISK**

Circle (or make **bold**) the level of potential risk.

Low

Medium

High

Circle (or make **bold**) and/or describe precisely what might happen

Slap

Punch

Bite

Pinch

Spit

Kick

Hair grab

Neck grab

Clothing grab

Body holds

Arm grab

Weapons /  
Missiles

<p>e.g. Violent tantrums Starts fights with other children Punches and kicks other children Grabs children around the neck and won't let go Very powerful when in a temper Throws/pushes furniture</p>
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**PREVENTION**

Describe any changes to routines, personnel or environment that might reduce the risk of this happening.

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**DIVERSION AND DISTRACTIONS**

Describe interests, words, objects etc. that may divert attention from an escalating crisis.

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## Useful Links

DfE: Behaviour & Discipline in Schools. Advice for Headteachers and school staff – Updated January 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>

DfE: Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions. Statutory guidance – December 2015

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/306952/Statutory\\_guidance\\_on\\_supporting\\_pupils\\_at\\_school\\_with\\_medical\\_conditions.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/306952/Statutory_guidance_on_supporting_pupils_at_school_with_medical_conditions.pdf)

DfE Use of reasonable force Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/444051/Use\\_of\\_reasonable\\_force\\_advice\\_Reviewed\\_July\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf)

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children & young people in education settings – May 2019

<https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Guidance-for-Safer-Working-Practices-2015-final.pdf>

Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders (2002)

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/g/guidance%20on%20the%20use%20of%20restrictive%20physical%20interventions.pdf>

DfE Screening, searching and confiscation – advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies. Updated Sept 2016

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/554415/searching\\_screening\\_confiscation\\_advice\\_Sept\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/554415/searching_screening_confiscation_advice_Sept_2016.pdf)

Keeping Children Safe in Education; Part 4 Allegations of Abuse made against teachers and other staff.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550511/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf)