



# Harrietsham Church of England Primary School

## Positive Handling Policy

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## Contents

School Context: .....	3
Introduction: .....	4
Objectives: .....	4
The Legal Framework:.....	5
Definition of Positive Handling: .....	5
Safeguarding: .....	5
Staff Authorisation: .....	6
Situations when Positive Handling MAY be used: .....	6
Situations when Positive Handling MAY NOT be used: .....	6
Deciding whether to use Positive Handling: .....	6
Using Positive Handling: .....	7
Types of Positive Handling:.....	7
Passive Positive Handling:.....	7
Active Positive Handling: .....	7
Actions after an Incident: .....	8
Recording incidents: .....	8
Individual Needs (SEND and Equality): .....	9
Pastoral Support Plans and Risk Assessments: .....	9
Complaints: .....	9
Equal Opportunities: .....	9
Monitoring, Review and Governance: .....	9

## School Context:

### Harrietsham CEP Vision Statement

*We are a warm, welcoming, and inclusive school rooted in our rural community. Like the mustard seed we grew from tiny beginnings and our branches are now spread wide –providing support and taking our values beyond the school gates. All those in our community feel safe and nurtured - able to flourish and grow academically, spiritually, emotionally and physically to achieve their full God-given potential.*

### **“Nurtured we flourish”**

We are a nurturing school. As such we believe in, and follow, **The Six Principles of Nurture** in all of our practice.

1. Children’s learning is understood developmentally.
2. The classroom offers a safe base.
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.
4. Language is a vital means of communication.
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. The importance of transition in children’s lives.

### **Our Values**

The roots of our vision are in the parable of the Mustard Seed.

*‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches’.*  
**Matthew 13 31-32**

In order to grow and reach our potential, everything that we do in school is driven by our vision and underpinned by our core Christian values of:

### **Love, Fellowship and Forgiveness**

## Introduction:

All the experiences that we offer our pupils, and the way our community behaves towards each other, are shaped by our school's vision and values. This policy should be read alongside our Behaviour Policy. The school's vision and values have shaped this policy as we welcome everyone into our warm and inclusive environment, enabling them to flourish. When thinking about behaviour management, the safety and wellbeing of our whole school community is of the highest importance, as without this children and adults cannot flourish.

Pupils at our school are praised and rewarded for thoughtful and loving acts. Sometimes, though, pupils make poor choices and behave inappropriately. Our behaviour policy guides staff to teach self-discipline not blind compliance. It echoes our core values with a heavy emphasis on respectful behaviour through our Christian value of love and the restorative nature of forgiveness. Behaviour is everyone's responsibility reflecting the fellowship we strive for in school. We have used some of the core principles from Paul Dix and Pivotal Education to help guide our behaviour policy and also the principles behind this positive handling policy and put our values into action.

***You can be strict without being nasty, maintain boundaries without cruelty and correct children without aggression". (Paul Dix, Pivotal Education)***

Everyone is expected to maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, to accept responsibility for their behaviour and to encourage others to do the same. We set these expectations for conduct through a whole school **'reset'** at the start of each term where positive behaviours are explained, reinforced through routines and their importance highlighted through reward.

The school has 3 simple rules: **'Ready, Respectful, Safe'** which can be applied to a variety of situations and are taught and modelled explicitly.

We also understand that for some children following our behaviour expectations is beyond their developmental level, or very challenging due to another external factors. In this case, children will have bespoke positive behaviour plans which may include rewards to reinforce positive behaviour or greater SLT involvement to minimise disruption to learning for those around them.

## Objectives:

This policy seeks to:

- Ensure the safety of all pupils and staff.
- Prevent serious breaches of school discipline.
- Prevent serious injury to staff and/or student.
- Provide guidelines to staff when faced with situations that may require positive handling.
- Minimise the use of positive handling.

The following principles in our school help to minimise the need to use positive handling:

- Establishing a calm school environment.
- Ensuring appropriate levels of supervision at all times.
- PSHE / Life skills lessons and assemblies / worship cover ways to manage conflict and strong feelings.
- Developing appropriate risk assessments and positive handling plans for individual pupils.
- Only using positive handling where the member of staff considers that the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using it.

## **The Legal Framework:**

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort.

This policy is written in accordance with:

- Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- DfE Use of Reasonable Force in Schools guidance.
- KCSIE (2025 – or latest version).

This policy is based on current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:
  - Causing injury to themselves or others.
  - Committing an offence.
  - Damaging property.
  - Prejudicing good order and discipline.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025 or latest version).
- The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- The Behaviour Policy.
- The Equality Policy.

The use of reasonable force must always be lawful, necessary, proportionate, and in the best interests of the child and others involved.

## **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.

The terms "positive handling" and "reasonable force" are used interchangeably within this policy. "Reasonable force" is the legal term used in national guidance.

## **Safeguarding:**

The use of positive handling is a safeguarding matter. All staff must ensure that any use of reasonable force is consistent with the school's safeguarding duties as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff must consider the welfare and dignity of the pupil at all times and act in a way that protects children from harm. Any concerns arising from the use of positive handling must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

All incidents will be reviewed in line with safeguarding procedures to ensure that practice remains safe, proportionate, and appropriate.

## **Staff Authorisation:**

Staff members have been trained in PROACT-SCIPr-UK. This is a BILD-accredited, positive behaviour support framework used in the UK to help professionals and carers manage complex needs and behaviours that challenge. Developed by The Loddon School, it focuses on proactive strategies and therapeutic approaches to minimise physical intervention and promote independence.

There are also designated members of staff who are trained by Team Teach (Mrs Chambers, Mrs Evans and Mrs Griffin) so wherever possible these would be the first to be called upon if a pupil requires positive handling. However, any staff member is able to use positive handling as a last resort if following the rules and regulations set out by this policy.

## **Situations when Positive Handling MAY be used:**

Positive Handling may be considered when:

- There is a need to prevent injury to another pupil or member of staff.
- Self-defence.
- A pupil fails to comply with a reasonable instruction to stop an action that is potentially dangerous to themselves or others.
- A pupil's behaviour seriously prejudices good order and discipline in the school.
- Pupils are physically fighting.
- A pupil is deliberately damaging property.
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, rough play, or by misuse of materials or object.
- A pupil is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson, school event or visit.
- A pupil is placing themselves at risk.

## **Situations when Positive Handling MAY NOT be used:**

Staff must not use force in a way that:

- Causes pain as punishment.
- Restricts a pupil's breathing or airway (e.g. covering the mouth or nose).
- Involves holding a pupil around the neck.
- Restricts blood flow or circulation.
- Could be considered degrading, humiliating, or abusive.
- Is used as a form of discipline rather than to prevent harm.

Any use of force must be reasonable, necessary, and proportionate to the circumstances. Staff must cease the intervention as soon as it is safe to do so.

## **Deciding whether to use Positive Handling:**

Members of staff should use the following guidelines to decide whether or not positive handling should be used in particular circumstances:

- The situation could not realistically be dealt with by another means – it was deemed necessary.
- The potential consequences of not intervening were sufficiently serious to justify considering using

positive handling.

- The chances of achieving the desired result by other means were judged to be low.
- The risk associated with not using positive handling outweighs those of using it.
- There was identifiable risk to other pupils and/or members of staff and/or school property.
- Consideration of the pupil's age and needs must be taken into consideration.

## **Using Positive Handling:**

It is important to note that decisions often need to be made quickly and that the professional judgement of the member of staff involved is key.

Where possible, call a member of staff trained in positive handling or, if necessary, the police. Where there is a serious risk of harm, criminal activity, or where a situation cannot be safely managed by staff, the police may be called in line with safeguarding procedures.

A clear verbal warning should be given to the pupil before using positive handling.

Wherever possible, positive handling should not be used unless there is another responsible adult present to support, observe and call for assistance.

It is important to use the minimum positive handling technique to achieve the desired result.

Staff must continuously monitor the physical and emotional wellbeing of the pupil during any intervention. Particular care must be taken to avoid positions that could restrict breathing (positional asphyxia). If a pupil shows signs of distress, difficulty breathing, or medical concern, the intervention must stop immediately and medical assistance sought if required. The duration of any physical intervention must be kept to the absolute minimum necessary.

## **Types of Positive Handling:**

### **Passive Positive Handling:**

- Standing between pupils.
- Blocking a pupil's path.
- Shepherding a pupil away.
- Escorting a pupil.
- Comforting a pupil.

### **Active Positive Handling:**

- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm (pupil free to move away).
- Ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back (pupil free to move away).
- Guiding a pupil using "caring c" hands.
- Using appropriate physical restraint (in extreme/dangerous situations).

Members of staff are justified in taking any necessary action (consistent with seeking to use the minimum handling required to achieve the desired result).

Staff should make every effort to avoid acting in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. However, in rare circumstances, to ensure the safety for all, it may not always be possible to avoid injuring a pupil.

In all forms of positive handling staff should avoid touching or restraining a pupil in a way that could be

interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct.

## **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 lead DSL or the Headteacher (Deputy in her absence) should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for holding a debriefing session 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 support plan.

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 on CPOMS using the tag: 'Physical Interventions - Serious Incident Form'.

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. The incident write-up will also be provided to the parents in writing, via email.

It is recognised that the need to intervene physically is distressing for both the pupil concerned and staff involved.

Following the use of physical intervention staff and pupils will be supported and the immediate physical and well-being needs of all parties will be met. Staff will ensure that positive relationships are maintained.

## **Recording incidents:**

CPOMS should be used to record details of any incidents requiring the use of active positive handling. This should be completed as soon as is practically possible after the incident and alerted to all DSLs.

The tag: 'Physical Interventions - Serious Incident Form' must be used on CPOMS. Staff will be required to record:

- The name of the student.
- The date and time of the incident.
- Where the incident occurred.
- Whether parents have been informed (and the type of communication that occurred, including logging the written follow-up provided to parents).
- Names of Staff members involved in the Physical Intervention.
- Names of any witnesses.
- Reasons for the Physical Intervention.
- A description of the lead up to the Physical Intervention.
- Details of any potential triggers.
- The nature of any Physical Intervention techniques used.
- The duration of any Physical Intervention.
- Any medical intervention needed due to injury to the child, staff, or others.
- Details of any follow-up needed from the child's viewpoint.
- Details of any review needed to the child's risk assessment / care plan.

## **Individual Needs (SEND and Equality):**

When considering the use of positive handling, staff must take into account:

- The pupil's age, understanding, and developmental level.
- Any Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).
- Any Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Known triggers, behaviours, and risk assessments.
- The Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Where appropriate, pupils with identified needs will have individual Pastoral Support Plans or Risk Assessments. These plans will outline strategies to prevent escalation and detail agreed approaches to managing risk.

Staff must always aim to use the least restrictive option and adapt their approach to meet the needs of the individual pupil.

## **Pastoral Support Plans and Risk Assessments:**

Some of our pupils may be at higher risk of displaying extreme behaviours which may necessitate positive handling and the use of force. In such cases a Pastoral Support Plan and Risk Assessment should be completed for the child, alongside their parents / carers. This will include details of:

- What is going well.
- What is not going well.
- Details of unwanted behaviours.
- Details of replacement strategies.
- Support strategies in place.
- Support from outside agencies.
- Proactive, Active, Reactive and Recovery triggers, behaviours and support measures.
- Review details.

## **Complaints:**

All complaints made relating to the use of positive handling will be dealt with according to the school's complaints procedure. Allegations about a member of staff will follow Kent guidelines.

## **Equal Opportunities:**

The governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all pupils, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background.

## **Monitoring, Review and Governance:**

All incidents involving positive handling will be monitored and reviewed regularly by senior leaders.

## ***'Nurtured We Flourish'***

This will include:

- Analysis of frequency and patterns of incidents.
- Consideration of any safeguarding concerns.
- Review of equality implications (e.g. disproportionate impact on specific groups).
- Identification of staff training needs.

A summary of incidents will be reported to the Governing Body on a termly basis as part of safeguarding oversight.

Where concerns are identified, action will be taken to review practice, update risk assessments, and improve support for pupils and staff.