



## **Positive Handling Policy**

<b>Date approved by St. Stephen's CE Primary School:</b>	Autumn Term 2025
<b>Review date:</b>	Autumn Term 2026
<b>Approved by:</b>	Ethos and Community Committee

## **A policy for the use of physical intervention and physical contact with pupils**

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School does not support the routine use of physical intervention.

In line with our school's vision statement, we are committed to ensuring that all our pupils and staff are able to live and work in a supportive and caring environment, demonstrating mutual respect, so that teaching and learning can take place to maximise pupils' potential and achievement.

In the rare circumstances that it becomes appropriate to use physical intervention, it will be used as an act of care and not punishment and staff will follow the guidelines outlined below. Staff need, whilst taking any of the action detailed in this policy, to make sure that the pupil understands that this is a last resort and the security of the pupil is continually maintained.

### **This policy must be read in conjunction with the following publication:**

Positive Environments

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/positive-environments-where-children-can-flourish/positive-environments-where-children-can-flourish>

### **Circumstances when physical intervention might be appropriate.**

- Action is necessary because there is an imminent risk of injury to someone or of significant damage to property.
- A pupil attacks another pupil or a member of staff.
- A pupil misses class or tries to leave the school in circumstances where that pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or school.
- A pupil is refusing to move and leaving them would put themselves or others at risk

It may be necessary to physically intervene to move a child in the following situations, but only when all other possible tactics outlined in our behaviour policy have been tried. In either of the following cases, physical intervention will be limited to a request to leave the classroom and then physical presence only needed as a deterrent (for example, a blocking stance with the use of arms to direct the pupil to the door).

- A pupil persistently refuses to obey instructions to leave/ enter a classroom.
- A pupil is refusing to leave an area that does not have adult supervision
- A pupil refuses to leave an area which could contain hazards
- To support a parent when trying to move a child into school

A member of staff will sometimes need to rely on their professional judgement about whether or not to physically intervene by placing themselves in a hazardous situation, or to stand back and allow a pupil or colleague to face a potential hazard. Staff must balance the level and duration of their intervention against the seriousness and likely affects results of the incident.

## **What staff will do before and during any physical intervention**

Before physically intervening, staff will:

- remain calm and attempt to create a calm atmosphere;
- tell the pupil to stop and explain to them what will happen if they do not; and
- use a range of non-physical alternatives aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation. These might include:
  - continuing to speak and listen to the pupil(s)
  - employing an appropriate level of eye contact during any dialogue
  - recognising that they are feeling angry, frustrated, upset
  - diverting, distracting, cajoling or humouring the pupil where appropriate
  - reasoning with and offering appropriate choices to the pupil(s).

Sometimes a teacher should not intervene in an incident without help. For example, when dealing with physically large pupils, with groups of pupils or if the teacher believes he or she may be at risk of injury. The teacher should remove other pupils who may be at risk and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues, or where necessary telephone the police. The teacher should tell the pupil(s) that he or she has sent for help. Until assistance arrives the teacher should continue to attempt to defuse the situation through talking to the pupil and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Whilst physically intervening, staff will:

- use the minimum amount of force required to achieve the desired result;
- tell the pupil that physical restraint will stop as soon as it is no longer necessary;
- continue to use a range of non-physical alternatives aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation, as above; and/or
- remove the rest of the class when a pupil persistently refuses to leave or offers any kind of resistance to being removed from a classroom. Communication with the pupil concerned can continue in isolation.

## **Ways in which staff may use reasonable force**

Whilst there is no legal definition of reasonable force, DfES circular 10/98 advises that “the degree of force employed must be in proportion to the situation and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent”.

A potentially dangerous situation may involve staff in:

- physically stepping in between pupils
- blocking a pupil’s path
- holding
- pushing
- pulling
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- guiding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back or under the arm
- (in more extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

Staff are not permitted to act in a way that might cause injury, for example by:

- holding a pupil round the neck, by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe
- slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- tripping up a pupil
- holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- holding a pupil face down on the ground.

The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force.

Physical force cannot be justified in a situation that could clearly be resolved without force, for example to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial offence.

### **Members of staff that are permitted to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils**

Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 permits adults who have lawful charge or control of pupils to use reasonable force to control or restrain them. These include:

- teachers
- learning mentors
- teaching assistants
- midday supervisors
- other adults who may be working with pupils either on school premises or accompanying them on out of school activities, for example during field trips or on school journeys.

The head teacher will clearly identify the staff authorised to use physical intervention, bearing in mind that any member of staff is entitled to intervene in an emergency.

### **Training**

Our school will ensure that a copy of this policy will be given to all permanent and long term supply staff and be fully explained to them. A shortened form of this policy (see appendix A) will be given to all short term supply, students and casual staff, as well as to any other person authorised by the head teacher to take care of pupils, for example parents accompanying a school trip.

St Stephen's School aims to identify, address and review the training needs of school staff, with a view to developing a shared awareness of:

- how and when to intervene; and
- how to prevent, defuse and/or resolve disputes, including the appropriate use of anger management, de-escalation and conflict resolution skills and techniques.

Appropriate training will be provided to all school-based staff.

### **Planning for the needs of individual pupils**

Our school aims to identify, together with parents or carers, any pupils whose behaviour is potentially thought to require physical intervention, and to consider the needs of those pupils in relation to:

- any individual medical, social, behavioural, learning or other factors
- any individual education plans, pastoral support programmes or personal education plans which support the pupil.

If a member of staff thinks that a particular pupil may at sometime need such intervention, the circumstances and requirements will be presented for discussion at an appropriate meeting of relevant staff.

### **Other physical contact with pupils**

Our school believes that some use of appropriate, positive physical contact with pupils can contribute to its development as a safe and friendly school. Some physical contact may be necessary or unavoidable when staff work with:

- younger children who may need encouraging or guiding
- pupils with special educational needs who may need physical support
- pupils requiring first aid
- pupils receiving coaching in sport or as part of another curriculum activity
- pupils in distress.

Our staff will make professional and sensitive judgements about the nature and extent of their physical contact with pupils. We will take into account individual sensitivities and gender differences, the needs of adolescent pupils and of those who may be particularly vulnerable following previous trauma or abuse.

### **Record-keeping**

St Stephen's School records all incidents where physical intervention involving the use of force against the will of a pupil has been necessary, and must be recorded on CPOMS.

#### **Within the CPOMS report you should include:**

**Nature of the incident** - How did it begin? - What circumstances led to the incident? What happened during the incident - including child's behaviour and response? Who was involved throughout the incident and what did they do/say - including adults and children. When and where did the incident take place? What strategies were to de-escalate? Why was a physical intervention necessary and what was the perceived danger if that had not been employed? What type of physical intervention was used and the degree of force? How long was the physical intervention applied? Was there any injury sustained by any party and the nature of the injury.

**Witness accounts** - please include witnesses and they should also add the above to CPOMS too. If the witnesses are children, these must be spoken to by a DSL/DDSL as soon as possible and their account also recorded on CPOMS.

The head teacher or Deputy DSL will be told at the earliest possible time after an incident. The written record will be completed within one working day and discussed with the nominated person who will also decide how and when to report the incident to the pupil's parent or carer.

**Further Action** - the person recording or DSL/DDSL must record any further action. E.g. police involvement, parental contact, LADO involvement, Health and Safety report.

In line with our commitment to working with parents, we aim to maintain an open discussion during events following an incident.

We will review the number and type of incidents in which physical intervention has been necessary. This will be used to ensure that there is adherence to this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the school.

### **Sharing of information**

All members of the school community should know of the existence of this policy. In principle, as few people as possible should know of any specific incident and staff should maintain maximum confidentiality. This is so that governors and staff involved in any consequence or complaint can do so without having acquired hearsay knowledge.

### **Complaints**

Complaints following a dispute about the use of physical intervention by an adult will, in the first instance, be referred to the head teacher. The Complaints Procedure will be followed.

Where disputes cannot be resolved informally within school or by the governors, complaints will be pursued in accordance with the school's complaints procedures.

### **Implementation, monitoring and review**

The Headteacher or nominated person is responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff are familiar with this policy
- ensuring that all selected staff have received training in Positive Handling from Strathore or similar
- monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the school's policy.

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## **Physical intervention with pupils**

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**Guidelines for short-term supply and casual staff and other adults authorised by the head teacher to work with children in St Stephen's School.**



Physical intervention must never be used as a punishment.

- It should only be used if there is an immediate danger to pupils, staff or school property.
- It must only be used if all other tactics have failed.
- Any force used in a physical intervention must be of minimum strength and duration in order to deal with the immediate danger.
- Send for help as soon as you can, probably using another pupil to do so.
- Be careful how you handle a pupil. Never hold them by the neck, collar, ear or hair. Do not slap, punch, kick or trip them. Do not twist limbs, force limbs against the joint or hold a pupil face down on the ground. Avoid contact with breasts, bottoms and genital areas.
- Talk to the pupil; explain that physical contact will cease as soon as they calm down.
- Keep yourself and other pupils safe – it might be better to remove other pupils than to try to physically intervene with the aggressor.
- Do not put yourself at risk by confronting pupils who are bigger or stronger than you, who are armed or who otherwise pose a threat to your safety.

All incidents of physical intervention must be reported to the head teacher or DSLs on the same day, and should be written up immediately on CPOMS if possible.

If a physical or verbal assault has occurred, the council health and safety form should also be completed.

