



Living and learning
together with God

**St Nicolas' CE School
Taplow**

Jesus said 'I am the vine and you are the branches'.

Our school is rooted in the Christian Faith. Nourished by God, we want to grow together drawing on His strength to live out our Christian values so that we can reach out to others in our community.

We are all unique and together with God we want to be the best that we can be. As we learn together in a supportive and nurturing school, we will thrive and be ready to face the challenges of life.

Positive Handling Policy

Members of staff responsible:

SEND Leader
Curriculum Committee

Policy reviewed: January 2026

Review date: January 2028

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1. **THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort. Under the Children Order 1995, it is only permissible as described under the heading "Physical Control". Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law.

It enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from.

Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies:

1. Causing injury to themselves or others
2. Committing a criminal offence
3. Damaging property
4. Causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

(Examples of possible situations are given in Appendix 1)

2. **THE DEFINITION OF POSITIVE HANDLING AT ST NICOLAS'**

Positive Handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property.

3. **THE AIM OF THIS POLICY**

Staff at St Nicolas' School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/ well-being and to maintain good order and discipline.

The key objectives of the policy are:

- 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 and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations

4. **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 him/herself 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 physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the school's Positive Handling Policy.

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, could, in certain circumstances, 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.

5. **ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES**

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. if a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:

- An instruction is being repeated until the pupil complies
- Use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- Withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- Other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)
- The employment of other sanctions consistent with the School's policy on Behaviour.

6. **THE 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.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

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

7. **WHEN POSITIVE HANDLING BECOMES NECESSARY**

Do

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what he/she must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Use the correct holds as trained in Step on and Step up training
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in genital areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck

Use of Reasonable Force

- Like all schools, we reserve the right for our Staff to use reasonable force to control or restrain a pupil in specific circumstances.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables School Staff to use "such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do" any of the following:
 - "Causing personal injury to any person" (including the pupil themselves)
 - "Causing damage to the property of any person" (including the pupil themselves)
 - "Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school, and among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise" (For further information please refer to 'The use of force to control and restrain pupils')
- All members of staff are aware of the regulations regarding the use of force by teachers, as set out in DfAE Circular 10/98, relating to section 550A of the Education Act 1996: The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils. Teachers in our school do not hit, push or slap children. Staff only intervene physically to restrain children or to prevent injury to a child, or if a child is in danger of hurting him/herself. The actions that we take are in line with government guidelines on the restraint of children.
- All staff have the right to use reasonable force however most staff have completed Step on training and Step up training courses for positive handling.
- All instances of restraint are recorded & parents informed.

8. **ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN 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 no later than the same day.

All incidents should be recorded immediately in CPOMS so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available.

Exceptions to the requirement to report are where:

- It appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

A report of the incident made to parents will include the following

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

The requirement to report applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan. Schools should communicate this information to parents in writing. For example, via email or online messaging system. Best practice would include inviting parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. This could involve a discussion about:

- *any behavioural triggers or warning signs of an impending incident*
- *whether any agreed behaviour support plans were followed*
- *what de-escalation strategies were used and how effective they were*
- *what might be done differently in the future*

9. **RISK ASSESSMENT**

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may need the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds 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 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

10. Pupils with SEND

At St Nicolas', we give consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) Some of our children and young people with SEND react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions. At St Nicolas' we seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support. At St Nicolas School we utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk.

At St Nicolas School, we use de-escalation strategies that include: -

- removing stimuli that may be causing distress
- changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed
- engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety
- distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention

Where appropriate, the SENDCO and relevant teaching staff work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of any necessary behaviour support plans. Behaviour support plans outline any adjustments. Behaviour support plans detail potential triggers and specific de-escalation strategies.

11. COMPLAINTS

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, if an allegation regarding inappropriate use of force and/or other restrictive interventions is made against a member of staff, the procedures in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> should be followed. This includes the provisions regarding suspension of staff.