



St Nicholas Catholic Academy

'Our Catholic school is a diverse, nurturing and dynamic community which is faithful to Jesus, welcoming to all and provides a learning environment where everyone can succeed'.

Safer Handling Policy

November 2022-24

Policy Outline:

This policy is to outline the safer handling ethos and procedures that take place within the school.

INTRODUCTION

Legal framework

This policy complies with the following legislation, including, but not limited to:

The Education Act 2011

The Children's Act 1989

The Equality Act 2010

This policy will also have due regard to the following guidance:

DfE 'Use of reasonable force in schools' 2013

DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015

The school will implement this policy in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy and Equality Policy.

At Saint Nicholas Catholic Academy we believe that the use of reasonable force is only necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- **Committing a criminal offence**
- **Injuring themselves or others**
- **Causing damage to property, including their own**
- **Engaging in any behaviour at school or on school activities/visits which is prejudicial to the welfare of other pupils or staff**

There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The Criminal Law Act (1967) allows any person to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent an offence (e.g. physical assault) being committed. Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement.

The Positive Handling of a child

The positive handling of a child may be used by those staff authorised to do so by the Headteacher. (Due to the geography of the school, all staff have been given

and accepted such authorisation). Positive handling should always be a last resort. It requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining. If practical before intervention, a calm warning or instruction to stop should be given and every attempt made to achieve a satisfactory outcome without physical intervention. In all circumstances help must be sent for, even when immediate intervention is necessary. Positive handling can take a variety of forms - see section titled 'Application of Force'. Staff should always avoid touching / holding a pupil in a way that might be considered inappropriate.

'Reasonable Force' should not be used for trivial misdemeanours and should always be proportionate to the circumstances of the incident. It should be used only to control or restrain and never with the intent to cause pain or harm. It must, therefore, be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result, in any action, due regard has to be taken to the age, understanding and sex of the pupil.

Saint Nicholas Catholic Academy accepts and understands that in accordance with the law corporal punishment is forbidden.

General Aims

The staff at Saint Nicholas Catholic Academy recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.

Our policy on the use of reasonable force is part of our overall pastoral care procedures and closely related to our policies on managing pupil behaviour in the "Rewards and Sanctions Policy" and also to the school's "Child Protection/Safeguarding Guidelines".

- 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 key staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.
- To give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from pupils or others

Risk Assessment

All staff including teachers, Learning Support Assistants and other colleagues in the school must be informed about pupils and families who are vulnerable or volatile.

Vulnerable or volatile pupils and families should be clearly identified in documentation and kept in the class record file.

A risk assessment based on knowledge and previous experience will be carried out and a plan of action for individuals written by a delegated member of staff. Such planning needs to address:

- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary);
- Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take;
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate.

More detailed examples of risk assessment and preventative steps can be found in Appendix 1

Positive Handling may need to be used when:

- The potential consequences of not intervening were sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force
- The chances of achieving the desired result by other means were low
- The risk associated with not using force outweighed those of using force.

Application of Force

Physical Intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff in:

- physically interposing between pupils
- blocking pupil's path
- holding
- pushing or pulling but only in extreme circumstances to avoid danger
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back

In extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds.

Staff should not act in a way that might be expected to cause injury for example by:

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

Action Steps

Tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;

If possible always try to summon another adult, they will act as a witness to the incident and will complete a witness report for the record;

Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident;

Make it clear the physical intervention will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary;

Appropriate follow up action should be taken, which may include;

- **Providing medical support**
- **Providing respite for those involved.**

A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem.

Procedure

- 1. Staff must use minimum force for maximum effect over the shortest time and use only the agreed physical intervention methods.**
- 2. Pupil safety is paramount. Staff must be aware of signs of distress such as vomiting, changes in colour, breathlessness.**
- 3. After an incident staff must complete the 'Report of Incident Involving 'Positive Handling' (Appendix 2). One copy is to be placed in a staff incident file and one copy is to be given to the Headteacher. Report incident on CPOMS/Arbor also.**
- 4. Parents must be informed on the same day as the incident of the circumstances which led up to the incident and the outcome. Parents must also be informed of any further action the school intends to take.**
- 5. The SLT and staff will evaluate the incident of 'Positive Handling' to inform future management of pupils in similar situations.**
- 6. Staff involved will be debriefed following an incident and kept informed of any future action which relates to it.**
- 8. The Chair of Governors will be informed on the day of any incident.**

Recording Incidents

Staff should record (Appendix 2) all incidents of physical intervention in accordance with School Policy and report these to the Headteacher. Record incident on CPOMS/Arbor also.

Details should include:

Name of pupil(s)

Staff member(s) involved

Factors necessitating physical intervention

The strategies which were employed prior to using physical intervention

How physical intervention was effected

Outcome of the physical intervention

Any other action taken in the management of the incident

Parents/Carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded.

Complaints

We all have a duty of care to the young people in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by staff, should help to avoid complaints by parents. It will not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the police and social services department under child protection procedures.

Staff, subjected to physical violence or assault, have the right to be supported in making a formal complaint to the police, and, if necessary, taking private action against an assailant.

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

Remember that adhering to the principles and procedures referred to in this policy statement, is part of effective practice and should minimise risk to young people in our care and enhance your own self – protection.

Information for Parents

In keeping with our home/school partnership, we will inform all parents/carers of our policy on positive handling. This will highlight:

- **Our emphasis on care and protection for everyone within our community.**
- **Our belief that physical intervention may be needed on very rare occasions**
- **Our endeavour to handle situations with care and responsibility**
- **Our intent to apply follow-up and repair strategies.**
- **When staff are authorised to use reasonable physical intervention**
- **What steps will be taken after an incident has been dealt with.**
- **The responsibilities of staff, pupils, and parents/carers in resolving situations.**

Positive Handling Policy

Appendix 1

All teachers need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps which can be taken to defuse and calm a situation.

- ✓ Move calmly and confidently**
- ✓ Make clear, simple statements**
- ✓ Intervene early.**
- ✓ Try to maintain eye contact**
- ✓ If necessary summon help before the problem escalates**
- ✓ Remove audience from the immediate location.**

There are situations where staff may consider not intervening without help:

Assistance may be sought, for example, when dealing with;

- an older pupil**
- a physically large pupil**
- more than one pupil**
- when the teacher believes that he/she may be at risk of injury.**

In those circumstances where a member of staff considers it inappropriate to restrain a pupil without help they may:

- Remove other pupils who might be at risk;**
- Summon assistance from colleagues;**
- Inform the pupil(s) that help will be arriving;**
- Until assistance arrives, the member of staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating.**

Appendix 2

RECORD OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Date of Incident:	Time of Incident:
Location of Incident:	
Pupil Name: Class:	DOB:
Member(s) of Staff involved (directly or as witnesses)	
Details of other pupils involved (directly or as witnesses), including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings given that force might be used.	
Reason for using force and description of force used:	

Outcome of Physical Intervention:
Description of any injury sustained by pupil and / or teacher and any subsequent treatment:
Follow up, including post-incident support and any disciplinary action against pupils:
Date parent / carer informed of incident: Time:
By whom informed:
Outline of parent/carer response:
Signature of staff completing report: Role: Date:
Signature of Headteacher: Date: