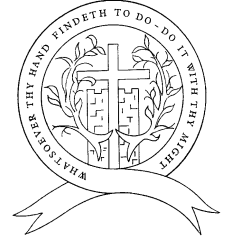


St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Positive Handling Policy

Policy written by Kirsten Cameron
Governor Link: Chair of Governors

Policy approved in Autumn 2024
Policy to be reviewed in Autumn 2025



Whatever you do, do it with all your heart. Colossians 3:23

Our vision is to be a school where pupils have a positive approach to learning and where provision is consistently good or better. Our curriculum is relevant and creative and reflects our diversity. We aim for all pupils to leave St Matthew's well equipped for the future, demonstrating Christian values and showing self-confidence.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Schools have a duty to promote good behaviour and discipline. The school's governing body, with the support of the MAT and the Local Authority, has the duty to ensure the health, safety and well-being of everyone in St Matthew's Church of England Primary School.
- 1.2. For some children with the most significant needs it must be recognised that their challenging behaviour is an aspect of their developmental profile. Interventions to manage their behaviour must reflect their overall needs, should be matched to their particular circumstances and be in the best interests of the child and the whole school.
- 1.3. It is essential that staff act appropriately to safeguard children in order to minimise the risk of accusation of improper conduct towards a young person (*Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board – arrangements for managing allegations of abuse against people who work with children who are in a position of trust*).
- 1.4. All members of school staff have a legal right to discipline children whose conduct falls below the standard which could reasonably be expected (*Section 93 Education and Inspections Act 2006*). To be lawful, any sanction must satisfy the following:
 - It is not a breach of any legislation, in respect of disability, special educational needs, race and other equalities and human rights, and that it is reasonable in the circumstances – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment or simply to get a pupil to follow an instruction.
 - The pupil is under lawful control or charge of a member of staff.
 - Any sanction is proportionate in the circumstances of the case.
- 1.5. The Headteacher and Governing Body ensure the Behaviour Policy is robust to support staff in managing behaviour, including the use of rewards and sanctions. Schools should always consider whether continuing disruptive behaviour might be the result of unmet educational or other needs. At this point the school should consider whether a multi-agency assessment is necessary (*DfE: Behaviour and discipline in schools*).
- 1.6. Reasonable force or restraint is only to be used as a last resort when other approaches have been tried and exhausted (*Education Act 2006*).

2. What is reasonable force?

- 2.1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils. All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. (*Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006.*)
- 2.2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances, such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 2.3. Control means either passive physical contact such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- 2.4. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed. There are relevant considerations:
 - The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it; whether or not it was necessary, therefore physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanor or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force.
 - The degree of force employed must be the least restrictive option that will meet the need - in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any restriction should be imposed for no longer than is absolutely necessary.
 - Whether it is reasonable to use force, and the degree of force that could reasonably be employed must also meet statutory guidance in respect of disability, special educational needs, race, other equalities and human rights. Whatever is done, why and with what consequences must be recorded in an open and transparent manner.

3. Definition of Restraint:

- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example, when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention. (*Use of reasonable force guidance July 2013 DfE - reviewed July 2015*)
- The positive application of force with the intention of over-powering the child. By definition it is applied without the child's consent. *Department of Health (DOH)*

4. Restrictive Practice:

- 4.1. Restrictive Interventions are defined in the DOH document as: Deliberate acts on the part of other person(s) that restricts an individual's movement, liberty and/or freedom to act independently in order to:
 - Take immediate control of a dangerous situation.
 - End or reduce significantly the danger to the person or others.
 - Contain or limit the child's freedom for no longer than is necessary.
- 4.2. Schools cannot use force as a punishment- **it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.**
- 4.3. Restraint is an action of last resort and is not a substitute for behaviour management strategies. The emphasis of such strategies should be on managing incidents and behaviour through non-physical, non-threatening, aggression-free strategies. **Physical intervention should only be considered in order to control situations involving imminent danger to pupils or to others.**
- 4.4. Where de-escalation of a situation has not been possible and restraint is deemed necessary the minimum of physical force should be used, for the minimum of time, ensuring the least restrictive intervention necessary to make the situation safer.

4.5. Restrictive interventions should always be used in a transparent, legal and ethical manner.

5. Prohibited Holds:

5.1 A panel of national experts in education identified that certain restraint techniques presented an unacceptable risk when used on children and young people. The techniques in question are:

- The 'seated double embrace' which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing.
- The 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest.
- The 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose. (DfE: Use of Reasonable Force guidance July 2013)

5.2 Whatever the technique is called, pupils should not be deliberately restrained in a way that impacts on their airway, breathing or circulation. This would include any pressure to the neck region, rib cage or abdomen. The mouth and/or nose should never be covered.

5.3 There should also be no intentional restraint of a person in a prone/face down position. Schools should keep their practice and training under review to ensure it reflects current guidance.

6. Seclusion or Isolation Room

6.1. A disruptive pupil can be placed in an area in which is referred to as a seclusion or isolation room. An isolation which prevents a child from leaving a room of their own free will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and this decision will be made by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

6.2 A child will only be placed in a locked room as a temporary measure in an emergency whilst staff seek assistance. It should be noted that 'locked' also includes holding a door shut, or someone standing against a door.

6.3 An emergency is a genuinely unforeseeable event e.g. when a child acts out of character.

7. Reporting and Recording

7.1. A detailed, contemporaneous written report should be made in respect of any incidents where force is used by the member of staff concerned. This may help prevent any misunderstanding of the incident, and it will be helpful should there be a complaint.

7.2. An Incident Report Form must be completed as soon as is reasonably practicable in respect of any incident defined within the Suffolk County Council Policy and Guidance document, *Recording and Reporting Incidents in Schools and Other Education Premises*, and brought to the attention of the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a senior colleague or a representative of their professional association when compiling a report. They should also keep a copy of the report.

7.3. Additionally, the school's internal recording and reporting procedure should be followed where appropriate. Should restraint be used, the incident must be recorded in a pupil restraint log which is stored in the locked filing cabinet in the Deputy Headteacher's office.

7.4. The Headteacher or a designated senior member of staff will ensure that parents are informed as soon as is reasonably practicable of an incident where physical restraint has been used. Where a pupil has Special Educational Needs or behavioural difficulties and an agreed method of restraint has been included in a support plan, the use of restraint will be reviewed regularly but only reported to parents where the restraint applied is outside that set out in the plan.

7.5. Where a complaint about the use of restraint is made by a pupil or parent this will be reported to the Area Education Manager in accordance with the *Procedure in Respect of Allegations of Child Abuse Made Against School Staff*. In the event of such a complaint being made it is important that

no investigation of the circumstances in which restraint was used is undertaken by the school unless the Local Authority determines that this is the most appropriate course of action.

8. Risk Management

8.1. Risk management is a proactive approach to minimising difficult and dangerous behaviour, and is set against the background of procedures and policies in school. It includes general risk assessment of the environment and individual risk assessment of pupil support needs.

8.2. Risk management strategies, including the use of physical intervention must prohibit:

- any intervention which impedes the process of breathing
- the deliberate use of pain for control purposes
- contact with vulnerable parts of the body e.g. neck and sexual areas
- hypertension, hyper flexion and pressure on or across joints
- any other potentially dangerous position

8.3. Some pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or behavioural difficulties may need to be regularly restrained. Where this is the case, good practice indicates that the situations and methods used would be outlined in the pupils Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and therefore known to parents. Any restraint applied outside of that written must be recorded and reported to parents.

8.4. Individual Risk Assessment: if we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, a plan is created to show the response if the situation arises. Such planning needs to address:

- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary) Details of these will be recorded as a Restraint Agreement (Appendix 1).
- 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.

9. Staff Training

9.1 All staff will receive training from BellsCroft as recommended by the MAT.

10. Support for Pupils and Staff

10.1. Support will be provided for staff following situations where they have had to restrain a pupil or have been involved in an incident which has been successfully de-escalated but the staff member involved has requested time to recover.

10.2. A debriefing session should be held with both staff and child involved in any incident and outcomes reviewed to inform future practice in order to minimise risk of similar occurrences.

11. Responsibilities

11.1. All Staff

It is the duty of everyone to consider the safety of children, their own safety and that of other staff at all times. In the event of circumstances arising that might escalate to an incident, staff should:

- Follow the school's Behaviour Policy and pupil behaviour plans where appropriate.
- Begin early de-escalation using preventative, non-confrontational methods such as moving calmly and confidently, make simple clear statements in a controlled and calm voice, intervene early, try to maintain eye contact.
- Consider all options available to them, including withdrawal of themselves or others.
- Seek support where possible.
- Consider the use of reasonable force to make the situation safe.

- Recognise when they should not intervene without support, such as dealing with an older pupil, a physically larger pupil, more than one pupil or when the member of staff believes they may be at risk of injury.
- Report, record and review.

In those circumstances where the member of staff has decided that it is not appropriate to restrain the pupil without help they should:

- Remove other pupils who might be at risk.
- Summon assistance from colleagues.
- Where necessary, the police should be summoned.
- 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.

11.2. Governors

Governors, through the Headteacher, are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all those working in school are familiar with and follow this policy.
- Making a copy of the policy available to parents (references to parents should also be taken to be references to persons having parental responsibility).
- Annually reviewing the policy, its application and effectiveness.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated.

11.3. Headteacher

The Headteacher will ensure:

- This policy and other related policies are applied consistently across the school.
- That staff are trained to a suitable and sufficient level to manage behaviour effectively in order to minimise the need for the use of restrictive practices.
- Risk assessment and behaviour plans are in place for children whose behaviour may be challenging.
- Staff are provided with comprehensive information on the risks and the preventative and early de-escalation strategies that are part of the school Behaviour Policy.
- Staff are given clear guidance to risk assess difficult and dangerous behaviour so that interventions are legal, appropriate and proportional.
- Staff development and training is kept under review to ensure it reflects current guidance.
- An open and transparent reporting & recording system for monitoring behaviour.
- Monitor and review incidents to take appropriate action to mitigate reoccurrence and inform staff CPD.
- Ensure that arrangements are in place for reviewing the policy annually.

11.4 Teaching Staff

Teachers must have regard to the expectations of conduct set out in the Teachers Standards.

Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment (7):

- Have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
- Have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly.
- Manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them.
- Maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

Personal and Professional Conduct (Part 2)

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
- Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

12. What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?

12.1. All complaints about the use of force will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in accordance with the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board 'Arrangements for managing allegations of abuse against people who work with children or those who are in a position of trust'.

12.2. The school will not investigate complaints about the use of force unless or until they are advised they may do so by the LADO.

13. Review

13.1. All staff should be involved in the annual review of the policy. This should form part of the school self-evaluation process. Having reviewed the issue and evaluated their experience, the policy and management arrangements should be amended as necessary.

13.2. The Governing Body is responsible for reviewing annually the application and effectiveness of the policy.

K Cameron
September 2024

This policy was written in line with these three documents:

- Use of Reasonable Force, July 2013
- Behaviour in Schools, September 2022
- Keeping Children and Staff Safe: Restraint Policy Guidance, April 2016

Related Policies: Safeguarding Policy, Staff Conduct Policy, SEND Policy, Behaviour Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Appraisal Policy, Complaints Policy.

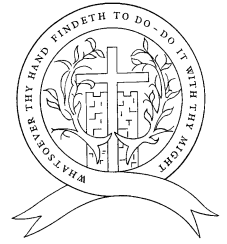
Appendix 1:

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Physical Restraint Agreement Form.



St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Diocesan Multi Academy Trust



Pupil's Name:	Date of Birth:
Physical Restraint will be used in cases of:	
Method of Restraint:	
Any medical conditions which need to be considered:	
Persons nominated by the Headteacher to apply restraint where necessary:	
Signature of Parent/Carer	Date:
Printed Name:	
Signature of Headteacher:	Date:
Printed Name:	

Parents will always be informed when a child has had to be restrained.