

# Stillness Infant School

## Positive Handling Policy (reviewed January 2024)

### Introduction

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils who may need to be positively handled.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils, specifically the school's Behaviour Policy, Preventing & Dealing with Violence at Work, Staff Code of Conduct, Complaints Procedure.

### Purpose of the policy

Good professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in school respond positively to the discipline practised by the staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff. It is also acknowledged that in **exceptional** circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of positive handling may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in Stillness Infant School:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where positive handling is necessary and
- are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur.

The application of any form of positive handling places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and **to seek alternative strategies wherever possible** in order to prevent the need for positive handling.

**Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff, or property, are at risk.**

### Definitions

#### **(a) Physical Contact**

Situations in which proper physical contact takes place between staff and pupils, e.g. in sports/PE or to comfort pupils.

#### **(b) Physical Intervention**

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

#### **(c) Positive Handling**

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to pupils, staff, or property, or if good order is being seriously prejudiced. All such incidents will be recorded.

### Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working at Stillness Infant School has the right to:

- a recognition of their unique identity
- be treated with respect and dignity

- learn and work in a safe environment
- be protected from harm.

Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of their needs by staff that have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in the school;
- be informed about the school's complaint procedure.

The school will ensure that all pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits which govern behaviour in the school. Parents should have committed themselves to ensure the good behaviour of their child and that the child understands and follows the School's Behaviour Policy.

### **Training**

Positive Handling training will be made available to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the Head teacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

### **Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour**

Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches will be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- a) Verbal acknowledgment of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain; this includes negotiation, care and concern.
- b) Further verbal reprimand stating:
  - this is the second request for compliance
  - an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable
  - an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- c) Warning of potential need to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. At this point it may be necessary to summon assistance from trained staff, staff who are more familiar with the child's needs, or a member of the SLT.
- d) Physical intervention. Reasonable physical intervention using the minimum degree of contact to prevent a child harming him or herself, others, or property.

### **Escalating Situations**

The 1996 Education Act (Section 550A) stipulates that reasonable physical intervention may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom, during a teaching session or elsewhere (this includes authorised out-of-school activities);

- self-injuring or placing himself or herself at risk;
- injuring others;
- causing damage to property, including that of the pupil himself or herself;
- committing a criminal offence (even if the pupil is below the age of criminal responsibility).

### **Types of Incidents**

Incidents described above fall into 3 broad categories:

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property;
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline.

### **Examples of situations which fall within one of the first two categories are:**

- a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing injury, damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of materials or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor or in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself;
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave the school.

### **Examples of behaviour which fall into the third category are:**

- a pupil persistently refusing to do as requested;
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

### **Acceptable measures of Physical Intervention.**

Positive handling can only be deemed reasonable if:

- it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident;
- it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent;
- it is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result;
- the age, understanding and the gender of the pupil are taken into account;
- it is likely to achieve the desired result.

### **Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervention.**

The form of physical intervention may involve staff doing the following:

- physically interposing themselves between pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- escorting a pupil;
- herding a pupil away.

Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

### **Whenever positive handling is used, staff will keep talking to the pupil.**

### **Recording**

Where positive handling has been used a record of the incident always needs to be kept. All recording needs to be completed on the day of incident and needs to include the following:

- name of pupil
- date, time and place of incident

- a brief description of the incident and actions taken
- attempts made to calm the situation
- names of people who witnessed the situation
- any damage/harm to persons or property
- name of person informing parents
- after investigation a summary of action taken

Staff completing recording forms will keep a copy for themselves for future reference.

After the review of any incident, a copy of the recording form will be placed on the pupil's file.

*See appendix 1 for the recording sheet.*

### **Action after an Incident**

The Head teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Child Protection Procedure
- Staff Facing Allegations of Abuse Procedure
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure

Members of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.

In case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

### **Complaints**

The availability of a clear policy regarding Positive Handling and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's Complaints about Staff Procedure Policy. The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints but other governors will not be involved as a complaint may require further action on their part.

### **Monitoring of Incidents**

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use positive handling, this will always be recorded and documented. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Head teacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using positive handling.

This process will address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.

Date: January 2024

Review date: January 2026

Approved by Full Governing Body

Appendix 1.

Positive Handling Report

Day and Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Name(s) of staff involved	
Name of Child(ren) involved	
Name(s) of other staff/children who witnessed incident	
Brief description of incident (Please be objective and factual, outlining how incident began and progressed, details of pupil's behaviour, what was said by each parties, steps taken to defuse/calm the situation, degree of force used, how applied, and for how long.)	
Reason why restraint was necessary	
Child's response & outcome of incident	

Details of any injury suffered by the child, another child or member of staff or other damage to property	
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Signed:

Date:

DRAFT