



ST. MARY MAGDALENE
C OF E SCHOOL

Positive Handling Policy (Secondary Phase)

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"Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you." Luke 6:31

In the Koinonia Federation we strive for excellence and high standards through:



A Koinonia student will go out into the world happy, courageous, resilient, motivated with a lifelong love of learning, fully equipped to make a positive contribution to society.

Ephesians 4:32 Instead be kind and tender hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ.

Children at our schools enjoy many rights. These include the right to be healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve and to make a positive contribution to school life. We foster and nurture the Christian faith and the ethos of the Church of England. We aim to create a positive and caring environment which values all members of our diverse community, and where anti-social and bullying behaviours are not accepted or tolerated.

Our school motto 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you' helps us to think about our actions and try to look for peaceful and productive ways to solve conflict. When considering a situation we may also consider what we think Jesus may have done. (WWJD – What Would Jesus Do)

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. We work in partnership with all stakeholders to eliminate bullying and unacceptable behaviour.

Positive Handling Policy

Positive environments where children can flourish (Ofsted)

In October 2021, Ofsted updated its guidance on how they will inspect a school's approach to physical interventions, restraint and the restriction of liberty. The guidance has been updated to explain the importance of protecting and promoting children's rights; recognise that restraint negatively impacts children's mental health and well-being; highlight the importance of taking positive steps to understand children's communication, and to identify triggers for and problem-solve difficult situations by taking positive steps to defuse situations. The advice includes information about how inspectors will explore the culture of the residential setting or school through an understanding of the role of leaders in overseeing staff practice and outcomes for children and young people.

This policy has been developed with due regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE 'Use of reasonable force in schools' 2013
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2018
- DfE 'Positive environments where children can flourish' 2021

The policy should be read in conjunction with other federation policies relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding, Behaviour, Health and Safety, Equality and Complaints policies.

Policy Statement

St Mary Magdalene Secondary Phase respects the rights of students and believe that staff should work positively and confidently to find the least intrusive way to support and keep students safe. The foundation of good practice in working with student should be:

- Building relationships of trust and understanding
- Understanding triggers and finding solutions
- Diffusing incidents should they occur

We recognise that the use of positive handling is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure student safety and well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. Positive handling should only 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 student to regain self-control. Our policy on restraint should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy and Child Protection Policies.

Specific aims of the positive handling policy

- To protect every person in the school community from harm

- To protect all students against any form of physical intervention that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- To provide adequate information for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour when dealing with violent or potentially violent situations

Definition of Positive handling at St Mary Magdalene Secondary Phase

Positive handling is the positive application of protecting the student from harming themselves or others, or seriously damaging property.

The Legal Framework

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the case. Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and should only be used as a last resort. Article 4 of the Education Act 1989 clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It enables teachers and other members of staff in schools, authorised by the Headteacher or Principal, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a student:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to a person
- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its students; whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

However, any use of positive handling has to be the last resort.

Examples of possible situations are:

- A student attacks another child or adult
- Students fighting
- A student trying to run away from school
- A student in danger of causing injury through the misuse of substances, materials or objects
- A student shows persistent and extreme acts of defiance disrupting the safety of those around them
- A student persistently refuses an instruction to leave an area putting themselves or others in danger

This list is not exhaustive and professional judgement will be used.

Why use Positive handling?

Positive handling should be used to avert danger by preventing or deflecting a student's actions. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary and staff will need to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise. They should always act within the school's Behaviour Policy particularly when dealing with disruptive behaviour.

The Interventions used are Proportionate

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 student to regain self-control. Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling. If a member of staff decides that force is necessary, he or she must then ensure the degree of force used is reasonable.

The Intervention employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is trying to prevent. Any interventions used should be the minimum required to achieve the desired result. The member of staff must bear in mind what it is that force is being used to prevent, and use no more force than is necessary to ensure that result.

When Positive handling becomes necessary

Do

- Tell the student what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Advise the student what they need to do to remove the restraint
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible
- Relax your restraint in response to compliance
- Maintain a calm supportive manner
- Do be aware of personal jewellery or sharp nails which might scratch students

Don't

- Involve yourself in a verbal altercation with the student
- Involve other students
- Twist any limbs
- Grab children by their hair
- Hold the student in any way that would restrict blood supply
- Act in temper

Management by Staff of Disruptive Behaviour

Physical intervention should never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management. All staff need to develop strategies and techniques for dealing with disruptive and challenging behaviour, which they should employ to diffuse and calm situations.

Staff should:

- Avoid confrontational behaviours
- Avoid invading a student's personal space
- Avoid too much language or sensory overload
- Use distraction tactics
- Avoid giving the impression of communicating through frustration or anger.

Actions after the Incident

There is a clear need for debriefing once an incident of positive handling has taken place, both for the student and the adult. A member of the leadership team should be informed as soon as possible and all relevant information should be recorded on the school CPOMS system. (Child Protection Online Monitoring System). All sections of the report should be completed so that in case of a future complaint the incident has been fully recorded.

The senior leadership team will take responsibility for debriefing and offering support as required. The parents/carers will need to be informed as soon as possible after the incident, with details of the actions that were taken the reasons why and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary for decisions to be made regarding possible exclusions, support programmes and engagement with outside agencies including the possibility of a social care referral.

Risk Assessments

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

- Management of the student (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict)
- 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

Complaints Procedures

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents/carers, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints however, a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation in line with the school's complaints policy. All staff will be made aware of these procedures and the context within which they apply.