



# Positive Handling Policy

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**Next review due by:** Sept 2025

## 1. Introduction

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### Legal Framework

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. to use such force as is reasonable in circumstances where the pupil may need to be prevented from engaging in behaviours which are likely to cause injury to themselves, others or damage to property. This policy takes into account The Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 93 which reinforces and replaces previous guidance. It also considers joint guidance issued by the DfE and Department of Health and follows the guidance for 'The Use OF Reasonable Force to Control or Restrain Pupil's'. The policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies such as Inclusion policy, Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Policy. The guidance extends this to maintaining good order and discipline, for both on-site and off- site activities.

Reasonable minimal force must be a matter of personal judgement. All teachers have a professional 'duty of care' within their job description which is underwritten by paragraph 58.7 of School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2002. Together with the legislative framework this enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable.

Positive handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful **or in an emergency situation.**

## **What does it mean to restrain a child?**

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property. The proper use of positive handling requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining. The decision to use positive handling as restrictive physical intervention must take account of the circumstances and be based on an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention compared with the risks of not employing a restrictive intervention.

The physical intervention must also only employ a reasonable amount of force – that is the minimum force needed to avert injury or damage to property, or to prevent a breakdown in discipline – applied for the shortest period of time (see section on use of reasonable force).

## **Why use restraint?**

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. Positive handling skilfully applied may be eased by degrees as the child calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour. Should physical restraint be necessary it will be utilised by staff trained in the correct procedures. Staff members trained in 'Team Teach' will be summonsed as quickly as possible with the intention of deescalating and reducing the risks to the child, other persons and property.

## 2. Aims

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### **General aims**

The staff at The James Cambell Primary school 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 our Behaviour Policy and also to Child Protection guidelines.

### **Aims:**

The aims of this policy are:

- To address the meaning of 'duty of care'.
- To provide guidance to staff and parents about appropriate physical contact.
- To assist staff to maintain a safe and secure environment in school so that learning can take place.
- 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 use the minimum degree of force necessary to accomplish positive handling.

- To give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from pupils or others.
- To protect staff and minimise the risk to staff of any accusation of improper conduct towards a pupil.
- To maintain accurate records of incidents where positive handling (including restraint) has been employed.

### 3. Objectives

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At James Cambell Primary school it is recognised that the majority of pupils respond positively to the discipline and control practiced by staff and to the rules within school. 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 reasonable and necessary force may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of duty of care in taking appropriate training measures where the use of physical restraint is necessary and are provided with suitable training to deal with these difficult situations.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- Self-harming
- Causing injury to others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Engaging in any behaviour which causes disruption to the good order and discipline at school.

Most young people at James Cambell Primary School will never require any form of positive handling. Where staff may have to deal with some young people who exhibit disturbed, distressed and distressing behaviour. It will be necessary to carry out a risk assessment. We will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

- The environment
- Body language
- The way we talk
- The way we act

The school's ethos and the guidance in this policy is based on the presumption that every adult and child is entitled to:

- Respect for his/her private life
- Recognition that all pupils are unique
- The right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- The right to learn and work in a safe environment
- The right to be protected from harm, violent, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, it is our intention to plan how to respond 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);
- 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.
- If positive handling is likely to be necessary this should be included in the pupil's Personal Learning Journey together with information on: de-escalation strategies; the manner in which the pupil will be held; how support can be summoned if needed; any medical factors to be considered. (A serious incident form will be completed following the incident). (See below)

### **Minimising the use of force:**

At James Cambell Primary we aim to ensure that the environment is calm and minimises the risks of incident arising that might require physical intervention. In addition pupils who present with persistent challenging behaviour (SEMH) are supported through the SEND procedures in school. They may have a learning mentor to support, access to a nurture group, individual targets other behavioural interventions.

In class all pupils access the PSHE curriculum to support anxiety, learning about feelings and managing conflict.

## 4. Procedures

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### **Procedures:**

It is important to consider when reasonable force is appropriate, the actions necessary should positive handling be used, the strategies that are deemed acceptable, and the recording procedures that should be in place. Positive Handling uses the **minimum** degree of force for the **shortest period of time** to prevent a pupil harming him/her self, others or property.

The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be **proportionate** to both the behaviour of the individual and the nature of the harm they might cause.

Staff would be expected to follow the pupil's individual targets or positive plan.

***(All pupils where issues have arisen will have a positive handling plan.)***

Only if all of the above have been tried and are unsuccessful should staff consider any other form of restraint. This would involve only staff who have been

 **TEAM TEACH TRAINED**

### **Physical Contact**

There are situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils e.g. in the care of pupils and in order to support access to areas of the curriculum. Young children also require opportunities for close contact as long as it is sensitively carried out and age appropriate.

### **Physical intervention**

This may be used to divert a pupils from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding a pupils by the arm or shoulder, offering a hand where the pupil is compliant.

This type of technique may prevent a potentially volatile situation from escalating further.

### **Other Positive Handling Strategies.** (see also behaviour policy)

These will include Time Out/ Withdrawal from the situation.

### **Physical control/Restraint/intervention.**

#### **When might it be appropriate to use?**

When a pupil may be:

1. Committing an offence
2. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself); or
3. Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or amongst pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Examples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- Pupils fighting;
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which s/he might have or
- cause an accident likely to injure him/herself or others;
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- ❖ A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom.
- ❖ A pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

#### **Action Steps:**

1. Tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
2. If possible summon another adult;
3. Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident;
4. Make it clear that restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
5. Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:

- i. Providing medical support
- ii. 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.

#### **De-escalation & Positive Handling Strategies:**

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

- Move calmly and confidently
- Make simple, clear 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 SHOULD NOT INTERVENE WITHOUT HELP**

Assistance should be sought when dealing with:

- A physically large pupil
- More than one pupil, or
- When the teacher believes that s/he may be at risk of injury
- 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, telephone the police
  - 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

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following requirements:

### **Restraint must NOT:**

- Involve hitting the pupil
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- Restrict the pupil's breathing
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas

During any incident the restrainer should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or
- (In extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

### **Some Dos and Don'ts**

#### **DO**

- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Summon help
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Provide a soft surface if possible
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil
- Hold the pupil's arms by his/her sides

## DON'T

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking even if the pupil does not reply
- Straddle the pupil
- Push arms up the back
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints

## 5. Recording

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Staff should record all incidents of positive handling (including restraint) in accordance with this policy and report these to the Headteacher. **(Serious Incident Form)**.

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 restraint
- 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. A record of the incident will be kept in the pupil's file and in a file of all such incidents kept centrally.

## 6. Complaints

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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, and should help to avoid complaints from 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.

All complaints are dealt with according to the School's Complaints Policy and 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.

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 our own self-protection.

## 7. Statement for Parents

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

The statement will highlight:

- Our emphasis on care and protection for everyone within our school community
- Our belief that restraint will be needed on very rare occasions
- Our endeavour to handle situations with care and responsibility

The statement will outline:

- 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.

## 8. Training

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It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that staff members are fully informed of the school policy and understand what authorisation entails. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to arrange training or guidance to staff, possibly through a senior member of staff. An up-to-date list of authorised staff should be maintained within school and teachers should know who they are. No member of staff will be authorised to use Team Teach techniques without appropriate training.

## 9. Monitoring

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This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the headteacher.



## Appendix 1

### **Cambell Primary Centre Authorised Staff – Positive Handling (Team Teach trained) From section 550A of The Education Act 1996:**

The Act allows all teachers at a school to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. It also allows other people to do so, in the same way as teachers, provided they have been authorised by the Head teacher to have control or charge of pupils. Those might include classroom assistants, care workers, midday supervisors, specialist support assistants, education welfare officers, escorts, caretakers, or voluntary helpers including people accompanying pupils on visits, exchanges or holidays organised by the school.

Head teachers should identify people, other than teachers, whom they wish to authorise to have control or charge of pupils and therefore be able to use force if necessary.

Authorisation may be on a permanent or long-term basis because of the nature of the person's job, or short term for a specific event such as a school trip. The Head should explicitly inform the people concerned, and ensure that they are aware of and properly understand what the authorisation entails. To ensure this, Heads may find it helpful to arrange for a senior member of the teaching staff to provide training or guidance. They should keep an up-to-date list of authorised people and ensure the teachers know whom they are.

#### **Staff members currently trained in application of 'Team Teach principles: Name of staff member Date of Training:**

Zenab Abbas	Sep 2020 (updated annually)
Gemma Bird	Sep 2020 (updated annually)
Melanie Ball	Sep 2019 (updated annually)
Rebecca Seaton	Sep 2020 (updated annually)
Hazel Thompson	Sept 2024 (Updated annually)
Other members of staff may be trained at different points of the year and may not be reflected on the policy until it's review.	