

St. Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Positive Handling Policy



"I came so that you may have life, life in all its fullness" John 10:10

St Michael Catholic Primary School and Nursery is a Catholic family of faith following the teachings of Christ. We strive to create an environment where all members of our school community respect the values of: Church, Independence, Resilience, Caring, Learning and Enjoyment for all. Belief in these values will nurture all as individuals and instil in them the confidence to meet their full potential, providing them with the best grounding for their future place in an ever-changing world.

Policy Date	September 2026
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs N Collins
Review Date	September 2027

Introduction

At St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School, we are committed to promoting positive behaviour through strong relationships, high expectations, restorative approaches and our Catholic values.

We believe that children learn best when they feel safe, respected and understood. Our behaviour management approach prioritises prevention, de-escalation and support.

We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when staff need to intervene physically to prevent harm, injury or serious damage to property.

For the purposes of this policy, Positive Handling includes the use of reasonable force and restrictive physical intervention where this is necessary, proportionate and lawful in order to prevent harm.

Positive handling will only ever be used as a last resort when all other reasonable strategies have been attempted or where immediate intervention is required to maintain safety.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote a safe environment for all pupils and staff.
- Protect children from harm.
- Ensure staff understand their legal powers and responsibilities.
- Promote positive relationships and de-escalation strategies.

- Ensure physical intervention is only used as a last resort.
 - Minimise risk and distress to all involved.
 - Ensure incidents are recorded, monitored and reviewed appropriately.
 - Support pupils following incidents.
 - Support staff involved in incidents.
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Key Principles

At St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School:

- Every child deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.
 - Positive relationships underpin effective behaviour management.
 - Prevention and de-escalation are always the preferred approaches.
 - Physical intervention should only be used when necessary.
 - Any use of force must be reasonable, proportionate and lawful.
 - The welfare of the child remains paramount.
 - Restrictive interventions should last no longer than necessary.
 - All incidents will be reviewed to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.
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Prevention and De-escalation

The best form of positive handling is preventing situations from escalating.

Staff will use a range of strategies including:

- Positive relationships
- Calm communication
- Active listening
- Distraction

- Redirection
- Humour where appropriate
- Giving choices
- Planned support strategies
- Safe spaces
- Emotional regulation strategies
- Individual support plans
- Restorative approaches
- Trauma-informed practice

Staff should remain calm and professional at all times.

Where possible, pupils should be given time, space and support to regain self-control.

Vulnerable Pupils

Some pupils may be more likely to require additional support due to:

- SEND
- Social, emotional and mental health needs
- Autism
- ADHD
- Trauma
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Communication difficulties
- Medical conditions
- Safeguarding concerns

For these pupils, individual behaviour and support plans may be developed to reduce risk and support positive outcomes.

When Positive Handling May Be Used

Physical intervention may only be used when a member of staff reasonably believes it is necessary to:

- Prevent a pupil from injuring themselves.
- Prevent a pupil from injuring another person.
- Prevent serious damage to property.
- Prevent behaviour which places safety at significant risk.
- Prevent a pupil from leaving a safe area where this would place them at risk.
- Restore safety and good order when all reasonable alternatives have failed.

The decision to intervene will always be based upon professional judgement and the specific circumstances of the situation.

Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to the minimum amount of force necessary to achieve a legitimate aim.

Any force used must be:

- Reasonable.
- Necessary.
- Proportionate.
- Appropriate for the circumstances.
- Applied for the shortest possible time.

The degree of force used should always reflect the level of risk presented by the situation.

Examples of Acceptable Physical Intervention

Examples may include:

- Standing between pupils during conflict.
- Blocking a path to prevent danger.
- Guiding a pupil away from danger by the arm.
- Escorting a pupil to a safer location.
- Separating pupils involved in physical aggression.
- Holding a pupil in a safe manner to prevent immediate injury.

These examples are not exhaustive and each incident must be judged according to circumstances.

Prohibited Practices

Staff must never:

- Use corporal punishment.
- Use force as a punishment.
- Use techniques that deliberately inflict pain.
- Restrict breathing.
- Hold a child around the neck.
- Hold a child by their hair or ears.
- Slap, punch or kick a pupil.
- Force limbs beyond natural movement.
- Hold a child face down on the floor unless exceptional circumstances exist and safety absolutely requires it.
- Humiliate or degrade a pupil.
- Deprive pupils of food, drink or basic needs.

Any intervention which is likely to cause injury, fear or humiliation should be avoided.

Trained Staff

The school will ensure that appropriate staff receive training in positive handling and physical intervention techniques in accordance with school needs and recognised best practice.

All staff are expected to understand:

- Their legal responsibilities.
- De-escalation strategies.
- Safe practice.
- Reporting procedures.
- Safeguarding expectations.

Training will be refreshed regularly.

Recording and Reporting

Any incident involving positive handling must be recorded as soon as possible.

The record should include:

- Date and time.
- Individuals involved.
- Antecedents and triggers.
- De-escalation strategies attempted.
- Description of the incident.
- Type of physical intervention used.
- Duration of intervention.
- Outcomes.
- Injuries sustained.
- Witnesses.

Incidents should be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Informing Parents

Parents and carers will be informed as soon as reasonably possible following any significant positive handling incident.

Communication will include:

- A factual account of the incident.
- The reasons intervention was necessary.
- Any injuries or concerns.
- Planned next steps.

The school seeks to maintain positive partnerships with families following incidents.

Debrief and Support

Following an incident:

The Pupil

The pupil will:

- Be given time to recover.
- Have an opportunity to discuss the incident.
- Be supported to reflect on events.
- Be helped to identify alternative strategies for the future.

Staff

Staff involved will:

- Receive support from a senior leader.
- Have an opportunity to debrief.

- Receive appropriate wellbeing support if required.

Review

Relevant staff will review the incident and consider:

- What triggered the behaviour.
 - Whether support plans need adjustment.
 - Additional strategies that may help prevent future incidents.
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Complaints and Allegations

Any complaint regarding positive handling will be investigated thoroughly, fairly and promptly.

The school recognises the importance of supporting staff where reasonable force has been used appropriately and lawfully.

Positive handling incidents will be reviewed in conjunction with safeguarding and complaints procedures where required.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will monitor:

- Positive handling records.
- Patterns and trends.
- Training needs.
- Individual pupil plans.
- Policy implementation.

Governors will receive anonymised information regarding incidents and monitoring outcomes where appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if changes to legislation, guidance or school practice require amendment.

Linked Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Medical and First Aid Policy
- Complaints Policy

Through positive relationships, effective de-escalation and a commitment to safeguarding, St Michael Catholic Primary and Nursery School seeks to provide a safe, supportive and nurturing environment where every child can flourish and experience life in all its fullness.