

Positive Handling Policy

Whole School and EYFS

Regulation ISSR: Part 3

Reviewed and updated by: Mrs C Wood

Approval: Full Governor Board

Last Review: August 2025

Next Review: Summer 2026



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. These include:

- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding

This policy was written following the non-statutory advice from the Department for Education, '[Use of reasonable force](#)' (July 2013). Note – we are waiting for an update from the DFE following their consultation (April 2025)

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 act in situations where the use of positive handling may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff (any person who works at the school and has lawful control or charge of pupils at the school) at Alderley Edge School for Girls:

- 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.

Training

Positive Handling training will be made available to designated staff as part of new staff induction. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling without appropriate training. Refresher training to members of staff will be provided through staff meetings.

Definitions

(a) Physical Contact

Situations in which proper or necessary physical contact takes place between staff and pupils include:

- Holding the hand of a very young child at the front/ back of the line walking to assembly
- Comforting a distressed pupil
- When a pupil is congratulated or praised by shaking hands for example
- Demonstration of a musical instrument, PE or sports coaching
- To give first aid

(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.**

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:

Verbal acknowledgment of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain; this includes negotiation, care and concern.

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.

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.

Physical intervention: reasonable physical intervention using the minimum degree of contact to prevent a child harming themselves, 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 themselves at risk;
- injuring others;
- causing damage to property, including that of the pupil themselves;
- committing a criminal offence (even if the pupil is below the age of criminal responsibility).

It does not authorise anything to be done in relation to a pupil which constitutes the giving of corporal punishment. We reject the use of corporal punishment.

Types of Incidents

Incidents described above fall into 3 broad categories:

1. Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
2. Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property;
3. 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 she might have or cause an accident likely to injure themselves;
- 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 considered;
- 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. A copy will be sent to the DSL and a copy will be scanned and uploaded onto CPOMS.

See Appendix I for the recording sheet.

The DSL will include the number of Positive Handling Incidents in the termly safeguarding report which is sent to the Governors' Curriculum Committee.

Action after an Incident

The Head 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 Code of Conduct Policy
- 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 Policy.

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 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 and is reported to the Governors' Curriculum Committee via their meetings.

Appendix I. 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 individual, steps taken to defuse/calm the situation, degree of force used, how applied, and for how long.) *The DSL may request further reports from other witnesses | |
| 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 | |
| First Aid provided? Summary of what was provided | |
| Parental contact made by DSL or Head of Year | |
| Added to CPOMS | "Positive handling report made and recorded, notes in Pupil File" (add date and time of incident) |
| Actions taken after incident to support pupil(s) and staff | |
| Logged on behaviour log and review of incident completed with relevant staff | |

Signed:

Date:

Copy sent to DSL

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