



Positive Handling Policy



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1. Aims

This policy has been written to support all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils who may need physical intervention. Staff at St. Vincent's VC Academy recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. St. Vincent's VC Academy follows the non-statutory guidance; Use of reasonable force; Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

2. Minimising the need to use force

As a school, we are committed to creating a calm and safe environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force.

The school will:

- Create and maintain a calm, orderly and supportive school environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require force arising
- Develop effective relationships between staff and pupils
- Teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings
- De-escalate incidents if they do arise
- Only use force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risk involved in not using force

3. Staff authorised to use force

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

- This power applies to any member of staff at the school.
- It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Head of School will make every effort to ensure that staff at St. Vincent's VC Academy

1. Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
2. Are provided with appropriate training to deal with difficult situations

Staff should only use force when:

- The potential consequence of not intervening are sufficiently serious to justify considering the use of force
- The risk associated with not using force outweigh those of using force
- The chance of achieving the desired result by other means is low

All staff will be kept informed and advised how to deal with particular pupils who present particular risk to themselves or others. If it is deemed there is a likelihood that force will need to be used a positive handling plan will be created for the individual pupil. Reasonable adjustments will be made for children with special educational needs & disabilities (SEND). PHPs will be reviewed following any use of physical intervention and necessary alternations made, if required.

4. Using force

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force and each case must be judged on its circumstance. However, when managing situations involving pupils with SEN and disabilities or medical conditions, the staff must recognise these additional vulnerabilities and consider carefully any associated risks when using reasonable force.

The force used needs to be in proportion to the consequence it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Staff will always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring a pupil.

Force should not be used to prevent trivial misbehaviour.

Before using force, staff should:

- Use all approaches/strategies available to them to deescalate the situation

- Communicate in a calm and measured manner
- Never act out of anger or frustration or to punish a pupil
- Make it clear to the pupil that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

The type of force used could be:

- standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- ushering a pupil away by placing a hand on the centre of the back
- using appropriate restrictive holds, which may require specific expertise or training

Staff should always avoid touching or restraining a pupil in a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct.

Staff are advised that, as far as possible, they should not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe or call for assistance.

5. Reason for using force

To:

- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight

6. Staff Training

Reminders of the behaviour policy will be given regularly through staff meetings and briefings. Staff will be offered the opportunity to take part in TEAM TEACH training. If a pupil is displaying challenging behaviour and it is thought they may need physical intervention a positive handling plan will be written, discussed and disseminated to staff.

7. Advice for staff

At all times try to manage your own emotions – maybe take a deep breath – and do not become involved in a 'conflict spiral'. Situations are rarely personal. Name the inappropriate behaviour; express clearly the desired behaviour, calmly confidently, assertively. Use 'language of choice' – put the responsibility, ownership of behaviour with the child.

8. Recording incidents

Any incident of physical intervention **must** be recorded on the appropriate form or in the appropriate book/folder. The incident should also be recorded/uploaded onto CPOMS.

9. Reporting incidents

After any incident in which force has been used parents should be informed as soon as possible. The Headteacher should also be informed.

10. Post-incident support

Physical Intervention can be distressing for both staff and pupils it is important both staff and children are given the time and support needed to help them regain their composure.

- The school will decide and involve as appropriate any multi-agency partner e.g. early help, social care, CAMHS.
- Wherever possible, the views of the child, post incident, must be sought understood and recorded.
- Opportunities to repair relationships between staff and pupils affected by the incident will be offered
- In some cases, the incident may lead to the fixed term or permanent exclusion of the pupil in line with the behaviour policy

11. Complaints or allegations

Complaints will be dealt with under the school's complaints procedures however, if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the school will follow the procedures outlined in the child protection policy, and advice sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer, as per Keeping Children Safe in Education.

12. Physical Contact with pupils in other circumstances

There may be occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary e.g., sports coaching or giving first aid. Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is being congratulated or praised, or where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. Teachers must use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support. For some pupils, touching is particularly unwelcome. Staff must bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentional physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

13. Powers to search pupils without consent

In addition to general power to use reasonable force, the Headteacher and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following 'prohibited items'²:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- pornographic images
- any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used
 - i) to commit an offence,
 - ii) to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil)
- Principal and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.

School staff can confiscate any prohibited items found as a result of a search.

The Headteacher/Head of School must ensure the person carrying out the search is of the same sex as the pupil, and the search must be carried out in the presence of another adult also of the same sex as the pupil (where possible in a small primary). Pupils cannot be required to remove any clothing other than outer garments. If a pupil's possessions are searched this must also be done in the presence of another adult. The person carrying out the search is able to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstance for exercising that power.

Furthermore, the Education Act 2011 allows staff to lawfully search electronic devices, without consent or parental permission, if there is a suspicion that the pupil has a device prohibited by school rules, or the staff member has good reason to suspect the device may be used to:

- cause harm,
- disrupt teaching,
- break school rules,
- commit an offence,
- cause personal injury, or
- damage property.

Appendix 1

NON-PHYSICAL CRISES INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Appear calm and relaxed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Appear afraid and unsure of yourself, ◆ Bossy or arrogant ◆ Assume an "I don't give a damn about you" attitude
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Keep the pitch and volume of your voice down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Raise your voice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Feel comfortable with the fact you are in control ◆ Project a calm assured feeling that you will see the situation through to a peaceful end no matter what happens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Appear to expect an attack
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Talk with the pupil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Give demands ◆ Make demands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Be matter of fact if the pupil becomes agitated ◆ Be sensitive and flexible ◆ Be flexible but consistent ◆ Be aware of body language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Make threats ◆ Maintain continuous eye contact ◆ Gesticulate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Stay close to the pupil and attend to him/her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Turn your back or leave ◆ Invade their personal space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Be patient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Display emotion ◆ Argue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Acknowledge his/her feelings ◆ Leave the pupil an avenue of escape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Corner the pupil physically or psychologically
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Where possible, remain seated as long as the pupil does; ◆ Avoid crowding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Get up and move towards the pupil

Appendix 2

USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN PUPILS
INCIDENT RECORD

Staff member(s) involved in the incident:

Reference
Number

Details of the pupil or pupils on whom force was used by a member of staff:

Name:

Year Group:

Date of the incident:

Time of the incident:

Location:

Details of witnesses:

Name:

(Staff / Student)

Name:

(Staff / Student)

Reason for intervention:

Immediate danger or injury to self Avoid damage to property
Verbal threats Immediate danger or injury to others Fighting
Assault in peer Assault on staff Disruption of other students

Detail any de-escalation techniques used:

Verbal advice & support Calm talking Reassurance
Removal from the area Non-threatening body language
Humour Step away Distraction

Description of the incident:

Details of the physical intervention used:

<u>Duration of the physical intervention:</u>	
<u>Detail any injury suffered by the member(s) of staff or student.</u>	
Student:	First aid required: Yes / No
Staff:	First aid required Yes / No
<u>Damage to property?</u> If yes, please provide details:	Yes / No
<u>Detail any follow up</u> - including post incident support, disciplinary action required against the student/s, amendments required to the PHP:	
Debrief undertaken with the student(s): Yes No	
Pupil's response to the incident:	
Date & time parents/carers informed of the incident:	
Outline of parents/carers response:	
If necessary, details shared with external agencies (social worker, police, Education Officer)	
Has any complaint/allegation been made against the member of staff? <u>NB</u> details should not be recorded here:	
Yes	No
Report compiled by:	Report countersigned by the Head:
Name:	Name:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:
Time:	Time:

IMPORTANT: - THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED THE SAME DAY

Incident Reporting – Bound Book

Please ensure that when you are completing incident forms you allocate yourself the next sequential incident number and complete all the required information in the Physical Intervention Bound Book

- Reference number
- Date
- Pupil involved
- Reporting staff
- Signature

**St. Vincent's VC Academy
POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN**

Name:

DOB:

ENVIRONMENTS AND TRIGGERS

Describe the situations that have led to a dangerous incident in the past.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
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RISK

Circle (or make **bold**) the level of potential risk.

Low

Medium

High

Circle (or make **bold**) and/or describe precisely what might happen

Slap

Punch

Bite

Pinch

Spit

Kick

Hair grab

Neck grab

Clothing
grab

Body holds

Arm grab

Weapons /
Missiles

<p>e.g. Violent tantrums Starts fights with other children Punches and kicks other children Grabs children around the neck and won't let go Very powerful when in a temper Throws/pushes furniture</p>
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PREVENTION

Describe any changes to routines, personnel or environment that might reduce the risk of this happening.

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DIVERSION AND DISTRACTIONS

Describe interests, words, objects etc. that may divert attention from an escalating crisis.

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DE-ESCALATION

Describe any strategies that have worked in the past or should be avoided

	Try	Avoid
Verbal advice and support		
Firm clear directions		
Negotiation		
Limited Choices		
Distraction		
Diversion		
Reassurance		
Planned Ignoring		
Withdrawal Offered		
Withdrawal Directed		
Transfer Adult		
Reminders about Consequences		
Humour		
Success Reminders		
Other/Talk about ringing parents		

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Describe any strategies that have worked in the past or should be avoided.

	Try	Avoid
Help Hug		
Cradle Hug		
Standing Wrap		
Sitting Wrap		
Standing Double Elbow		
Sitting Double Elbow (Single person)		
Standing Single Elbow		
Standing Single Elbow (2 person)		
Sitting Single Elbow (2 person)		
Half Shield		
Other		

LISTENING AND LEARNING

Describe any strategies which have worked in the past or should be avoided.

<p>Responds to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>Avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •

RECORDING AND NOTIFICATIONS REQUIRED

Parents/Carers		Educational Psychologist	
Headteacher/Head of School		Doctor / Nurse	
Social Care		Others:	

Name	Status	Signed	Date

Useful Links

DfE: Behaviour in Schools. Advice for Headteachers and school staff – Updated February 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>

DfE: Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions. Statutory guidance – December 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/306952/Statutory_guidance_on_supporting_pupils_at_school_with_medical_conditions.pdf

DfE Use of reasonable force Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf

Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders (2002)

chrome- <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/15434/>

DfE Screening, searching and confiscation – advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies. Updated July 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

Keeping Children Safe in Education; Part 4 Allegations of Abuse made against teachers and other staff.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>