



St Mary's CE Primary School

"Nurturing Success"

De-escalation and Positive Handling Policy 2024 (Use of Reasonable Force)

Date reviewed: June 2024
Date due for review: June 2026

This policy follows the DFE 'Use of reasonable force' guidance, 2013.

At St Mary's, we are committed to nurturing every child (and every adult) as a unique individual to be the best that they can be, within a safe, friendly and welcoming community rooted in Christian values. Our vision is to provide an education of the highest quality through a rich, broad and balanced curriculum which focuses on the development of the whole person. We want children to develop as happy, confident and articulate individuals who will love learning throughout their lives.

We expect all members of our school community to uphold the worth of each individual and to treat everyone with dignity. Children are expected to be respectful and kind towards others and to understand at an age appropriate level, the impact their behaviour has. If a child's words or actions are unacceptable, there are clear systems in place to address this within an overall framework of compassion and forgiveness. Children who make unwise behaviour choices are given opportunities to reflect and learn through restorative practice - a key way for children to work out how to be in relationship with themselves and others.

In line with our vision and our commitment to being the best that we can be, the highest standards of behaviour are expected from all pupils during lessons and at all times in the school day. These standards are clearly communicated and understood by pupils, parents & carers, governors, staff and voluntary helpers. As a community, we live out our vision, as outlined in Philippians 4, by actively looking to promote and celebrate positive behaviour. Praise, rewards, setting good examples, effective behaviour management and positive reinforcement are key to the successful promotion of good behaviour. All staff use these methods before considering the employment of sanctions. In this way, there is a pro-active rather than a re-active approach to behaviour.

Behaviour and Safety also go hand in hand, whether that be behaviour at school or behaviour online. For this reason, this Positive Handling Policy (Use of Reasonable Force) links with a whole suite of school policies including the school's Behaviour Policy, Strategic Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Online Safety Policy which incorporates the school's Acceptable Use Rules. All of these policies are underpinned by the school's Christian vision and values.

On rare occasions, there are circumstances when it is appropriate for St Mary's staff to use reasonable force. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain pupils. 'Reasonable in

the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed. Members of staff have the power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property and to maintain good order and discipline at the school or among pupils. All members of our school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can be used at St Mary's.

At St Mary's, staff can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from a room 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 in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

There may be other situations as every event is different.

School staff should 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 the pupil.

Core Principles

- At St Mary's, physical intervention must be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies including de-escalation strategies, have failed.
- All use of force must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary
- Force must never be used as a punishment
- At Mary's, reasonable adjustments for children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND) are made
- All parents are required to sign and return the Home School Agreement which will indicate parental agreement with the School Behaviour Policy
- Reasonable force may be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and will always depend on the individual circumstances.

Situations which may result in the need to use physical intervention or restraint are challenging for staff to deal with. Staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention. Physical restraint 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, allow the pupil to regain self-control.

The head teacher (or Assistant Headteacher in her absence) must be informed of any incident as soon as possible.

Staff must report on incidences of restraint they have witnessed or been involved in. A senior member of school staff will report to parents/carers on the same day, a serious incident of restraint.

If reasonable force has been used, this must be recorded on the reporting form at the end of this statement and logged in the behaviour log book and CPOMS. These can be used in order to inform individual and school risk assessments. All incidents within a school year will be stored with reference to the policy and guidance for that year.

In the event of any complaint or allegation, this record will provide essential and accurate information.

Preventing future incidents

An assessment of the pupil's behaviour will be undertaken to identify any factors which could in the future be prevented

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural plan. This may require additional support from the local authority Behaviour Support Team.

An assessment of any health and safety risk will be undertaken and this may lead to the development of a Support and Handling Plan.

In some circumstances a TAF may be appropriate to help identify an additional need for a particular child.

Complaints and Allegations

Complaints and allegations which may arise following the use of reasonable force will be managed through the schools Complaints Policy and Initial Allegation Management Procedures document.

References: Use of reasonable force; DFE; July 2013
Keeping children safe in education; DFE; September 2023

Reassurance		Planned ignoring			C.A.L.M. talking/Stance		Takeup time		Withdrawal offered	
Withdrawal directed		Transfer adult		Reminders about consequences		Humour		Success reminders		

Physical Intervention Strategies Attempted

Help hug		Cradle hug		Double elbow						
Sitting Double Elbow (single person)		Single Elbow (two person)		Sitting Single Elbow (two person)				Small Child Escort		

Other (please describe)

How was this action in the best interests of the child?

Do you think PHP needs amending? If yes why?

Summary of de-brief conversation

Name and Signature of Adults Involved

Date

Witnesses as stated above

Monitoring: *All reports logged in Bound Book by Head teacher*

SLT Evaluation Comment

Signature

Date