



**ST MARGARET OF SCOTLAND  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Positive Handling Policy  
2021**



**This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following school Policies:**

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding**
- **E Safety**
- **Anti-Bullying**

### **Rationale**

- Each child has the right to be educated in a safe and secure environment where each child's moral, intellectual, personal, social and emotional development is promoted.
- Parents and carers are informed and reassured that their children are being educated in a safe, caring and respectful atmosphere.
- All staff have the right to work in a safe and secure environment.

### **Aims**

- To create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe.
- 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 develop and implement guidance for staff (teaching and non-teaching) so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such force might be applied.

### **Definitions:**

**Reasonable Force** is the minimum force necessary to prevent a child from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned.

All schools need to consider;

- planned intervention in which staff employ, where necessary, pre-arranged strategies based upon a risk assessment and recorded within the Pupil Passport.
- emergency or unplanned use of force/intervention, which occurs in response to unforeseen events e.g. violent behaviour.

Luton Borough Council Guidance defines;

- **Escorting** – accompanying for protection or for guidance. The nature of the child's response and the degree of physical force being used by the member of staff will determine whether this act should be considered as a restraint.
- **Holding** – to assert authoritatively. The degree of force used in relation to the level of co-operation and compliance displayed by the child determines when holding becomes restraining. The higher the level of force the more likely the action will be deemed restraint.
- **Restraint** – physical control as defined by the application of force with the intention of preventing the child from harming themselves or others or damaging property.

### **Practices**

The school actively promotes positive behaviour management strategies (see Appendix 1 and the Behaviour Policy), thus reducing the need for the use of any form of physical intervention, except in emergency situations.

## **Risk Assessment**

Risk assessment is one of our preventative strategies to minimise the risk of an incident escalating unnecessarily and will be a normal practice for our school where a child or small number of children are known to exhibit disturbing or distressing behaviour.

Risk assessment will be considered only for those children where there is a foreseeable risk and enable the school to plan and train accordingly. Risk assessment will be considered from two perspectives (a) environmental risk assessment or (b) individual risk assessment. This should form part of the Pupil Passport.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Reasonable force/safe handling can be used by any member of teaching, support or admin staff who are authorised by the Head Teacher to have lawful control or charge of children and have received Team Teach training.

Reasonable force/safe handling can be used by any authorised member of staff on the school premises or when authorised elsewhere e.g. residential visit, sporting event, educational trip.

Reasonable force should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have been exhausted and where;

- Action is necessary in self defence or because there is imminent risk of injury to another child or person.
- There is a developing risk of injury to another child or person, or significant damage to property.

Examples that fall into the above categories are;

- A child attacks a member of staff or another child
- Children are fighting
- A child 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 child absconds from a class or tries to leave the school site (this will only apply if the child could be at risk when leaving the classroom or school site).

## **Forms Of Reasonable Force**

When other behaviour management strategies have failed it should be the **minimum intervention or force** that should reasonably be employed depending on the age, sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical condition and any special needs of the child and used in a way that preserves the dignity and respect of all concerned. The use of reasonable force/safe handling should involve a calm measured approach at all times appropriate to the particular child and in accordance with the schools agreed strategies and the following procedures;

- tell the child to stop the inappropriate behaviour
- ask the child to behave appropriately, clearly stating the desired behaviour
- tell the child that physical intervention will take place if inappropriate behaviour continues
- during the incident repeatedly reassure the child and tell him/her that physical contact will stop as soon as he/she is ready to behave appropriately
- if the member of staff feels at risk send for further staff support

The forms of reasonable force the school will use will depend on the individual circumstances and include:

- physically interposing between children
- leading a child by the hand or arm
  - shepherding a child by placing a hand in the centre of the back
  - in extreme circumstances using Team Teach holds

Staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by;

- holding a child around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the child's ability to breathe
- slapping, punching or kicking a child
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- tripping a child up
- holding a child by their hair or ear
- holding a child face down on the ground

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a child that might be considered indecent.

### **Health and Safety**

When using reasonable force/physical intervention/Team Teach the child's health and safety must always be considered and monitored.

Physical intervention/Team Teach should always involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the situation and calm the child.

A member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help if there is a risk that he/she may be injured or may endanger his/her life.

### **Record Keeping**

All incidents involving the use of reasonable force or Team Teach must be recorded using the agreed forms – see Appendix 2. After an incident the member of staff must inform the Head or an Assistant Head and provide the correct paperwork.

The Governors and Head Teacher will review such incidents annually.

### **Contacting Parents**

Parents/Carers should be contacted as soon as possible after an incident and this must be recorded on the relevant forms.

### **Complaints**

Any complaint from a parent will be dealt with within the school's complaints policy/procedures.

Staff who themselves are subject to physical violence or assault should be supported as appropriate in taking legal action.

### **Training And Development**

All staff will be given regular opportunities to raise issues relating to the use of reasonable force or Team Teach methods, procedures and practices relating to behaviour management and child protection policy and procedures.

Staff will be given the opportunity to complete Team Teach training.



## Appendix 1

### Preventative Strategies



## **Preventative Strategies**

All staff need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult children and steps which they can take to diffuse and calm a situation.

The strategies listed below as examples will be influenced by the age of the child and the context in which they are applied.

1. Move calmly and confidently
2. Make simple, clear statements
3. Intervene early
4. Try to maintain eye contact
5. If necessary summon help before the problem escalates
6. If possible remove audience from the immediate location

Actions to take:

1. Tell the child who is misbehaving to stop and tell him/her the possible consequences of failure to do so.
2. If possible summon another adult.
3. Continue to communicate with the child throughout the incident.
4. Make it clear that physical intervention will cease as soon as it is no longer necessary.

Appropriate follow up action should be taken, which may include:

- Providing medical support
- Providing respite for those involved
- Accessing external advice/support

A calm and measured approach 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.



## Appendix 2

### Recording Form for Use of Reasonable Force





**RECORD OF THE USE OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION**

**Child:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Involved:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Adult Witnesses To Incident:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Child Witnesses To Incident:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Outline of events leading to incident, including location, description of child's behaviour and steps taken to defuse situation other than physical intervention:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Outline of incident including reason for use of reasonable force, how it was applied and duration:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Measures taken following the incident e.g. respite for the child, support for the staff member:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Description of any injury sustained, subsequent treatment, damage to property:**



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**Date parent/carer contacted and details of their response:**

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**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_