

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Academy

Part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate



Positive Handling Policy 2025-2026

Policy Written:	Date: March 2025
Ratified by the Academy Committee	Date:
Date for review:	Date: March 2026
Chair of Academy committee:	Naomi Williams
Principal:	Helen Rigby

At St John the Evangelist Catholic Academy we strive to create an environment in which both children and adults feel happy, safe, secure and valued. We aim to ensure a whole school approach to behaviour known and understood by all staff, children, parents and outside agencies. **The use of force upon any pupil by a member of staff is a serious matter and should only be considered as a last resort.** However, the law is clear and the Governing Body has a responsibility to all concerned, to support any member of staff who as a last resort uses reasonable force in accordance with the law and this policy.

This policy is designed to serve the best interests of children and to reduce risk of harm to school staff. **It is based on, and should be read alongside DfE Use of Reasonable Force Guidance 2013 and other school policies on Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and SEND.**

In this policy, the term “**staff**” refers to teachers, teaching assistants, mid-day assistants and support staff alike.

At St. John the Evangelist Catholic Academy we aim:

- To nurture in children a sense of acceptance of responsibility for their own actions in order to promote positive behaviour choices.
- To create conditions for a learning community in which effective engagement can take place, in which there is mutual respect between all members, and where there is proper concern and ownership for the environment.

However, we also acknowledge that there are times when poor behaviour choices may require staff intervention to ensure the safety of the child, other children and staff and that this may require the use of physical interventions.

The Legal Framework

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- injuring themselves or others;
- committing a criminal offence;
- causing damage to property
- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom or elsewhere.

The DfE Use of Reasonable Force Guidance allows all staff at a school to use reasonable force to keep children safe. It also allows other adults in the school to use physical interventions where reasonable, proportionate and necessary to ensure the safety of children. Those might include classroom assistants, care workers, midday supervisors, specialist support assistants, escorts, caretakers or voluntary helpers, including people accompanying pupils on visits, exchanges or holidays organised by the school.

At St John the Evangelist Catholic Academy only staff who have received appropriate training are authorised to use positive handling techniques where a plan has been agreed for any children. All staff have a duty of care to keep children safe but a few individuals will have planned interventions.

Staff will always consider carefully whether physical intervention is necessary or if other options could be used to de-escalate the situation. Where possible staff will always try to deal with a situation through other strategies before using physical techniques. Trained staff need to develop strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and situations, which they should use to de-escalate and calm a situation. Advice and support will be sought from outside agencies when necessary. Refer to DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2020.

Key Points

- School staff have a legal power to use reasonable force and lawful use of this power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.
- Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
- Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power.

Planning for Incidents

Where we are aware that a pupil may be likely to behave in a way that may require physical control, the school adopts a proactive approach to managing these incidents by ensuring that a SEND Pupil Passport, Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Action Plan has been completed and that appropriate planning is in place to:

- De-escalate behaviour before it disrupts others.
- Manage the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict and where necessary the physical techniques to be used when there is no other way)
- Support staff after any crisis situation
- Involve the parents or carers to ensure that they are clear about what specific action the school might need to take and agree to the plans.
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned where necessary
- Involve medical and health services where necessary

Reasonable Force

- It is advised that wherever possible, another member of staff is present if staff need to use reasonable force in order to assist and/or act as support.
- Staff will always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent and will always follow training advice.
- It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Post Incident Support

If injuries result from the application of reasonable force, medical help should be sought straight away. Staff and children must also be given emotional support. The child will have the opportunity to reflect on their choices and actions in a supportive structured discussion using a Listen/ Link / Learn approach. This will help to improve behaviour long term if the child can take responsibility and learn to understand emotional responses and the impact on others. As soon as possible after an incident parents/carers should be informed and provided with a copy of this policy. When reviewing the incident with staff other multi-agency support will be considered. Where the child is responsible for the injury or distress to another person the child will be offered the opportunity to repair the relationship through a supported restorative approach.

Recording Incidents

All incidents where physical force has been necessary to be used by a member of staff will be carefully recorded and evaluated in the school's Accident and Incident Book. Immediately following any such incident, the member of staff concerned should tell the Principal, Vice Principal, or a senior member of staff and provide a written report as soon as reasonably possible afterwards (In the Accident and Incident recording book on site).

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a colleague or line manager on a description of the incident and action taken for recording purposes.

Complaints and Allegations

If a complaint is made against a member of staff about the use of force the school will follow the guidance set out in Section 8 of the Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies DfE –Ref:DFE-00341-2014