



**All Saints C of E**

**Infant and Nursery School**

# **Positive Handling Policy**

**September 2021**

*Opening hearts and minds through  
the grace and love of God*

# **ALL SAINTS CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*"Opening hearts and minds through the grace and love of God"*

At All Saints Infant and Nursery School, children always come first and we try to nourish, challenge, prepare and inspire them within a Christian ethos.

We believe in valuing all who contribute towards the successful running of our school including children, parents, carers, governors, teaching and non-teaching staff.

This Mission Statement lies at the heart of our school's aims. It is the philosophical basis for all of the school's policies and through these, for everything that happens in and round the school. Our aspiration is for everyone at All Saints to:

- feel happy, secure, safe and valued at school
- develop a growing awareness of their own inner self and spirituality, and of the power of the Christian faith to transform lives
  - develop healthy relationships based on care, trust, compassion and forgiveness
  - show acceptance for and understanding of others who may have different beliefs or needs
- strive for the highest standards of achievement, developing the confidence and skills to be independent, motivated and self-disciplined learners
- have a positive approach to life, contributing to the well-being of the community and building hope for the future

We hope that children will leave our school with open hearts and minds, ready to respond to the opportunities that lie before them and to experience the joy of life in all its fullness.

# Objectives

At All Saints Infant and Nursery School, we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our pupils to allow them learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential.

We take the safety of our pupils and staff very seriously. We believe that all pupils and staff have the right to feel and be safe whilst at school or on a school-run activity.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our behaviour, discipline, child protection (and the broader safeguarding agenda) policies.

Staff at this school are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school/pre-school or causes damage to property. Any parents/carers wishing to view this policy may do so on request.

This policy is also written in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's policy on the same subject, entitled 'Keeping Classrooms Safe for Learning and Teaching', March 2011.

# Introduction

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' in the national guidance (DfES/DoH 2002). A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Pupils with behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Headteacher may use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of discipline.

This policy details how we implement the guidance in our school and pre-school. It should be considered alongside the most recent LA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

# School and Nursery Expectations

The management team takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the school/pre-school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management team. This policy has a clear focus:

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after these children.

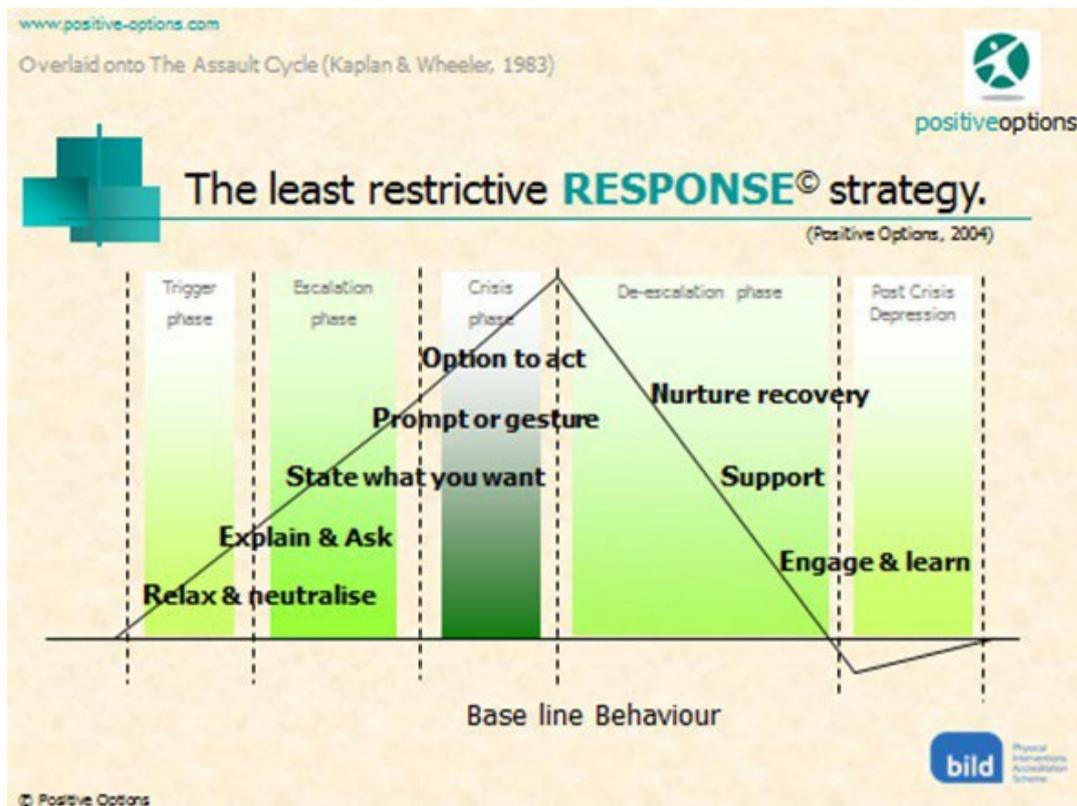
# Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at this school/nursery are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school/nursery behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents/carers are also encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

# Minimising the Need to Use Reasonable Force and Using Reasonable Force

When using force members of staff should only use the minimum amount of force required in achieving the required outcome.

Staff should also use force within the context of existing good practice in non-physical skills and techniques, such as in the RESPONSE<sup>®</sup> Strategy:



Staff should, where possible, avoid any type of intervention that is likely to injure a pupil, unless in the most extreme of circumstance where there was no viable alternative. Also staff should avoid using force unless or until another member of staff is present to support, observe or call for assistance.

We are firmly committed to creating a calm and safe environment which minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force. We use the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning curriculum to explore and strengthen emotional responses to situations.

We will only use force as a last resort and strongly believe in de-escalating any incidents as they arise to prevent them from reaching a crisis point. Staff will be skilled in promoting and rewarding positive behaviour and will utilise various appropriate techniques in the management of a class environment.

## Alternatives to Physical Controls

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.

- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

## Help Protocols

The expectation at this school/nursery is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available.

## Well Chosen Words

A well chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can actually wind them up. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

## The Last Resort Principle

We only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

“If necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predictable future.”

*Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – “The Control of Children in the Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act 1989” – London: H M S O*

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

# Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling Plan. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

# Reasonable and Proportionate

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

# Unreasonable use of Force

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a pupil secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

# MAPA

It is the policy of All Saints Infant and Nursery School that identified staff working closely with pupils who exhibit more challenging behaviours are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and

techniques of MAPA, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the Behaviour Policy.

## Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

## Getting Help

At this school the following support structures are in place:

- IEPs and Behaviour Management Plans for those pupils who have SEND are kept on file to ensure all relevant information about each pupil is available to all members of staff working with them.
- Briefing sessions to update staff on current issues and share information.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.

## Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the SEND documentation and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development,

special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in a Pastoral Support Plan or IEP.

## **Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies**

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences. The key principles are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school. In general, if staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

## **The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff**

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this school/pre-school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

## Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. Pupils should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school/pre-school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for Child Protection. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

## Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the head teacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. This school has adopted the MAPA model of training. All training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with DCFS and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

## Staff training

Staff at All Saints Infant and Nursery School, who have been identified as needing training in this area, will access Physical Intervention and MAPA training through the County Council co-ordinator who delivers nationally accredited courses.

These courses provide participants with an insight into recent legislation and guidance that could impact on policy and practice, as well as a range of physical and non-physical strategies to help manage the risks posed by children and young people's behaviour.

Nottinghamshire County Council has adopted the MAPA (Managing Actual and Potential Aggression) training model, and as such is an 'Approved Training Centre' for Positive Options Ltd, which is a BILD (British Institute of Learning Disability) accredited training programme.

These training programmes will be delivered to staff via whole school inset or by accessing specialist training events, details of which can be found in the physical intervention room on Nottinghamshire's virtual learning platform.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. However, all staff benefit from whole school training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our pupils.

Staff who receive MAPA training will be accredited to use the physical elements of MAPA for a defined period as stated on their certificate. Staff will be expected to attend a refresher course to update their skills and renew their certification every 12 months.

## Recording

All *significant* incidents where a member of staff has used force on a pupil must be reported in writing. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be made as soon as practicable after the incident. The governing body will ensure that a procedure is in place, and is followed by staff, for recording and reporting, *significant* incidents where a member of staff has used force on a pupil. The record must be made as soon as practicable after the incident.

While ultimately only a court of law could decide what is 'significant' in a particular case, in deciding whether or not an incident must be reported, staff should take into account:

- an incident where unreasonable use of force is used on a pupil would always be a significant incident;
- any incident where substantial force has been used (e.g. physically pushing a pupil out of a room) would be significant;
- the use of a restraint technique is significant;
- an incident where a child was very distressed (though clearly not over reacting) would be significant.

In determining whether incidents are significant, schools should consider:

- the pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time;
- the degree of force used and whether it was proportionate in relation to the behaviour;
- the effect on the pupil or member of staff.

Staff should also bear in mind the age of the child, any special education need or disability or other social factors which might be relevant.

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed.

# Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed by the governing body annually.