



# Stockton Wood Community Primary School



*'Laying the Foundations for Life'*

## Positive Handling Policy 2021-22

Review Date: May 2023



## Positive Handling Policy 2022-23

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### Compliance

This policy had been written in reference to and in conjunction with the following guidance, legislation and documents (but is not limited to):

- [Stockton Wood Behaviour Policy](#) (2022-23)
- [Stockton Wood Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#) (2022-23)
- Stockton Wood Staff Code of Conduct (2022-23)
- Department of Education [“Working together to safeguard children.”](#) (2018)
- Department of Education [“Keeping children safe in education.”](#) (2021)
- [Stockton Wood Special Educational Needs Policy](#) (2022-23)
- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015)
- Stockton Wood Restorative Practice (Statement of Intent)
- Department of Education [“Use of reasonable force Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies.”](#)

The policy will detail how Stockton Wood will implement guidance provided by the Department of Education (DfE) and Team Teach.

### The Legal Framework

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort.

Under the Children Safer Handling Policy Order (1995), it is only permissible as described under the heading “Physical Control.” The Education Order (Article 4, 1998) clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It enables trained staff in the school, authorized by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself)
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

### Definition of Positive Handling at Stockton Wood Primary School

Positive handling is the **positive application of force** with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property.

## Policy Aims & Purpose

All staff at Stockton Wood Primary School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the **last** in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety and/or well-being in order to maintain pupil safety, good order and discipline. Our policy on positive handling should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Child Protection policies.

Specific aims of our Positive Handling Policy include:

- protecting **every person** in the school community from harm.
- protecting **all pupils** against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- providing adequate information and **training** for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to support / intervene / manage effectively violent or potentially violent situations.

## Positive Handling – School Rationale

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him / herself or others.

It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions (self-regulate) and behaviour. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and trained staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories.

Staff should always act within the school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly when managing and supporting disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they have a duty of care throughout the school day and during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and wellbeing.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

## TEAM TEACH



The [TEAM TEACH](#) system is recognised by the Local Authority.

Team Teach is an accredited, provider of positive behavioural management. The provider equips schools with the "tools" they need to understand behaviour and manage challenging situations, in a positive and respectful manner.

Staff undergo a one- or two-day course led by qualified trainers with a single day refresher course undertaken every three years.

*Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible.*

Steps to be taken before using physical controls:

- show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning.
- give clear instructions for the pupil to stop (in some cases using key word language and/or visuals)
- remind the pupil about school's behaviour expectations and classroom rules.
- remove an audience or take the vulnerable pupil to a safe place.
- make the environment safer by re/moving furniture and re/moving objects which could be used as weapons or pose a risk.
- use positive guidance to escort pupils (for example guiding by their elbow, use of a bean bag to support regulation).
- ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

## Preventative Strategies

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (for example, a pupil attempting to run across a busy road, physical aggression towards peers and/or staff). However, in many circumstances there are **alternatives** which can be preventative and/or compliment school's **personalised provision** and behaviour management strategies, for example:

- use of clear and consistent instructional language using key words and/or visuals and repeated until the pupil complies.
- use of a "distractor" or "motivator" (for example, a tambourine, whistle, sensory tools, personalised boxes) to interrupt or deter the undesirable behaviour (such as a fight or physical aggression) until verbal control is effective.
- withdrawal to a safe, calm space (without an audience) if damage to property is threatened or carried out or physical aggression towards others is threatened or acted upon.
- avoidance of confrontation (for example, using pupil interests or humour to de-escalate behaviour)
- Use of self-regulation charts / visuals.
- **Restorative Practice.**
- sanctions consistent with the school's Behaviour Policy.

## Implementation of Positive Handling

Positive handling 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, allowing the pupil to regain self-control to once again regulate their emotions and behaviours within their environment.

It **should never** take a form, which could be seen as a punishment. Although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary. In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective positive handling should be a last resort. When positive handling becomes necessary:

**DO**

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why (for example, explaining why a child will be lifted from a table height due to his/ her safety being at risk)
- Use the minimum force necessary.
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple (key word) and clear language (and when appropriate supported by visuals).
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible (for example, above the elbow)
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance.

**DO NOT**

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil.
- Involve other pupils in the restraint.
- Touch or hold the pupil in sexual/intimate areas.
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint.
- Bend fingers or pull hair.
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing (for example, around the neck)
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil.

## When Might Positive Handling (Reasonable Force) Be Used?

Examples of situations that may require positive handling restraint may include:

- a pupil physically attacking a member of staff, or another pupil (aggressively, with increased volatility or as an unpredictable act of behaviour).
- pupils fighting.
- a pupil 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 pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others
- a pupil absconding from a class or trying to leave school (this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)
- a pupil persistently refuses to obey an instruction to leave an area
- a pupil behaves in such a way that seriously disrupts a lesson.
- a pupil has lost self-control (can no longer self-regulate despite school's use of preventative strategies)

## Post Incident Management & Recording of Positive Handling

Positive handling often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil.

A member of the leadership team (including Designated Safeguarding Leads) should be informed of any incident **as soon as possible** and will take responsibility for a planned debriefing once the incident has been calmed and any peer conflicts resolved.

An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, with their parents informed (and, if appropriate use school's Restorative Practice).

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the need through the development of a **SEND Support Plan**, Passport for Learning or access to additional support/ intervention (following school's **SEND Graduated Approach**). For some pupils this may include an emotional literacy or anger management programme, access to school's A Quiet Place or other strategies/intervention agreed by the **SENCO**.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances "triggering" the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be prevented, de-escalated and/or implement effective early intervention strategies. Staff can use school's **S.T.A.R. Chart** document to support the monitoring of positive handling incidents.

All incidents should be recorded **immediately using CPOMS** with the alert of the school's Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Incidents of positive handling must also be recorded in school's "**Bound and Numbered Book**" by the Headteacher or **trained Team Teach staff**.

A member of the leadership team will contact parents **as soon as possible** after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to share their parent/carer voice.

## Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive and/or aggressive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will risk assess to manage our response, this may include:

- personalised management of the pupil considering strengths and motivators and reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict (and when applicable informed by professional report recommendations).
- consultation advice with **Outreach providers** accessed via the South 1 SEND Consortium
- individual pupil risk assessments
- **involvement of parents/carers** to ensure they are clear about school's approach to positive handling and actions that may need to be taken.
- briefing of staff to ensure expectations of actions are clear (and in some cases identifying additional needs for training).
- identification of additional support that can be accessed from Health, Social Inclusion Team and/or **SEND Consortium**.

## Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents/carers, should help to avoid complaints from parents.

It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and Social Services department under child protection procedures. It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

## Reviewing the Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually within our school policy cycle, or earlier in response to local or national recommendations or changes to policy and guidance. In evaluating the effectiveness of this policy, the school will consider the outcomes of:

- reports presented by the Head teacher, SENCo and SEND Governor;
- regular monitoring activities as planned within the School Development Plan;
- parents/carers points of views.

**Review Date:** May 2023

