

St. Paul's Catholic School
Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy

Mission Statement

St Paul's School is a Catholic family,
a living, breathing reflection of the
love of our God and neighbour.

We each celebrate education through
diversity, seeking mutual respect and
high expectations.

Our mission and vision is to strive to
fulfil our potential as disciples who
grow in holiness, knowledge and
dignity.

LOVE
tenderly

ACT
justly

WALK
humbly

Preamble

This policy must be read and implemented in conjunction with the school behaviour policy and approach to behaviour management. Positive handling is the use of physical intervention to restrain a student.

Physical Intervention

On rare occasions it is necessary to intervene physically to prevent a student injuring themselves or others or committing a criminal offence, to keep a student safe, prevent damage to expensive property or to maintain good order and discipline within the school.

Restrictive physical intervention is always used as a last resort and when other strategies have failed. In the majority of incidents consistent application of the school's behaviour policy and positive management techniques are successful in resolving conflicts.

Key Pastoral staff at St.Paul's will be trained in Team Teach and receive regular refresher training to keep them up to date with their training. Part of the training and the internal professional development at the school is aimed at ensuring that they always use their professional judgement and calculate the risk to themselves and others should they feel it necessary to intervene physically with a student. Our detailed knowledge of our students means that staff can make instant risk assessments on each situation. There will always be situations which arise where an instant and emergency intervention needs to be made e.g. to stop a fight.

Appendix A St. Paul's Catholic School

POSITIVE HANDLING

Section 550A of the 1966 Education Act allows teachers, and other persons who are authorised to have control or charge of students, to use such force as is reasonable to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility)
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property (including the student's own property)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its students, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom or elsewhere.

Positive handling should involve minimum reasonable force and should seek to avoid injury.

Positive handling should only be used with professional judgement.

Positive handling should be avoided if there is a likelihood of staff injury.

Whenever possible, at least two staff should be involved in any positive handling situation.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

Management of Violent Behaviours

Aspects of behaviour common in students who display severe emotional and behavioural difficulties:

- Some students experience extreme mood swings that may involve a range of behaviours that demonstrate emotional fragility.
- At such times students can react to their circumstances with increased hostility and aggression.
- Disruptive behaviour is often a symptom of fear, failure or frustration. Frequently, students do not identify the true cause of their anxiety or emotional distress, but fixate on alternative 'supposed' causes.
- Real or imagined slights, minor disruptive incidents, or tension within the teaching group can trigger incidents that invoke hostile responses in such students.
- With or without staff support to defuse this tension and frustration, the student may display an outburst of violence.
- Outbursts of violence may be exhibited, the cause of which often originated out of the school or even due to the student's history.

Initial management of disruptive behaviours

- The level and nature of appropriate staff support, or intervention, will wherever possible depend on the attitude and behaviour of the student.
- When staff observe tension the initial approach should be low key and appropriate.
- The student's response determines the route by which staff manage the student's difficulties. In the majority of cases it is possible to divert the student away from a violent outcome.
- In some cases, the student will dismiss all avoidance options suggested by staff and continue to escalate aggressive behaviour towards a confrontational and violent outcome.
- Some situations can escalate very quickly.
- During an escalation, staff should decide whether and when to summon support or take other measures to safeguard the health and safety of all present.

Principles Governing Staff Decisions in Managing Students

Staff may use many options and strategies to manage difficult students. The selection of specific management techniques depends, in part, on the personality, character and temperament of individual staff. No set strategy guarantees a successful outcome to behavioural confrontation. However, the following principles should help support management decisions:

- It is essential that staff, when managing disruptive students, should remain objective and calm, in both speech and actions.
- It is important to listen and respond quietly to the student, rather than overwhelm the student with loud and insistent directives. (Loud, nagging demands).
- If no immediate solution is obvious, ask, if appropriate, if the difficulties can be dealt with at an agreed later time. Imposing an 'immediate' solution may not dispel the student's frustration, or diffuse the behaviour, whereas time distancing can sometimes do so.
- Avoid attitudes becoming polarised. Staff should keep their positions flexible for as long as possible, without losing their objective. Staff should rarely push towards confrontation.
- Always maintain positive attitudes that are constructive. By stressing positive behaviours regularly, staff reinforce desired attitudes in students. Refer to the student's previous achievements and promote self-esteem.
- In confrontations, negative factors should be stated in a neutral tone of voice. Factual statements should be used as the basis for staff/student discussion.
- Always clarify options and consequences, rather than impose directives or make threats. Students must be made aware that it is they who make the decisions and that those decisions have consequences.

- Create 'diversionary', displacement activities, involving other people, in order to dispel student's aggression. Resist being cornered in an argument. We can become defensive very easily. Avoid it.
- Decide, when appropriate, to involve other adults. Management of disruptive behaviour requires individual, undistracted attention. Supporting adults can encourage rational, sympathetic, supportive attitudes in other group members, helping to 'talk round' the aggressive student.
- When support is available, remove the student from an unhelpful environment. Don't allow negative peer pressure. Withdrawal can often enable staff and student to focus more clearly, and resolve the issues through discussion.
- Staff must assess the risks, promote physical safety and do everything possible to prevent physical injury.

Principles Governing the Positive Handling of Violent Students

- When aggressive students escalate confrontation to violent outcomes, staff, as far as possible should promote physical safety for all students and staff involved. This may require positive handling of aggressive students.
- No management strategies, including positive handling, which involves the deliberate ill-treatment of students by staff are acceptable. (e.g. hair pulling, punching, emotional abuse etc.).
- Key Staff will always observe Team Teach principles and adopt its methods that range from the least intrusive to the most restrictive. (These principles are outlined throughout this document. All staff are trained and regularly refreshed on these principles.)
- In exceptional circumstances with very strong and aggressive students, it may be necessary to employ the use of Team Teach ground recovery holds. Key Staff involved in such strategies will make strenuous efforts to follow the ground recovery safeguards published by Team Teach.
- Later, when calm, the student should be encouraged to discuss the reasons for the outburst. Discussions should include other, more acceptable options through which the violent conclusion could have been avoided. This follow-up action is a crucial element of support for violent students. It is essential that staff devote sufficient time to this aspect of managing violent behaviours.
- Any injuries should be examined, treated and recorded by a qualified first aider.
- The incident must be recorded on CPOMS, reported to the Headteacher for appropriate action to be taken and detailed descriptions provided (attached to CPOMS)
- A list of TT trained and authorised staff will be detailed in records held by the Vice Principal responsible for Child Protection.
- All staff are obliged to act within their 'duty of care', however there is an expectation that trained and authorised staff are utilised first.

- Staff and students involved in positive handling will receive a de-brief with the Vice Principal in charge of safeguarding

The positive Handling of a Violent Student

It is considered that action under this heading will normally only be necessary in a very small number of incidents:

- Prior to exercising containment, the staff should advise/warn the student this is about to happen.
- If it becomes necessary to physically hold a student, the amount of force used must be the minimum necessary to hold the student safely. Any offensive acts towards a student such as punching, hitting or slapping is unacceptable. Sudden violent pushing is also unacceptable, whereas a steady push or pull to separate aggressor from victim may be appropriate. Trained staff will be operating within specified guidelines and their actions evaluated in this context.
- The length of time the student is constrained/held and the degree of force used should be the minimum necessary to achieve the immediate objective of regaining control of the situation. As soon as it is safe, positive handling should be gradually relaxed to allow the student to regain self-control.
- Whenever possible, a member of staff faced with a situation where physical intervention is thought necessary, should call for assistance so at least two members of staff are present. If more than one person exercises positive handling, less strength is required and the risk of injury reduced. However, it is important to remember that the greater the number of staff involved, the less efficient the procedure may become. Communication is vital.
- Throughout the positive handling, the student should be spoken to in a quiet and soothing manner, encouraging the return to self-control. The staff holding should make it clear that the student will be released as soon as calm is restored.
- Staff should have very clear reasons for forcibly removing clothing as there is a high risk of injury. This should only ever include outer garments such as coats/fleeces and never involve any garment being removed over the head, covering the lower part of the body, or those next to the skin.
- Footwear may need to be removed to prevent damage/injury.
- Data analysis of records will be made at regular intervals and appropriate evaluations discussed with all staff.

Methods of Positive Handling

- Team Teach positive handling methods will be used at all times. It is expected that due consideration has been given to all low level alternatives to support the resolution of the incident before any of the following methods are employed.

- In some circumstances a small student can be held sufficiently to calm down by putting an arm around the pupil holding their arms or shoulders. Care is needed if arms are held as a struggle could result in an arm being wrenched. Generally, the most useful form of positive handling is to hold the student in a 'wrap', using the minimum of physical contact to contain the situation.
- The above method of holding may not be suitable for an older student, still the positive handling applied should not extend beyond holding with both arms engaged and employing controlled use of the weight of the body. At no stage should there be any offensive behaviour toward a student.
- The positive handling of a very violent, large student is likely to place staff in danger of injury. This risk is reduced if other staff are called. Staff should make every effort to avoid physical contact with such students merely to establish control. If this sort of incident occurs, then the police should be called and staff efforts should be directed towards the protection of themselves and other students.
- Team Teach training on positive handling does not include techniques that rely on grips to joints that cause pain or risk of injury if the person being held resists. On no account should a student be held by the neck. Techniques should rely on weight and power (biomechanical efficiency) of the staff to prevent undue movement of the student's arms (and if necessary legs). **The most appropriate form of positive handling should be used with the minimum physical contact.**
- Members of staff attacked by adults should not try to restrain them. They should attempt to isolate themselves from the attacker and contact the police.
- Inclusive within the TT system of behaviour management is the requirement that Key staff will receive regular training in deflection, diffusion, minimising behaviours and also in positive handling. An ongoing system of practice will ensure that all staff are aware of correct procedures.

Approved by Governors:

May 2020

To be reviewed:

May 2021