



## Our Lady and St John's Catholic Primary School

Boston Park Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9JF

[www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk)

### Positive handling Policy

| Policy Start Date | Policy Review Date | Frequency |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Spring 2026       | Spring 2028        | Two Years |

#### Introduction

The policy is in response to DFE circular July 2011 "The Use of Reasonable Force issued following the enactment of Section 93 of the 2006 Education and Inspections Act. The policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils.

#### Purpose of policy

In Our Lady and St John's Catholic Primary school, we believe good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. The majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practiced by staff. In exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required. Only for a very small minority of pupils/cases will physical intervention be needed.

#### Objectives

- To maintain the safety of pupils and staff
- To prevent serious breaches of school discipline
- To prevent serious damage to property

All school staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviour might be communicating. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. However, teaching staff work should always operate with an appropriate 'Duty of Care'; they could be liable for a claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this policy.

Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

#### Definitions of Reasonable Force

No legal definition of reasonable force exists however for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it at Our Lady & St John's:

- Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property.



## Our Lady and St John's Catholic Primary School

Boston Park Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9JF

[www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk)

- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- “Restrictive Physical Intervention” is the term used to describe interventions where bodily contact using force is used to control or manage a child’s behaviour. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has to use “reasonable force” to control or restrain pupils in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria:
  - To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence (*this applies even if the child is below the age of criminal responsibility*)
  - To prevent a child from injuring self or others
  - To prevent or stop a child from causing serious damage to property (*including the child’s own property*)
  - To stop the child from engaging in behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school:
    - a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
    - pupils are fighting;
    - a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
    - a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;

### Who is authorised to use reasonable force?

It is the Headteacher’s responsibility to authorise named staff to use reasonable positive physical interventions with pupils.

The school must provide training for all staff authorised by the head teacher and retain a list of all those staff trained and authorised. The list is reviewed on an annual basis (or more frequently if the context requires it).

The Head teacher is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given, in what circumstances and settings they may use force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. The Head teacher will ensure that those authorised are aware of, and understand, what the authorisation entails. Those whom the Head Teacher has not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where positive physical intervention with a pupil is required.



## **Our Lady and St John's Catholic Primary School**

Boston Park Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9JF

[www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk)

### **Training**

It will be the responsibility of the Head teacher to arrange suitable training when needed. Training for all staff will be made available. No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of positive physical intervention without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of on-going staff development.

Our Lady and St John's School acknowledges that physical techniques are only a part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management. The governors of the school are committed to working within the LA's framework for accessing training in that:

- 1 It will review its Behaviour policy on at least a two-year cycle.
- 2 Negotiation will take place between the Vulnerable Children's Services (including Behaviour Support Services) and the Head teacher and agreement will be reached in relation to the standard of behaviour management within the school before a formal application for training is made.
- 3 Training will be delivered on a needs based approach and procedures are in place to monitor incidents, following a behavioural audit and implementation of appropriate risk management procedures.
- 4 All training will include theory on the following:
  - De-escalation
  - Causes of challenging behaviour
  - Prevention strategies
  - Positive behaviour management
  - Risk Assessment
  - Behaviour Support Planning
  - De-brief following incidents
  - The law regarding positive handling

Physical techniques are not treated in isolation and the school is committed to ensuring that as a result of incidents learning opportunities are created for children that allow them to 'own' and take responsibility for their behaviour.

In addition, procedures are also in place to ensure that appropriate support is provided for staff and that following an incident pupil/staff relationships are rebuilt and repaired to ensure that a positive learning environment is maintained.

All the techniques used take account of a young person's:

- age
- gender
- level of physical, emotional and intellectual development
- special needs



## **Our Lady and St John's Catholic Primary School**

Boston Park Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9JF

[www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk)

- social context

Risk Assessments need to be completed against each child when positive handling strategies may need to be used, in the context of the identified target behaviour(s) and environments in which they occur. The assessment should identify the benefits and the risks associated with the strategies being proposed.

Where appropriate, Positive Handling Plans are written for individual children and where applicable these should be in addition to any Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

### **Strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour**

As endorsed in the school's Behaviour Policy, staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order.

Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be adopted:

- Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain; (this includes negotiation, care and concern)
- Further verbal reprimand stating:
  - that this is the second request for compliance;
  - an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable;
  - an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies, if possible summon assistance from (senior management team and trained support staff).
- Physical intervention: reasonable force being used to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.

### **Acceptable measures of physical intervention**

The school will put in place systems for managing and reviewing the following:

- Strategies for preventing the occurrence of behaviour that precipitate the use of a physical intervention.
- Strategies for 'de-escalation' or 'de-fusion' that can avert the need for a physical intervention.



## Our Lady and St John's Catholic Primary School

Boston Park Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9JF

[www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk)

- Procedures for post incident support and de-briefing for staff, children, service users and their families.

The concept of reasonable force where 'reasonableness' is determined with reference to all the circumstances, including:

- The seriousness of the incident:
- The relative risks arising from using a physical intervention compared with using other strategies
- The age, cultural background, gender, stature and medical history of the child or service user concerned
- The application of gradually increasing or decreasing levels of force in response to the person's behavior
- The approach to risk assessment and risk management employed
- The use of:
  - **time out** which involves restricting the access to all positive reinforcements as part of the behavioural programme;
  - **withdrawal** which involves removing the person from a situation which causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities.

The distinction between **planned** physical interventions (where incidents are foreseeable in that they have occurred previously and a response planned following a risk assessment) and the use of physical interventions in **emergency** situations (which cannot reasonably be anticipated)

First aid procedures to be employed and those responsible for implementation in the event of an injury or physical distress arising as a result of a physical intervention

**Unacceptable** practices that might expose service users or staff to foreseeable risk of injury or psychological distress.

Wherever possible to get assistance from another member of staff.

Positive Handling at Our Lady and St John's Catholic Primary School is a proactive response to meet individual pupil needs and any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way that staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

### Recording

Where positive handling strategies and/or physical control have been used a record of the incident **must** be put onto CPOMs and the Headteacher notified immediately.



## **Our Lady and St John's Catholic Primary School**

Boston Park Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9JF

[www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk)

### **Monitoring incidents**

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use positive physical interventions, this is recorded following agreed procedures. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Head teacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour may require the use of a Positive Handling Plan and further positive handling strategies.

Monitoring of incidents will take place on a regular basis and the results used to inform planning to meet individual pupil and school needs.

### **Action after an incident**

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be through the appropriate procedure:

- Review of the individual behaviour plan
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Social Services)
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff

The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.

In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

### **Complaints**

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the School's Complaints Policy. If necessary, the complaint will be dealt with by the Staff Disciplinary Procedures and/or Child Protection Procedures.

### **Other relevant Policies**

Other relevant Policies that cross reference with this one are:

Behaviour Policy,  
Health & Safety Policy  
Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy  
Violence at work Policy  
Complaints Policy



## Our Lady and St John's Catholic Primary School

Boston Park Road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9JF

[www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstjohns.org.uk)

### Appendix 1

Those authorised by the Headteacher to use positive handling strategies are the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, members of the Senior Management Team, Class Teachers and support staff for 1:1 children who have a specific action plan. However, in the absence of any of the above member of staff then a trained staff member should intervene if there is a threat of danger and it is reasonable, necessary and proportionate to act.

**Staff should always send for another trained member of staff to support and witness.**

Trained members of staff – Team Teach (x2)

Positive handling training – Cedars Primary (x8)

|                    |                                                                                     |       |             |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------|
| Headteacher:       | <i>Mkelliher</i>                                                                    | Date: | Spring 2026 |
| Chair of Governors |  | Date: | Spring 2026 |