



St Nicholas Catholic High School

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY 2014

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

We aspire to embrace the Gospel and its values, celebrating uniqueness and diversity. Our learning, within an enterprise culture, is based upon trust and respect which define our relationships within the world family. "Everyone Matters".

We recognise the role model of St Nicholas in our everyday lives and work to ensure that St Nicholas Catholic High School is a school where "Everyone Matters".

What makes us distinctive as a Catholic school is that we care more about *who* a child becomes than just *what* she or he becomes. In this way we seek to ensure that each student is not only prepared for society when they leave school but equipped to make a positive contribution for its betterment.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other policies and not as a stand-alone policy. It is written in line with the DfE documentation: **Use of Reasonable Force - Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies July 2013.**

This documentation states that all teachers may use reasonable force to:

- restrain a student at risk of harming themselves or someone else through physical outbursts.
- prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight in the playground
- prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;

School cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

What is Reasonable Force? As defined by Use of Reasonable Force - Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies Department for Education July 2013

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with students.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control students and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom.

- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the student.

Power to Search Students Without Consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, the Headteacher and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited items” :

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

Designated Staff and Procedure

The legal framework states that any member of the teaching staff can use positive handling to:

restrain students, when the situation warrants such an action

Positive Handling

The school recognises that this may be necessary, however, where possible, designated members of staff should be called upon in the event of an incident, as soon as possible. This would include members of the Senior Leadership Team and SEND team.

Parents / Carers will be informed when positive handling has been used.

Procedure

- Where positive handling may be required the main school office should be alerted immediately.
- The main school office personnel should notify the SLT team and request at least two designated members of staff to attend the incident.
- Whenever possible positive handling should only occur when witnesses are present.
- Once a student is positively handled they should be taken to a quiet room so the student can be calmed. Staff accompanying the student must have a radio as a means of communication. Two designated members of staff must remain with the student at all times, until the student's parents/carers have been contacted.

Principles Relating to the Use of Positive Handling

- Positive Handling must only be used as a last resort when other strategies have failed. It must serve to defuse or prevent a violent, or potentially violent, situation. It must not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate risk to people or property.
- Staff should have good grounds for believing that immediate action (Positive Handling) is necessary in order to prevent a student from injuring him/herself or others, or causing serious damage to property.
- Where possible staff should take steps in advance to avoid the need for positive handling, e.g. through dialogue and diversion where appropriate. The student should be warned orally that positive handling will be used unless s/he desists.
- Positive handling must not be used in anger. When it becomes apparent that the student is not responding to verbal instructions and a violent incident is imminent, the member of staff, wherever possible, should call for assistance before engaging in positive handling.
- Where possible designated female staff should be summoned as assistance in the instance of female students requiring restraint, and male staff should be summoned as assistance in the instance of male students requiring restraint. Calling for support and assistance provides support and witnesses.
- When it becomes necessary to positively handle a student, the member of staff must, if possible, continue to talk to the student in a calm manner, offering choices and time for the student to become calm.
- The age and competence of the student must be taken into account in deciding what degree of intervention is necessary. Only the minimum force necessary, to prevent physical injury or damage, should be applied. Particular care must be taken to avoid inflicting any unnecessary pain or injury.

Positive handling must not involve deliberately painful or dangerous procedures. It must:

- Never interfere with breathing, blood supply or genital areas;
- Whenever possible avoid holding the head, throat or fingers.
- Be discontinued as soon as the situation is deemed safe.

- As soon as it is safe, restraint must be gradually relaxed as the student regains self-control.
- A student must never be asked to restrain another student.

Operational / Procedural Points Relating to the Use of Positive Handling

- The circumstances and reason for using positive handling must be recorded immediately, or as soon as possible, but ideally no later than the next working day. The member of staff must inform the Headteacher as soon as possible of the incident. The student's views should also be recorded as soon as possible, preferably on the same day. Ideally, the Headteacher will discuss the incident with the teacher within 24 hours.
- Following the incident the student should be advised of the reasons why it was necessary to restrain him/her. Students will be interviewed about the reasons that led to the incident and the circumstances that followed. The interviewer must be a senior member of staff.
- Staff should be provided with opportunities to discuss incidents involving positive handling and their subsequent feelings. Where it is clear that the teachers need further advice/training, the Headteacher should take prompt action to see that it is provided. As stated earlier, Parents/carers will be informed when positive handling has been used and will be given the opportunity to discuss the matter with the school.

ST NICHOLAS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

POSITIVE HANDLING INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Fill in this form immediately after the occurrence of any incident.

Forward this report to Kieran Kelly, Headteacher.

1. BASIC INFORMATION

Name of student

DOB:

Year:

2. EVENTS LEADING TO THIS INCIDENT

Where did the incident occur?

When did the incident occur?

Date:

Time:

How did the incident begin?

3. DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT

What was happening at the time?

Was anyone else involved?

Did anyone else see what happened? (give details of student or staff)

What behaviour was the student presenting that warranted restraint?

Was there damage to property or an assault on a student or staff during the incident?

What did you do to try to defuse the situation before using restraint?

Describe the ways in which the student was restrained? Be as specific as you can

For how long was the student restrained?

Were other staff involved? Please describe what they did

4. INJURIES SUSTAINED

Was anyone injured? YES / NO If yes, give details

Was this recorded in the accident book? YES / NO