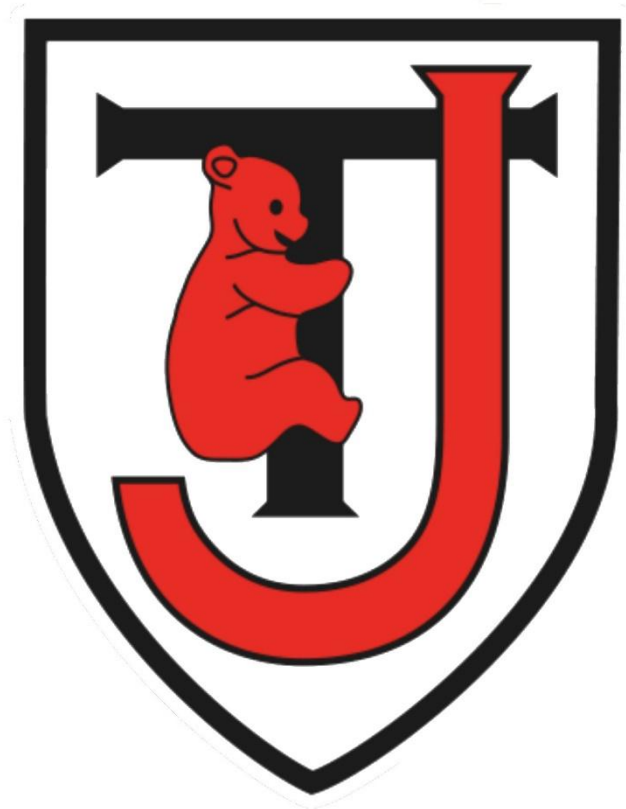


# Positive Handling Policy

Thomas Jolyffe Primary School

To be the best we can be!



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**Next review due by:** September 2026

# 1. Introduction

## The Legal Framework

Good behaviour in schools is central to a good education. Schools need to manage behaviour well so they can provide calm, safe and supportive environments which children and young people want to attend and where they can learn and thrive. Being taught how to behave well and appropriately within the context they're in is vital for all pupils to succeed personally. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, headteachers of maintained schools and pupil referral units must determine measures to be taken with a view to:

- promoting self-discipline and proper regard for authority among pupils,
- encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils,
  - securing that the standard of behaviour of pupils is acceptable,
  - securing that pupils complete any tasks reasonably assigned to them in connection with their education, and
- otherwise regulating the conduct of pupils.

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Education and Inspections Act 2006 clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It states that staff can use reasonable force for the purpose of preventing a pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following,

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

“Use of Reasonable Force”(DfE, July2013) offers further guidance to staff to use such force as is reasonable in the following circumstances:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

(Examples of possible situations are given in Appendix 1)

## **Definition of Positive Handling at Thomas Jolyffe Primary School**

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

### **General Policy Aims**

Staff at Thomas Jolyffe 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 / well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. Our policy on positive handling should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Relationships Policy as well as our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

### **Specific Aims of the Positive Handling Policy**

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.

## **2. Procedures and Practice**

### **Why Use Positive Handling?**

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 and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in *loco parentis* and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and wellbeing.

### **Alternative Strategies**

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. is a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:

- the *broken record* in which an instruction is repeated until the pupil complies
- use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is

threatened

- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)

Positive Intervention Plans, Risk Assessments and Pastoral plans will be created for specific children with high level behaviour needs and these will identify alternative strategies for individuals to reduce or prevent escalation.

### **Use 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.

All of our SLT, teachers and teaching assistants are authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, 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 and effective positive handling should be a last resort. When positive handling becomes necessary:

#### **DO**

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary, for the shortest amount of time needed
- 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 and clear language
- Hold arms above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow or wrist
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

#### **DON'T**

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Attempt to reason with the pupil

- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in their private 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 e.g. around the neck
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

### **Actions After A Positive Handling Incident**

- All positive handling incidents should be recorded immediately using the Bound and Numbered book and logged on Edukey
- A member of SLT should be informed as soon as possible
- Parents must be informed on the day of the restraint incident and the behaviour exhibited that caused the restraint to be used
- A member of the SLT should ensure debriefing of the staff and pupil involved
- Any victim or victims during the incident should be offered support and their parents informed
- If the incident becomes part of a pattern of behaviour, the pupil will be referred to the Behaviour Leader and SENDCo to create a positive behaviour plan which may include some or all of the following:
  - A Positive intervention plan
  - Pastoral support
  - A risk assessment
- The positive behaviour plan will involve parents and appropriate agencies to identify and support the needs of the child through clear objectives, effective strategies and regular review.

### **Complaints**


A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, 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.

## **Appendix 1 - When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?**

Examples of situations that may require reasonable force are when:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- 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 (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school. At Thomas Jolyffe, we deem that our pupils are at risk if they are in a space for a prolonged period of time, unsupervised. We insist that our pupils are in class or with the appropriate adult to do a learning activity elsewhere as led by the adult, such as a specific learning intervention. This does not apply to a pupil going to the toilet for an agreed amount of time or to go to another part of school as directed by the appropriate adult).
- a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave or move to an area
- a pupil behaves in such a way that seriously disrupts a lesson.

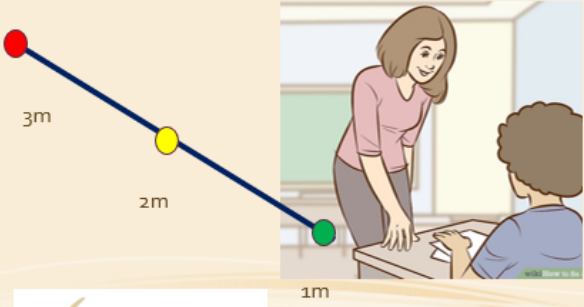
## Appendix 2 - Positive Handling sequence:




### Positive Handling

#### 1. Identify and control proximity

- Start at approx. 3 metres away
- Use the pupil's name first (shows respect)
- Explain that you are there to help, eg. 'I can see that you're not happy about...'
- Tell them why you are there (rapport/status) eg. 'Talk to me and I will listen.'
- Tell them what they can do (autonomy/certainty) eg. 'You can choose to come with me to outside the classroom or we can go to the quiet room.'
- Offering a "get out" (status/autonomy) eg. 'I need you to...or I will have to...'





### Positive Handling

#### 2. Prompting

When 'prompting' a person we should make effective use of good communication skills as well as distance. Only if it is safe to do so should we approach the subject to use any form of 'physical' prompt, such as an elbow or shoulder touch as shown.

## Positive Handling

### 3. Guiding



When 'escorting' or 'guiding' someone we can do so, as shown in the picture. The hand on the back is there purely and primarily as a 'prompt' to encourage the subject to move. No direct pressure is to be applied to the back or spine in any forceful or direct way. The hand on the back is only a means of encouraging guidance.

This can be removed once the pupil is moving in accordance with your request.

## Positive Handling

### 4. Double arm hold



A 'holding technique' can be used to support someone who may be unstable on their feet / or to assist them in walking where you would like them to walk to. In general the holding technique is limited in its effectiveness and will only be effective if applied with the 'willingness' of the person being held.

Outside arm underneath; inside arm cupped over the top of the pupil's arm to hold.

The first time this is carried out may deepen the child's anger at being held; for others it may help to calm them down.

Two people needed for this hold.