

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

Christ is our teacher.

At St Bernard's we believe that all persons are created by God, unique and equal. We strive to create a caring Christian community in which we provide education based on Gospel values where all people reach their full potential. We aim to develop positive relationships with every individual and family, the parishes and the wider community.

"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full"

John 10:10

Reviewed by:	Kirsty Graham, Vice Principal, July 2025
Reviewed by:	A Riding, Principal, July 2025
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Signed:	Sue Kelly, Chair of Governors

Positive Handling Policy

Rationale

The most effective way to manage challenging behaviour is to use whole school approaches to positive behaviour management. These can be found in our Positive Discipline Policy. These steps must be applied before there is a need to use physical intervention.

What is positive handling?

1. Positive handling involves managing the environment and deployment of staff. It also involves diffusion and de-escalation. Physical intervention is only a small part of the framework.
2. Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time when a student exhibits challenging behaviour that may end in the student harming themselves, others or property.
3. Intervention takes place using reasonable force.

Reasonable force

There is no legal definition of reasonable force, guidance suggests:

1. REASONABLE: where the action taken is reasonable in the context
2. PROPORTIONATE: where the degree of force is in proportion to the circumstances;
3. NECESSARY: if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it.

Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed.

Preventative Strategies

If a student is exhibiting difficult or challenging behaviour, the school's Positive Discipline Policy gives whole school guidelines on tackling the problem.

Responsive Strategies

There are occasions when there is a need for immediate and direct interventions. For example: to prevent a student from running across a busy road or to prevent self-injury.

Implications of the policy

The 1996 Education Act (Section 55O A) states that reasonable force may be used to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the academy or among any of its students, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within the academy (this includes authorised out-of-academy activities).
- Self-injuring or putting self at risk
- Causing injury to others or putting others at risk
- Committing an offence

Acceptable use of Physical Intervention

Ideally this should only be used by staff who have had appropriate accredited training. However, it is acknowledged that there may be times where untrained staff need to act. Examples of this might be the use of:

1. physically intervening between students
2. leading a student away from an incident by the hand or by gentle pressure on the centre of the back

Authorisation to use physical intervention.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Principal may authorise all teachers in the school to use Positive Handling or Physical Intervention.

Actions following the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention.

1. All incidents must be recorded as soon as possible.
2. A post incident de-brief should be held. This should include the student so that lessons can be learned by students and staff. Students and their parents/carers must have clear information on how to contribute to the meeting. They must also have clear information about who to direct any complaints to.
3. All parties involved will be kept informed of the process as appropriate.

Cases involving allegations, or suspicions, of abuse

In those cases where there is an allegation, or suspicion, that a member of staff has abused a child or young person, referral must be made to Social Services or the Police following our Safeguarding procedures.

Reporting incidents where positive handling has been used

In cases where positive handling has been used with a student, please refer to the forms held with the PA to Leadership Team/Clerk to Governors.