St Cuthbert's Primary School

Positive Handling Policy

Vision:

In our family school, we strive to be the best for today, for tomorrow, for ourselves, for each other, the wider world and for God.

As a Christian family we nurture an understanding that we are all of equal value and infinite worth.

In the safety of our unique family we will flourish and grow towards being Global Citizens and Courageous Advocates.

('You are now citizens together with God's people and members of the family of God'. Ephesians 2:19)

Mission statement:

Learning to love, loving to learn in the family of Christ.

('Encourage one another and build each other up'- 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Positive Handling Policy.

This policy is written taking note of the Department For Education *Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)*

What is reasonable force?

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most members of staff at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.

2. Force is usually used either to prevent or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. This is the only type of restraint used at Saint Cuthbert's.

3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed for the least amount of time and is proportionate.

4. As mentioned above, we only use restraint on pupils where they are posing a significant risk of harm to themselves or others. Passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path will always be used before restraint where it is safe to do so.

5. Restraint means a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint. Restraint might be used to bring a pupil under control to prevent them from harming themselves or others. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

6. 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 pupil.

When will reasonable force be used?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.

To prevent or stop a pupil from:
1. causing injury to themselves or others
2. committing a criminal offence
3. damaging property
4. causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Physical Restraint must not be used to:

• Punish
• Gain pupil compliance with staff instructions
• Cause or threaten hurt
• Oppress, threaten, intimidate or bully

Authority to Restrain

All staff have the legal responsibility to restrain if there is an immediate threat to the safety of a child, whether they are trying to harm themselves or others. If the threat is not immediate then send for a trained member of staff to try to diffuse the situation.

Members of staff have been trained in the Team Teach techniques and will follow this guidance wherever they are called upon to use reasonable force to restrain a child. Training is valid for three years and must be refreshed for the member of staff to continue to use the techniques with children. There are currently four members of staff trained to support.

When might students be restrained?

The only reason for the use of restraint is to keep people safe. Restraint is unlikely to be appropriate in the case of some older students and it may also increase the risk of injury to both staff and pupils.

The main grounds for restraint (Criminal Law Act, 1967; The Children Act 1989) are:

• 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 pupil's own property).

• Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

However, at Saint Cuthbert's we have taken the decision that restraint will only be used where there is danger of harm to a child or staff member.

A pupil absconding from school will not be restrained unless there is evidence that they are at serious risk. Members of staff are not obliged to restrain a pupil if it is against their better judgement. It may be more appropriate to summon help.

When it is known in advance that restraint may be necessary, an individual risk management plan should be devised following consultation with parents and medical

advice. Where it is known that a pupil is particularly sensitive about physical contact, staff will be informed in advance through the Special Needs Register.

The police should be called if there is a threat of violence which cannot be contained. All telephones in school accept outgoing 999 calls. However, unless circumstances are extreme, a senior member of staff should be contacted so that a decision can be taken at that level.

Who may restrain students?

Everyone has a right to use reasonable force to prevent an attack against themselves or others, whether they are formally authorised or not. At Saint Cuthbert's Primary School, only adults employed by the school may use physical restraint and unless in an emergency should be member of staff that has been trained to do so.

How should students be restrained?

Restraint must be reasonable and in proportion to the circumstances. Warning of intended restraint should be given, when practicable, in a non-threatening manner. Restraint should never be used as a substitute for normal disciplinary measures. Normal disciplinary measures do not include physical contact. Restraint, however, involves holding the child and in some cases sitting them down.

Forms of Control Explained

Obstructing

Obstructing is when a staff member may use their physical presence to obstruct a situation. Obstructing must be used in the general context of trying to engage the pupil in distraction about his/her behaviour, its implications and discontinued if the pupil physically challenges it (when a decision needs to be made as to whether some other form of permitted intervention is still justified).

Gather and turn

Where the member of staff intercepts the child when they are trying to go somewhere they shouldn't and turns and guides them in the opposite direction away from the danger.

Prompting

Using the Caring C hand to touch the elbow of the child gently to encourage them to move away from a situation.

Guiding

Using the Caring C to both elbows with one arm across the back to set the child off in right direction.

Escorting

Using the guiding hold the member of staff then walks alongside the child to the destination required.

Physical Restraint

This is the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering a pupil to prevent significant injury to themselves or others or serious/significant damage to property. The proper use of restraint requires judgement, skills and application of non-harmful methods of control.

Procedure for Physical Restraint

1. Use the Help script:

Hello ……..
It's Mr/S …….
I can see that ……..

2. Try to offer an alternative escape route from the situation by calming down and talking things through

3. Once physical intervention is necessary, it is important that it happens quickly, smoothly, confidently and successfully.

NOTE: DO NOT DISCUSS THE ISSUE THAT LED TO THE INTERVENTION WHILST HOLDING THE PUPIL.

NOTE: THIS SHOULD OCCUR UNDER THE CONSIDERED AND CALM CONTROL OF THE MEMBER(S) OF STAFF INVOLVED.

4. The intervention should be proportionate to the circumstances and staff involved. Staff will need to make an instant risk assessment of the situation. Involving the considerations stated previously in the policy.

5. When circumstances justify the use of restraint, staff must follow the Team Teach strategies to restrain and move the child.

When following out these forms of restraint the following guidance may be adopted:

• It is easier if one member of staff takes the lead and direction. Only one member of staff should do the talking at any one time.

• Beware of kicks, knees, head butts, bites etc. Staff should lean slightly away from pupil. If the pupil starts to spit, they should be told to stop, if they persist staff must make the decision whether to cease the restraint.

• Try not to move the pupil long distances. The greater the distance = higher potential for injury for all.

Staff will be expected to exhaust all behaviour management strategies (where possible) before using physical intervention.

What should be done after an incident of restraint?

A senior member of staff should be informed immediately, and a positive handling report form must be filled in and logged on CPOMS. Any comments from the child must be added as direct quotes. The incident must be noted for the attention of SLT.

Incident Reports need to be monitored and evaluated by DSLs to identify incident patterns or trends developing.

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or a senior member of staff will decide when and how to inform parents. Following incidents involving the use of restraint, SLT will offer parents the opportunity to discuss the incident further through a face-to-face meeting. Parents will be sent written confirmation of the date time and details of the incident via class dojo.

Further action should be considered in accordance with school policies on positive behaviour and health and safety.

All incidents must be reviewed to try to establish:

• Cause

• Appropriateness of action taken

• Whether and how procedures need amending

Review Date: April 2027

Appendix 1

Saint Cuthbert's C of E Primary School

Physical Intervention Report.

Pupil name:		**Date of Birth:**
Date of Incident:		**Time of Incident:**
Location:		
Adult Witnesses:	**Pupil Witnesses:**	**Reason for Restraint:**
Members of Staff involved:		
Strategies used before Restraint: (List)		
Restraint Technique Used: (Include length of time held)		
Details of Incident: (What child/ren said/did, what adults said/did)		
Details of any injuries, damage to property:		
Parents Informed: Yes/No		

Please upload completed forms onto CPOMs.

Appendix 2- Terminology- Department For Education Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools (April 2026)

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Significant incident: any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff as described in 'Other physical contact with pupils' within this document. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion: a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Restraint: a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

The various restrictive interventions above have been defined for completeness and should not be construed as an endorsement or otherwise for their use in schools. Some will not be relevant to most schools.