



Marlow Church of England Infant School Positive Handling Policy 2025

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness” Gen 1:26

Rationale

At Marlow Church of England Infant School our curriculum aim is to inspire learning and ignite curiosity, within a welcoming Christian and spiritual community.

This bible verse above underpins our Christian vision. It tells us that every individual is created in God's image and so this leads us to conclude that everyone is precious and valuable. As a result of this we focus on treating everybody with respect and dignity because we acknowledge their God given value and unique identity.

To help us achieve our vision we concentrate on:

- Embracing the uniqueness of everybody and being inclusive of all
- Empowering all to be enthusiastic learners
- Ensuring that every child feels nurtured, supported and safe
- Enriching learning through progressive teaching methods and technology
- Being responsible to and for society
- Being good citizens of the planet
- Embodying a Christian and spiritual community
- Being guided by our values of respect, kindness, perseverance, forgiveness, thankfulness and service

Marlow Church of England Infant School believes that in order to enable effective teaching and learning to take place, good behaviour in all aspects of school life is necessary. We aim to provide a calm, safe and supportive environment which children want to attend and where they can learn and thrive. Pupils need to feel safe, secure and happy to be able to learn effectively. As a school we support the rights of children and these rights are encompassed in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. This is reflected in this policy by Article 19 '*You have the right to be protected from being mistreated, in body and mind*' and Article 28 '*Children have the right to go to school and receive a good quality education.*'

Statutory Framework

The DfE non-statutory guidance document 'Use of reasonable force' (dated July 2013- reviewed January 2025) provides advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the Act) enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. DfE guidance on the use of reasonable force in schools (2013) also states that in addition to the general power to use reasonable force, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for "prohibited items". Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

DfE guidance and the Act make it clear that school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. However, wherever possible, only staff trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategy techniques Norfolk Steps Step Up will use physical intervention techniques with children, and only when necessary.

In March 2019 the Equality and Human Rights Commission published the guidance document, 'Human rights framework for restraint'. This guidance sets out key principles of articles 3, 8 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), incorporated into domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998, which govern the use of restraint across all settings:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/human-rightsframework-restraint>

Terminology

Positive handling

This term includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports all pupils, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Reasonable force

NOTE: there is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force.

Reasonable force means physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements.

'Reasonable' means using no more force than is necessary, for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention (see below) and may or may not also involve the use of restraint (see below).

Physical Intervention

The term 'physical intervention' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance.

Introduction

This policy will be read in conjunction with the Marlow Church of England Infant School Behaviour, Child Protection and search & confiscate policies and it details how we will implement guidance provided by the DFE and other agencies.

Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, damaging property or to maintain good order and discipline, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible. (See Appendix 1 for current list.)

Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, damaging property, or in order to maintain good order and discipline. Furthermore, the school takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors to the school.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them

Staff are trained to look after pupils in their care and aim to focus on de-escalation techniques wherever possible. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the School's Behaviour policy.

Before using Physical Intervention

Most Teaching Team and MDSA staff have been carried out Norfolk Steps Step On training. This training course promotes positive behaviour and focuses on de-escalation.

We take effective action to de-escalate and reduce risk by:

- Showing care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning.
- Giving clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Reminding the pupil about rules and likely outcomes.
- Removing an audience or taking vulnerable pupils to a safe place.
- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.

- Using positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensuring that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

Use of Physical Intervention

Step Up trained staff have been trained to use physical intervention and the school keeps a list of these members of staff.

Whilst or before intervention, staff will speak calmly as a way of reassurance. e.g. "I am doing this to keep you safe."

Physical intervention will only be used when there is no realistic alternative and for the shortest amount of time possible. A dynamic risk assessment or use the written risk assessment may be used, depending on the situation and the timing of the need for the intervention. Staff will think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces rather than increases risk.

Any response to challenging behaviour will be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Physical intervention must only be in accordance with the following:

- The member of staff will have good grounds for believing the child is in immediate danger of harming themselves or another person, in danger of seriously damaging property or not maintaining good order or discipline.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage will be applied.
- Every effort will be made to secure a minimum of two Team Teach trained members of staff present before applying the intervention. Other staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, the intervention will be relaxed to allow the child to regain self control.
- Intervention will be an act of care and control, NOT punishment.
- Physical intervention will not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger to people and property.
- After the event, the intervention will be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity

The definition of reasonable, proportionate and safe practice can change and evolve and that this will be kept under review.

Dynamic Risk Assessment - Responding to unforeseen emergencies

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet.

An unforeseen event may require an emergency response with a dynamic risk assessment. After that event, staff will plan ahead to prepare for will a similar type incident occur again with the same pupil. A risk assessment will be written, which will detail risks and possible mitigations. This will form part of the pupil's Positive Handling Plan

Positive Handling Plan (including risk assessment process and including the crisis plan from the Behaviour Policy)

Risk assessments are required for pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour.

Responsible staff will think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. Parents will be involved with the writing of the risk assessment.

When considering a pupil's behaviour, staff and parents will think about the following:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct the risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from reoccurring?

Staff may also need to make an individual risk assessment where it is known that force is more likely to be necessary to restrain a particular pupil, such as a pupil who is considered to be at greatest risk of needing positive handling interventions due to their special educational need (SEN) or disability. Plans will be compatible with a pupil's EHCP and properly documented in the school records.

An individual risk assessment is essential for pupils whose SEND are associated with:

- Communication impairments that make them less responsive to verbal communication;
- Physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments;
- Conditions that make them fragile;
- Dependence on equipment such as wheelchairs, breathing or feeding tubes.

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk, will have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are to be avoided. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective will be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective or which have caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans will be considered along with the child's EHCP or any other planning document.

Post Incident Debrief

After any incident a full debrief will take place so that learning can inform practice.

Following an incident, it is the policy of the school to offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning, and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that students and staff have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate another person's perspective.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team would expect to talk to staff and children involved in any incidents involving any intervention. If the staff or pupils need time to rest or compose themselves, then the Headteacher will make arrangements for this to happen.

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the current risk assessment. Any further action in relation to a member of staff or pupil will follow the appropriate procedures.

Recording

All incidents will be recorded on CPOMS by all staff involved:

- Details will be recorded within 24 hours of the incident and along with any follow up actions;
- A timeline of the incident with antecedents, behaviours and consequences will be outlined;
- Parents/Carers will receive a full account of incident and the fact that this has been shared will be recorded on the CPOMS incident.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed, ensuring that further actions are carried out. This information will be shared with the safeguarding governor.

Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints will follow the School's Complaint Procedure.

Other physical contact with students

It is not illegal to touch a student. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a student is proper and necessary.

Examples of where touching a student might be proper and necessary:

- When comforting a distressed student
- When a student is being congratulated or praised
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument

- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To give first aid

This list is not exhaustive, but provides some examples of situations where physical contact is proper and necessary.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or if there has been a change to the statutory guidance

Date of review:	November 2025
Date of next review:	November 2028