



St. Stephen's School and Children's Centre

Learning for life

Federated Positive Handling Policy

	Date	By	Role	Ratified	Date
Version 1	June 2013	Sheena Kelly	SENCO		
Version 2	June 2015	Alex Smith	Inclusion Manager		
Version 3	June 2016	Alex Dias	Inclusion Manager		
Version 4	July 2017	Alex Dias	Inclusion Manager		
Version 5	May 2018	Chetan Patel / James Frecknall	Inclusion Manager / SENDCO		
Version 6	October 2019	James Frecknall	AHT - Inclusion		
Version 7	October 2021	Esther Williams	AHT and SENDCO		
Version 8	October 2022	James Frecknall Tess Brown	AHT - DSL Federated SENDCO	Governing Body	December 2022
Version 9	October 2024	Rebekah Finlay	AHT - SEND	Governing Body	December 2024
Version 10	September 2025	Rebekah Finlay	AHT - Inclusion and Behaviour	Governing Body	December 2025

We are a Rights Respecting School and we use the United Nations Convention to ensure that no child should be punished in a way that humiliates or hurts them (Article 37)

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the welfare, dignity and safety of pupils and staff remain central to the ethos of the Federation of St. Stephen's Schools and Children's Centre. Positive handling will only ever be used as a last resort, in line with safeguarding principles and statutory duties, to protect children and staff from harm.

This policy should be read alongside:

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
- *Behaviour Policy*
- *SEND Policy*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*
- *DfE Guidance: Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (2013)*
- *Behaviour in Schools Guidance (2022)*

Assessing and Reviewing

This policy is monitored by the Inclusion Team, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Leadership Team and Governing Body and is reviewed annually.

Consideration will be given to:

- Reviewing the effective use of resources and provision.
- Reviewing staff expertise in supporting children with identified needs.
- Monitoring patterns and proportionality of incidents, with reports provided to governors.

The Federation is fully inclusive and committed to making reasonable adjustments to the curriculum, environment and physical spaces to ensure that all pupils' needs are met (Equality Act 2010).

Training and CPD

- Key staff across the Federation receive accredited training in positive handling from DfE-recognised providers.
- Training is refreshed on a rolling two-year programme, aligned to the Safeguarding and SEND CPD cycles.
- An overview of training records is maintained by the Inclusion Team and reported to SLT.
- New staff are inducted in this policy and practice through the Federation's induction process.
- Refresher and update training is provided following any significant incident or change in statutory guidance.

General Guidance

- Positive handling will only be used where a child may be at immediate risk of harming themselves, harming others, causing serious property damage, or where not intervening would risk significant disorder.
- Staff will always follow the approved methods of restraint as outlined in training.
- The decision to intervene physically is based on the professional judgement of staff, taking into account the age, understanding, needs and vulnerabilities of the child.

Legal Framework

- **Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93):** gives staff lawful authority to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, damaging property, or causing serious disruption.
- **Education Act 2011:** reinforces staff authority to use reasonable force where necessary.
- **Equality Act 2010:** requires schools to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities and SEND to reduce the need for physical intervention and prevent discrimination.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025):** emphasises that safeguarding and child welfare must guide all practice, including the use of restraint.

Practical Considerations Prior to Intervention

Where possible, staff should:

1. Use the child's name.
2. Acknowledge their feelings.
3. Confirm why you are present.
4. Remind them of their options.
5. Offer a 'get out' choice.

Staff should seek support from colleagues wherever possible before intervening physically. The safety of all children is the guiding principle, and no intervention should be made if safe alternatives remain.

Application of Force

Intervention may include:

- Physically interposing between pupils.
- Blocking a pupil's path.
- Holding, leading, or shepherding a pupil away.
- Restricting dangerous movement.

In all cases, staff will follow the approved techniques from accredited training.

Exceptional circumstances may require immediate action to prevent serious injury (e.g., stopping a child running into traffic). Any action must remain within the principle of reasonable, proportionate, and necessary force.

Recording and Reporting

- All incidents requiring physical intervention must be recorded in the incident log.
- Staff involved must complete a written incident report as soon as possible after the event.
- A member of SLT/DSL must be informed immediately.
- Parents/carers must be informed on the same day.
- Where incidents occur regularly, the Phase Leader and SENDCO will lead on creating a Positive Handling Plan (PHP), linked to the pupil's APDR cycle/EHCP.

Debrief and Follow-up

- Following an incident, a structured debrief will take place with the pupil (in an age-appropriate way) and with staff involved.
- Staff welfare will be considered, and support offered where necessary.
- Where appropriate, the incident will inform future planning, risk assessment, and updates to PHPs.

Complaints and Oversight

- All complaints relating to the use of force will be investigated speedily and appropriately by the Headteacher or a member of the Leadership Team.
- Complaints will be handled in line with the Federation's Complaints Policy.
- Governors will monitor trends and patterns of positive handling incidents as part of safeguarding oversight.