



Positive Handling Policy

2024

Cleves Primary School is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. For the purposes of this policy, 'positive handling' is defined as the overall, graduated approach of responding to pupils' behaviour and emotions with the intention of protecting pupils and staff, and limiting damage to others and property. Positive handling adapts the least intrusive intervention techniques in response to situations, before using gentle physical intervention and reasonable force as a last resort.

Where possible, the school implements an approach of *prevention*, where staff will be trained in recognising warning signs of severe pain or distress and/or aggressive behaviour, communicating empathetically with pupils displaying such signs to aid them in regulating their emotions, and altering their environment to minimise distressing stimuli.

Teaching staff will be aware of the behavioural patterns, medical conditions and levels of need of pupils in their class, and will ensure that incidents of disruptive or aggressive behaviour in the classroom are handled in line with individual pupils' needs.

Staff will not generally resort to physical contact or reasonable force immediately without first questioning whether there is a need to use physical intervention. Staff will question whether:

- Verbal de-escalation can be attempted.
- There are actions that can be taken to remove triggers from pupils, e.g. dimming the lights and encouraging quiet where a pupil is having a meltdown in response to sensory overstimulation.
- The pupil can be removed from the situation without physical intervention, e.g. if they will follow a member of teaching staff out of the classroom.
- The pupil has a condition or support needs that mean physical intervention would be inherently more dangerous, e.g. asthma which may be made worse by restrictive holds or sensory issues where physical touch would contribute to sensory overload and may provoke aggressive behaviour.
- They have the ability, training and adequate support to physically intervene safely without causing unnecessary harm to the pupil or themselves.

Where there is **no** immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, destruction of property or serious disruption, reasonable force will *not* be used on the pupil. Any reasonable force used in situations that are non-urgent will only be used once all alternative options have been exhausted and where the staff member in charge deems that the situation is escalating.

The school understands that, in some cases, action *may* be required very quickly. Staff will not be penalised for resorting to the use of physical intervention or reasonable force in such situations where it is justified and perceived necessary to prevent harm to others or property in the circumstances.

Positive handling will be applied with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Reasonable force is not used as a method of behaviour management or discipline – only as a *last* resort in situations that require de-escalation to prevent harm.

The school will have due consideration to the risks posed by the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND in terms of physical intervention and reasonable force. The SENCO and Inclusion Lead will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that staff that come into regular contact with pupils with SEND are aware of the ways in which their needs can be met without reasonable force.

Recording and Reporting

Any incident involving positive handling will be documented promptly and accurately in the Positive Handling Log Book which is kept in the Inclusion Lead's office. This should be completed within 24 hours. This includes details of the incident, the staff members involved, the reasons for the intervention, and any actions taken. The log will be shared with the headteacher.

Parents/guardians will be informed of any significant incidents involving positive handling. Open and transparent communication with parents/carers is essential to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students attending our school.

Staff Training and Competence

members involved in positive handling will receive training in the Team-Teach approach. This training covers de-escalation techniques, safe physical interventions, and the ethical and legal considerations surrounding positive handling.

Staff training is ongoing, with regular updates and refresher courses to ensure competence and compliance with best practices.