

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

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Rationale

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a student's action or perhaps by removing a physical object which could be used to harm him/herself or others. It is only likely to be needed if a student appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour. Staff should make all attempt to avoid the need for positive handling by adhering to the school's safeguarding procedure.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgment in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the School's Code of Conduct and Student Behaviour Management Policy, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of students during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in *loco parentis* and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure students' safety and well-being.

The Legal Definition and Framework

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the student from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property.

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Under the Students Order 1995, it is only permissible as described under the heading "Physical Control". Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It enables trained staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a student from:

- committing an offence;
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the student himself);
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its students, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

(Examples of possible situations are given in Appendix 1.)

Purpose

At Sandwich Technology School, we recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure student safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.

This policy aims to:

- protect every person in the school community from harm;
 - protect all students against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful;
 - provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and are able to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.
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Safety Measures

Although the Senior Leadership Team and Governors recognise that there will be scenarios when the following is not possible, all staff and visitors should aim to adhere to the following safeguarding measures:

- staff to not be alone in a room with a student working 1:1. If this does need to occur the door should be open and another staff member should be informed and working nearby. Staff and student should implement appropriate social distancing;
 - all rooms that staff see students in should have glass viewing that has not been covered with posters, etc. Where rooms do not have glass, the door should remain open;
 - staff must read and comprehend all individual student Risk Assessments shared with them.
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Implementation

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. if a student is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives such as:

- the 'broken record' in which an instruction is repeated until the student complies;
- use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective;
- withdrawal of attention (audience), e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened;
- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high);
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with the School's policy on behaviour.

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the student to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

There are some forms of physical intervention that may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a student's path or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the student and another student or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective, positive handling should be a last resort. When positive handling becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the student what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the student what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible, e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the student's compliance

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the student
- Attempt to reason with the student
- Involve other students in the restraint
- Touch or hold the student in sexual areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the student in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing, e.g. around the neck

- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the student

Actions after an incident

Positive handling often occurs in response to highly-charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the student. **The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed of any incident as soon as possible** and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the student involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the student's behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a Behaviour Plan or Risk Assessment.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately. All sections of this report should be completed. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible after an incident with actions that will follow.

Risk assessments

If pastoral staff at STS identify a student who may behave in a disruptive way that might require the use of reasonable force, a risk assessment will be carried out and a plan written on how to best to respond if the situation arises.

Such planning will address:

- management of the student (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary);
- involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take;
- briefing of relevant staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance);
- identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate.

Links to other policies/documents

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
 - Staff Code of Conduct.
 - Student Behaviour Management Policy
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Appendix 1

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?

Examples of situations that may require restraint are when:

- a student attacks a member of staff or another student;
- students fighting;
- a student is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;
- a student is running in a corridor or on a stairway, or near moving vehicles in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others;
- a student absconding from a class or trying to leave school (NB: this will only apply if a student could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school);
- a student persistently refuses to obey an order to leave an area;
- a student behaves in such a way that seriously disrupts a lesson.

Appendix 2

Record of Restraint:	
Date of Incident:	Time of Incident:
Student Name:	
College/TG:	
Member(s) of staff involved:	
Adult witnesses to restraint:	
Student witnesses to restraint:	
Outline of event leading to restraint:	
Outline of incident of restraint	
Outcome of restraint:	
Description of any injury sustained and any subsequent treatment:	
Date/time parent/carer informed of incident:	
Signatures of staff completing report:	
Name:	Signed