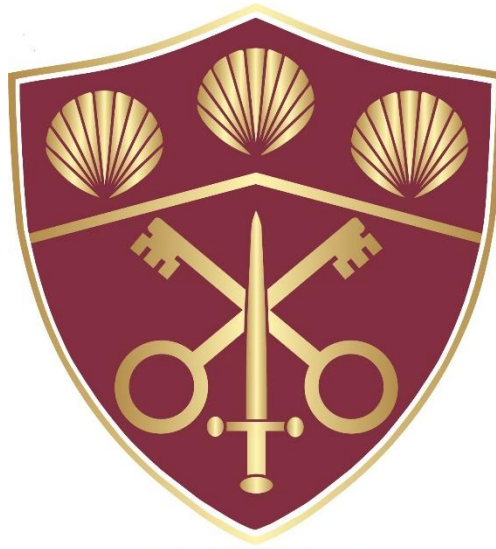


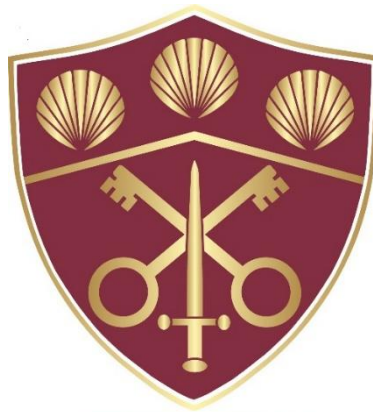


Ad Gloriam Dei et Servitium Omnium

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

The Palmer Catholic Academy

MISSION STATEMENT



Ad Gloriam Dei et Servitium Omnium

The Academy's Mission promotes the academic and personal development of each member of its community, both students and staff alike.

We serve Christ in each other to the Glory of God and Service of all.



Adoption by Governing Body of The Palmer Catholic Academy:

Date of Implementation: November 2025

Signature of Chair of Governors:

Signature of Headteacher:

Review Date: When required

Positive Handling Policy

Policy Statement

Staff at The Palmer Catholic Academy are trained to look after the students in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent students from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the academy or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever finds it necessary to intervene physically they will follow the academy's Positive Handling Policy. Any parents/carers wishing to view this policy may do so on request.

Introduction

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of *reasonable force* to restrain a student. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with students. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury (DfE *Use of Reasonable Force* July 2013). A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports students who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety. The academy will make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN).

What the Law Says

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables academy staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- a) committing an offence
- b) causing personal injury or damage to the property of any person (including the student themselves); or
- c) prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the academy or teaching session or otherwise.

Section 95 advises on whom these powers apply to:

- A teacher who works at the academy, and
- Any person whom the Headteacher has authorised to have control or charge of students.
- This includes support staff whose job normally includes supervising students such as teaching assistants, learning mentors and lunchtime supervisors.
- This can include people to whom the Headteacher has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge over students such as paid members of staff whose job does not normally involve supervising students (for example, catering or premises-related staff).
- It does not include prefects.
- These powers can be used when students are on academy premises or on school visits (including students from other schools who are visiting the academy).

This policy details how guidance should be implemented in The Palmer Catholic Academy. It should be considered alongside the most recent Local Authority policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

Academy Expectations

The Palmer Catholic Academy takes very seriously its duty of care towards students, employees and visitors to the academy. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management. This policy has a clear focus.

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

Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at the academy should be conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. Part of the preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Students should be encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all students when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

Alternatives to Positive Handling

It is possible for staff to take effective action to reduce risk without the need for physical intervention. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for students to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable students to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort students to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

Modifications to Environment

Staff should not wait until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some students at school may exhibit extreme behaviour, in general it is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. For example:

- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils, compasses and darts) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry student who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Is the design arrangements or furniture safe and appropriate for students who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated student?
- Are protocols in place to encourage angry students to take themselves to a safer place?

The Last Resort Principal

Staff should only adopt positive handling techniques when there is no realistic alternative.

“If necessary staff have the authority to take immediate action to prevent harm occurring even if the harm is expected to happen some time in the predictable future.”

Para 10 Page 4 Department of Health – 1997 – “The Control of Children in the Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act 1989” – London: H M S O

Proactive Physical Interventions

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Positive Handling Plan. Examples of this are where a student has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases, risk.

The academy has documented risk assessment procedures in place (See appendix 1 & 2).

Reasonable and Proportionate

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the student?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

Unreasonable use of Force

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should students be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a student secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this academy.

Force must not be used to prevent trivial misbehaviour. However, deciding whether misbehaviour is trivial depends on the circumstances. For example, a Year 7 student running in the corridor would be relatively trivial, but a group of Year 11 students chasing each other in the corridor when a pregnant member of staff is walking would not be trivial.

Staff Training and Team Teach

It is recommended by Redbridge Local Authority that staff working closely with students are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the academy's Behaviour & Discipline Policy. Following an annual review, training will be provided in the Autumn Term for those appropriately identified staff.

The Redbridge Authority had adopted Team Teach techniques whose ethos remains committed to the term 'Positive Handling' to describe a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. A number of Local Authority Staff have been trained in these techniques and some are qualified to deliver this teaching to academy staff. Teachers and anyone authorised by the Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. In some special schools all staff have been trained in these techniques. The local authority has adopted the Team Teach Model of training. All training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines.

Health and Safety

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the academy. All have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. It is recognised that it is not possible to entirely remove risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school and policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the academy safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non-physical aspects of positive handling training are also crucially important to.

When considering a student's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

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

Risk Assessment

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with students who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the students concerned. Confidence and

competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All students who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the Statement and any other planning documents which relate to the student. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in and Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) or Education Health Care Plan's (EHCP) where appropriate. The academy will make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN).

At present at The Palmer Catholic Academy we have no students for which we identified as requiring a Positive Handling Plan.

Types of Force

Types of force could include:

- Passive prevention by standing between students or blocking a student's path to prevent a student making physical contact with another student.
- Active physical contact such as :-
 - Leading a student by the hand or arm.
 - Ushering a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.
 - In more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive holds which may require specific training.
- **In all circumstances help must be sent for, even when immediate intervention is necessary.**

Where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury, any member of staff would be justified in using reasonable force – for example preventing a student from hitting someone with a dangerous object.

Staff should make every effort to avoid acting in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury although in the most extreme circumstances this may not be possible.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and it is recognised that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. The key principals are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this academy (See earlier section on Types of Force). If staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported.

The Post Incident Support Structure for Students and Staff

Following a serious incident, the academy should offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the academy's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships, a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that students have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

Complaints

Nationally it is not uncommon for students to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The academy has a formal Complaints Procedure. If students have a complaint they should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

Recording

Whenever reasonable force is used the incident must be recorded using the approved forms. (See Appendix 3 – Report on the use of Positive Handling – which can also be found in the Staff Handbook). Student and staff witnesses to the incident can complete our standard incident report sheet. These will be attached to the report. The Incident/Concerns book is kept in Bede Office, and the Report on the Use of Positive Handling sheets can be obtained from Bede Office. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours.

Staff should:

- Read through the academy recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered, but may be added to after the 24-hour period. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an independent or legal investigation at some time in the future.

Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed. A record is written into the Incident Log. This refers to supporting sheets and other relevant information.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher should ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The academy incident log is open to external monitoring and evaluation.

Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, Behaviour and Discipline Policy or this positive handling policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual student, will follow the appropriate procedures. (See staff and student behaviour and discipline policies.)

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Behaviour & Discipline Policy

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

The Palmer Catholic Academy
Positive Handling Policy

Appendix 1 Risk Assessment Checklist

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR ASSESSING AND MANAGING FORESEEABLE RISKS FOR STUDENTS WHO PRESENT CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

Name of student: _____

Class: _____

Assessment Completed by: _____

Designation: _____

IDENTIFICATION OF RISK	
Describe the foreseeable risk	
Is the risk potential or actual?	
List who is affected by the risk	
ASSESSMENT OF RISK	
In which situations does the risk usually occur?	
How likely is it that the risk will arise?	
If the risk arises, who is likely to be injured or hurt?	
What kinds of injuries or harm are likely to occur?	
How serious are the adverse outcomes?	

Signature:

Date:

The Palmer Catholic Academy

Appendix 2 Positive Handling Plan Checklist

NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

POSITIVES (What they are good at and what they like) _____

TRIGGERS (Common situations, which have led to problems in the past) _____

MODIFICATIONS TO THE ENVIRONMENT OR ROUTINES (What we can do to prevent problems from arising)

PREFERRED DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES (what tends to calm things down)

Verbal advice and support	☐	Distraction	☐	Reassurance	☐
Planned ignoring	☐	Contingent Touch	☐	CALM body language	☐
Giving take up time	☐	Withdrawal offered	☐	Withdrawal Directed	☐
Flexible negotiation	☐	Involve new person	☐	Choices offered	☐
Limits set	☐	Humour	☐	Reminders of success	☐

LEVEL OF RISK PRESENTED

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 (high) ☐

PREFERRED PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES (Combination of least intrusive and most effective)

Cradle Hug	☐	Wrap	☐	Half Shield	☐	Single Elbow	☐
Double Elbow	☐	Sitting on Chairs	☐	Sitting on the Ground	☐		

FOLLOW UP (Where, when and how to debrief and repair after an incident)

NOTIFICATION (Who have these plans and strategies been shared with)

Service User	☐	Parents/Carers	☐	Placing Authority	☐
Social Worker	☐	Psychologist	☐	Doctor/Nurse	☐
Area Child Protection Team	☐	Key Staff	☐	All Staff	☐

NAMES: _____ **SIGNATURES:** _____

DATE: _____

REVIEW DATE: _____

The Palmer Catholic Academy

Appendix 3 Report on the use of Positive Handling

REPORT ON THE USE OF POSITIVE HANDLING

Day: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Student(s) involved in the incident: _____

Member of Staff completing this report: _____ Designation: _____

Description of how incident began and progressed:

The Account should contain the following: (I) The reason why controlled force was necessary. (II) Description of how the incident began and progressed. (III) Student's response and outcome of incident. (IV) Name(s) of student(s) and staff involved. (V) Injury if any suffered by (i) The student(s) (ii) other student(s) (iii) Member of staff. (VI) Any damage to property. (VII) Name(s) of other staff, student(s) who witnessed the incident. (VIII) Action taken after the event.

Please continue onto another copy of this report sheet if necessary

The report is to be dated and signed:

(1) Person making reportDate

(2) HeadteacherDate

(Please keep a copy of this report)

Page 2 of 2

This form to be passed on to the Headteacher