

Safer Handling Policy



Lead	Alison Klaassen
Head	Sandie Edward
Chair of Governors	Jeremy Hooper
Policy amended	March 2026
To be reviewed	March 2027

Statement of Safeguarding Children

At St Philip's C of E Primary School, our school community has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are our pupils. This means that we have a Safeguarding Policy and procedures in place which we refer to in our prospectus. All staff including our volunteers and supply staff must ensure that they are aware of our procedures. Parents and carers are welcome to read all relevant policies which can be obtained from our website or paper versions are available on request.

Sometimes we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. We will always ensure that our concerns about our pupils are discussed with their parents/carers first unless we have reason to believe that this is not in the child's best interests.

Our Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is Mrs Sandie Edward and Mrs Alison Klaassen and Mrs Emma Cooper are Deputy DSOs.

Our qualified Safer Handling trainer and expert witness on the use of force with children is Doug Melia who has had input constructing this policy doug@safer-handling.co.uk 01772 727254 / 07872500272.

DfE (Department for Education) guidance emphasises a positive, preventative approach to behaviour, prioritizing de-escalation and support over physical intervention. School will always use positive behaviour strategies—like establishing clear, rewarding routines—with restrictive physical intervention only as a last resort to prevent harm, in line with updated 2026 guidance.

Policy on the Safer Handling of pupils

This policy sets out the framework for the use of reasonable force in the form of holding, handling, escorting and in extreme circumstances physical intervening to prevent a greater harm from occurring, but it must be clearly understood that this should always be set within the school's overall behaviour management framework and is only used as a last resort under-pinned by sound risk assessment. Staff should use calm communication, non-threatening body language, and distraction techniques to manage behaviour before considering intervention. Providing successful inclusion may necessitate physical restraint but only as one of the strategies available for the management of challenging behaviour. Only in the event of failure of clearly defined protocols to bring control to the situation, or imminent danger to persons, should such measures be considered.

For children identified with higher behavioural needs (e.g., SEND), schools should create specific plans or risk assessments to understand triggers, reduce risks and outline agreed-upon supportive actions where necessary.

Legislation that came into force on 1.9.98 (Section 550 of the Education Act 1996) together with national guidance (DfES Circular 10/98), establishes in a school setting the existing common law precedents allowing one to prevent harm to self, others and damage to property. It clearly sets out the powers of teachers and other staff to use reasonable force if required. This applies to all occasions when that member of staff is in charge of children both on and off school premises. The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 gives us the definition of Reasonable Force as using force only when necessary and then making sure that such force is proportionate to the harm or, perceived harm avoided. There is no legal definition. Reasonable force depends on the individual circumstances of each case and only a court may judge what is reasonable in terms of the amount of force used in physical handling or self-defence and obviously does so retrospectively.

Staff members are reminded that this is a “power” and not a duty; our staff have a duty of care to themselves and others including the children in their care. Where a staff member felt that by exercising their power to intervene physically they may put themselves or the child in physical danger or, they felt their intervening may cause a greater harm or was likely to fail then they are advised to seek a safer alternative option.

Staff members should try to avoid injuring pupils, however in extreme circumstances this may not always be possible. When interventions are necessary, they must be the least intrusive and shortest duration possible, focusing on safety rather than punishment. To reduce the risk of serious injury **methods of intervention to avoid** include the following:-

- Holding a child around the neck, collar or other way that may restrict breathing
- Slapping, punching, kicking or tripping a child. Holding or pulling a child by their hair or ear.
- Twisting or forcing limbs against joints.
- Indecently touching or holding.
- Holding a child on the ground prone (face down) or supine (face up)
- Use of Basket holds – Holding a child’s arms across their body from behind (Also known as a wrap)
- Lifting a child off the floor in order to intimidate

N.B. An adult in charge of children has a responsibility to intervene in the event of the following types of incident. Types of incident where the use of force may be necessary are given as:-

- **Action due to imminent risk of injury to themselves or others**
- **Action due to imminent risk of significant damage to property**

In some circumstances it may be possible to remove the rest of the children from the area and allow the child concerned to calm down safely. Where this presents a lesser risk of injury to all concerned this may be a more favourable option.

Here are some definitions of restraint; **‘The positive application of force with the intention of overpowering the child or a positive containing experience for the child.’** Both refer to using holds or intervening only, where it is absolutely necessary and where a non-physical method (Verbal or non-verbal prompt) is either failing or, is likely to fail.

The use of restraint requires skill, judgment and knowledge of a range of both non-harmful methods of control and restrictive methods of physical intervention. Reasonable force where used in circumstances which are necessary includes those methods taught and practised in the Edexcel Safer Handling (Care & Control) award certificate.

Where necessary, the degree of force employed must be in proportion to the perceived outcome of the incident taking into consideration the severity of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result with the highest degree of certainty (staff must use enough force for their intervention to be successful but not as to be excessive). The persons (unless it is an instinctive intervention or emergency action then there should always be a minimum of two staff physically intervening with a pupil) exercising the restraint must be authorised by the Head Teacher (see **Appendix 1, List of Authorised Staff**) and those who have received appropriate Edexcel Safer Handling Care & Control approved training that is in date.

Staff must take into account if the child has an **individual risk assessment** or is listed as having a **medical need** and follow any guidelines mentioned. Individual staff risk assessments must be considered (see **Appendix 2, Staff Risk Assessments**).

In the event of restraint becoming necessary, where appropriate before touching the child, the member of staff should advise the child calmly and repeatedly about what they are going to do and why, and how the child might change his/her behaviour, in order that the restraint would become unnecessary. If appropriate any other children and adults present should also be warned. **Note: this warning must not compromise safety or instigate any threat of unlawful attack.**

New DfE guidance (effective 1 April 2026) defines seclusion as a restrictive, non-disciplinary safety measure for managing extreme, high-risk, or self-harming behavior. It must only be used when necessary, with mandatory recording, parental notification, and a focus on positive, preventative behavioral strategies to minimise its use.

A second adult should always be present to assist with any holds to reduce the risk of the member of staff or child suffering bodily harm and as a witness if allegations of assault are made later by the child. Single person interventions should not be used as they are inconsistent with UK Law including Manual Handling regulations (Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999) they are very difficult to risk assess, dangerous for those involved and put staff and pupils at risk.

This would not take away from an untrained person their inherent right to intervene in an emergency should they deem it to be absolutely necessary to prevent a greater harm occurring which could not be safely controlled with a non-physical alternative. Staff are encouraged to win time to call for help and manage their personal space as an alternative to physically intervening on their own initially.

While intervening, the member of staff must:-

- Minimise the amount of time where the child is restrained
- Avoid prolonged struggling
- Wherever possible keep talking to the child and give choices as to how they could behave in a manner that would end the need for restraint
- Always look to use the least intrusive method of intervention
- Never act in revenge, retaliation, retribution or to teach a lesson
- Remain calm and manage any verbal abuse professionally

Types of restraint which may be appropriate:

- Any holding tactic in which a young child is restrained without injury until the young child calms down
- Physical contact with a young person designed to control the young person's movements, which pose a danger (e.g. holding by the arms against the side of the body). Standing by the side of the young person is likely to minimise the risk to adult and young person.
- The holding of a young person's arms or legs to prevent/restrict striking/kicking.
- The use of sufficient physical force – without causing injury – to remove a weapon/dangerous object from a young person's grasp (if foreseeable - this requires specialised training).

Pupils should not be restrained on the floor, where a pupil drops to the ground they are to be held until it is safe to release and then where safe to do so monitored as they get back onto their feet.

If restraint is required for an extended period (for example, more than five minutes), a senior member of staff must monitor the situation closely with a view to safeguarding the child and the staff concerned.

After the incident, it is vital that a full report is completed by all concerned (see **Appendix 3, Incident Reporting and Recording Form**) and the agreed de-briefing procedures adhered to in order to support the child, the members of staff involved, any other children involved and in line with our child protection & safeguarding policy, the parents.

In the event of an incident when physical restraint is required, an incident form will be completed within 24 hours. New draft guidance (effective April 2026) makes it mandatory for schools to record and report any use of restrictive physical intervention or reasonable force to ensure transparency and accountability, see Appendix 3. If possible, all staff and children involved will undertake a de-briefing meeting with the Head Teacher within 24 hours. The parents or carers should meet with the Head Teacher as soon after the incident as possible. Copies of the form will be kept in the office and in the Behaviour Records Book and copies added to special educational needs files and sent to all concerned in the incident including parents. If an injury has been incurred to anyone involved, the usual procedures regarding this will be followed.

If physical restraint is necessary to manage the behaviour of an individual, it may be appropriate to instigate a **Pastoral Support Plan** (PSP) during de-briefing meetings. In the event of physical restraint being necessary on more than one occasion, it may be appropriate to include **safer handling advice** in the child's **Learning Plan**. It is also necessary to compile an **individual risk assessment** in discussion with all staff, parents and any relevant outside agencies. In the case of a child with an EHCP, there will be opportunities to address issues of challenging behaviour at review meetings and an interim review organised in exceptional circumstances. **Looked-After Children** will have a **Personal Education Plan** which features planning and strategies to address challenging behaviour, where appropriate.

The Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governors need to ensure that all authorised teachers and other authorised staff are appropriately trained and updated by an Edexcel Safer Handling (Care & Control) Training provider and accept the responsibility of their role by being aware of the guidelines in this policy. Records are to be kept of any physical restraint or incident involving physical contact. These are to be clear, comprehensive and prompt (completed within 24 hours of incident). Parents must be informed and consulted each time a form is completed. These records will be part of an ongoing annual review procedure that examines practice and informs future planning. In addition, a Governor, will support the Head Teacher in monitoring and reviewing.

The Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governors need to ensure that, as far as possible, preparation and planning has taken place to identify areas where physical restraint might be used. However, the school may also have to intervene in circumstances where preparation and planning have not been possible. When physical restraint takes place, the school will always endeavour to protect children and adults from physical harm, however, there may be cases in which some discomfort and/or bruising may occur, to both staff and children, as a result of the restraint taking place. If, after receiving the report of an incident where physical intervention has occurred, the Head Teacher considers the school's guidelines have been seriously breached and that further investigation is warranted, the incident should not be pursued, but action in accordance with Child Protection procedures must be taken. In these circumstances, any school internal investigations must cease and no further statements should be taken. If the school's guidelines have been breached, the Head Teacher will contact the LA Personnel Division and advise the staff member to consult his/her professional association. Where necessary the Safer handling trainer (Doug Melia) or local Police should be informed of the circumstances as an impartial and competent professional's view on the force used would be

preferential prior to taking action such as suspending the member of staff as per the employment rights act 1996 which makes it an offence to;

“Members of staff should not be disciplined or dismissed for taking action to defend themselves or others in circumstances of serious or imminent danger”

Disability Equality

At St Philip's Primary School, we are committed to offering an inclusive curriculum to ensure the best possible progress for all of our pupils whatever their needs or abilities.

Pupils have Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Pupils with a disability have special educational needs if they have any difficulty in accessing education and if they need any special educational provision to be made for them, which is anything that is additional to or different from what is normally available in schools in the area. At St Philip's, we undertake the duties, including in relation to **this policy**:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason which relates to their disability
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- To do our best by all disabled members of our school community in relation to the requirements of this particular policy

Gender Equality

St Philip's C of E Primary School fully recognises its duty to comply with equality and diversity legislation, and its Gender Equality Scheme sets out the school's aims in relation to equality and what it will do to ensure that equality is fully embedded in practice. The school fully acknowledges its responsibilities in terms of equality issues in relation to gender, age, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment, including in relation to **this policy**. St Philip's is firmly committed to equality and diversity, and when carrying out our functions, we shall have due regard to the need: to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the School's 'Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy' and the school's 'Positive Behaviour' and 'Anti-Bullying Policy'.

Some Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Summon help
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Provide a soft surface if possible
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil
- Hold the pupil's arms by his/her sides

DON'T

- Try to manage on your own

- Stop talking even if the pupil does not reply
- Straddle the pupil
- Push arms up the back
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints

Appendix 1

List of Staff Trained in Safer Handling Method

Alison Klaassen

Appendix 2

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR THE USE OF RESTRAINT

The use of restraint would only be acceptable when the child is at serious risk of injuring themselves or other children.

RISK	CONTROL MEASURES	STAFF/CHILDREN AFFECTED
Risk of injury to adult	Restraint used only as a last resort. Safer Handling techniques used by trained personnel	The individual adult
Risk of injury to child	Restraint used only as a last resort. Safer Handling techniques used by trained personnel	The individual child
Risk of further injury to an existing staff medical condition	Any existing staff medical conditions must be disclosed to the Head Teacher and advice taken as to whether the use of restraint in any circumstances is viable	The individual adult
Risk of distress to other children	Whenever possible, other pupils should be taken to another location or the child being restrained removed to a place of safety	All
Risk of complaint from parent	Always call for assistance. Wherever possible, at least two adults should be present	Trained staff
Risk of repeated incidents	In certain circumstances, a place/room of safety will be created and used where there is a risk of repeated/regular occurrences	Individual pupils at significant risk

Appendix 3

Incident Reporting and Recording Form

St Philips C of E Serious Incident Record				Incident Number_____	
Name Of Young Person:					
Location of Incident:				Date:	
Full Names of Staff Involved:					
Start Time of Serious Incident:		Duration of Any Restraint:	Any Injuries:	Medical Check:	Incident Reviewed With Young Person:
		Mins:	☐ Child ☐ Other	☐ Offered ☐ Accepted	☐ Offered ☐ Accepted
Nature Of Risk		External Agencies Informed		Supporting Records Completed	
☐ Injury To Person ☐ Damage To Property ☐ Criminal Offence ☐ Serious Disruption ☐ Absconding ☐ Other Please State:		☐ Medical Staff ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Social Worker ☐ Placing Authority ☐ Police ☐ Other Please State:		☐ Accident Report ☐ Medical Report ☐ Formal Statement ☐ Other Please State:	
Environments and Triggers: Describe what was happening and what led up to a dangerous situation:					
Circle the level of potential risk Low Medium High					
Circle and/or describe precisely what the risk was Veбал abuse Slap Punch Bite Pinch Spit Kick Hair Grab Neck grab Clothing grab Body holds Arm grab Weapons/Missiles					
Other Please State:					
Who was at risk?					

Controlling Risk

Describe any changes you made to routines, personnel or the environment in an attempt to reduce the risk of this happening

Diversion, Distractions and De-escalation Attempted

Verbal advice and support Firm clear directions Negotiation Limited Choices
Distraction Diversion Reassurance Planned ignoring Contingent Touch
Calm Talking/Stance Time Out Withdrawal Offered Withdrawal Directed
Transfer Adult Reminders about Consequences Humour Success Reminders
Other Please State:

Physical Intervention Strategies Attempted

Please see Edexcel Manual

Other:

How Was Restraint Ended:**Young Persons Comments Throughout:****Outcome of Debrief and
Strategies Implemented For Preventing Re-occurrence**

Any Further Comments/Incidents During Restraint

Report Completed By

Signed

Date

Head Teachers Comments

Signed

Date