

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
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POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY
Updated December 2025

We are the children of Holy Cross,
Caring and sharing is what we do,
Trying our best and working hard,
Praying and playing with God in our Hearts.

Mission Statement

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a Catholic school. We seek to provide a broad, balanced Christian education which aims to help each child develop their full potential.

We are a worshipping community which recognises the uniqueness of the individual and aims to promote the Gospel values of love and respect for God and one another. We open ourselves to others and respect their ways of thinking and living.

The school encourages effective communication and good relationships with home, parish and wider community.

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, there is a commitment to developing and maintaining a Christian ethos, which ensures that all pupils attain their highest level of achievement. The school will seek to serve its local community and will endeavour to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-ethnic society. The ethos reflects the Christian belief that every human being is made in God's image and their true worth and value stems from this understanding. Jesus' ministry was to all the people of his time irrespective of wealth, status, gender, age, ethnic background, family ancestry or education and he taught that all were included in the love of God.

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, we are guided by our Christian mission to nurture each child as a unique individual created in the image of God. Our approach to behaviour, safety, and wellbeing is rooted in dignity, respect, compassion, and the belief that every child is worthy of love, care, and understanding. Positive Handling is only used when absolutely necessary to keep pupils and staff safe. Our aim is always to teach, guide, and support children using positive relationships, emotional regulation, and restorative practice.

1. Guiding Principles

1.1 Legal Framework (Updated 2025/26)

This policy aligns with:

- DfE *Use of Reasonable Force and Restrictive Interventions in Schools* (revised guidance 2025)
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Education & Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Criminal Law Act 1967 (reasonable force)

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour & Self-Esteem Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Key Principle:

Physical intervention should be used only when absolutely necessary, as a last resort, and in proportion to the risk of harm.

Staff may use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Causing serious damage to property
- Behaving in a way that seriously disrupts learning or compromises safety

New requirement (2025/26):

Any *significant* use of force must be:

1. Recorded clearly and promptly
2. Reported to parents
3. Reviewed by senior leaders to ensure safety, proportionality and learning

All staff have a *duty of care* to act when a failure to intervene could result in harm.

1.2 Definition of Positive Handling

Positive Handling is the *least restrictive* physical intervention used to prevent harm. It:

- Is planned wherever possible
- Uses the minimum force for the shortest time
- Must not cause pain, restrict breathing, or involve unsafe holds
- Must be consistent with training (Team-Teach or equivalent)

Restrictive intervention should always be part of a wider strategy including prevention, teaching self-regulation, and building positive relationships.

1.3 When Restraint May Be Used

Restraint may be required when a child is:

- Unable to control behaviour due to distress, crisis or dysregulation
- At risk of harming themselves or others
- Placing others in danger through unsafe behaviour
- Using or about to use an object dangerously
- Attempting to abscond in a way that puts them at serious risk

Positive Handling should be reduced or eased as soon as the child begins to regain self-control.

2. General Aims

Holy Cross aims to:

- Protect every member of the school community from harm
- Use physical intervention only when necessary and never as a behaviour management tool
- Prioritise de-escalation techniques and trauma-informed approaches
- Ensure staff are trained and confident in safe practice
- Ensure interventions are respectful, safe and proportionate
- Maintain accurate records and communicate with parents openly
- Review incidents so learning informs future practice

Positive Handling forms part of our wider approach to behaviour, wellbeing and pastoral care.

3. Risk Assessment

3.1 Environmental Risk

The school completes regular risk analyses of the site to identify and minimise environmental triggers (e.g., narrow corridors, bottlenecks, high-stimulation areas).

3.2 Individual Risk Assessments (Updated Requirement)

Where a pupil is identified as being at risk of needing physical intervention, an Individual Positive Handling Plan will be created, including:

- Known triggers
- Early warning signs
- Preferred de-escalation strategies
- Safe holds (if applicable)
- Medical or SEND considerations
- Parent/carer involvement
- Staff training implications

This is reviewed regularly and forms part of the child's My Plan/EHCP where relevant.

The plan will also reference a pupil's rights under:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

4. Procedures

4.1 Action Steps During an Incident

Staff will:

1. Use de-escalation strategies first
2. Clearly instruct the pupil to stop unsafe behaviour
3. Inform the pupil of the consequences if the behaviour continues
4. Call for additional adult support where required
5. Use physical intervention only if essential to prevent immediate risk of harm
6. Use least restrictive intervention
7. Communicate calmly and reassure the pupil throughout
8. Release the hold as soon as it is safe to do so

Follow-up actions may include first aid, emotional regulation support, reflection or restorative conversations.

4.2 Recording and Reporting (Updated 2025/26 requirement)

Every significant incident of positive handling must be recorded on the same day where possible **in the bound and numbered book, as well as C-poms.**

Records must include:

- Date, time and location
- Names of staff and pupils involved
- Antecedents and triggers
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Type of hold used
- Duration
- Outcome and any injuries
- Pupil voice (how they felt, what they recall)

Parents must always be notified and this communication must be logged.

Senior Leaders will review all incidents and support staff with reflective practice.

5. Complaints

The school recognises that restraint incidents can be distressing for pupils, staff and families.

Open communication, transparent processes and detailed records help prevent misunderstandings.

All complaints will be taken seriously and may be investigated under:

- School Complaints Procedure
- Staff Discipline Procedures
- Local safeguarding procedures

Staff have the right to report assaults against them to the police.

6. Looked After Children and Vulnerable Pupils

The school recognises that Looked After Children, children with SEND, and pupils with trauma histories may have additional vulnerabilities.

Staff will use trauma-informed approaches and ensure that:

- Individual needs are understood
- Interventions are adapted
- Positive Handling Plans consider attachment and emotional regulation

Confidentiality, dignity and respect are paramount.

7. Safe Practice — Do and Don't List (*Updated to reflect modern Team-Teach principles*)

DO:

- Stay calm and use low arousal strategies
- Keep verbal communication going
- Use gradual, least-restrictive interventions
- Be aware of medical or SEND needs
- Seek help early
- Ensure the environment is safe

DON'T:

- Use techniques that cause pain
- Hold around the neck, joints or face
- Restrict breathing
- Use force as punishment
- Intervene alone in high-risk situations
- Escalate through raised voice or confrontation

8. Types of Acceptable Physical Intervention

Physical interventions may include:

- Blocking a pupil from a dangerous action
- Interposing between pupils
- Guiding or escorting
- Shepherding with an open hand
- Restrictive holds (only if trained and only when necessary)

All must be consistent with training and risk assessments.