



## Positive Handling Policy

<b>This policy was adopted by Governors at the meeting held on</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025</b>
<b>Signed (Chair of Governors):</b>	<b>Clive Hyland</b>
<b>Date of Review:</b>	<b>Summer 2026</b>

### Statement of Intent

Ellingham C of E Primary School believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, it may be necessary to use positive handling in order to maintain safety and manage levels of risk. This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use positive handling, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to maintain safety and protect individuals from harm, when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that actions such as positive handling and reasonable force are used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

### Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Children Act 1989
- The Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice 2014

This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE (2025) 'Use of reasonable force in schools' DfE
- DfE (2024) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'



- DfE Reducing the need for restraint & restrictive physical interventions (2019)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy

### Roles and Responsibilities

The **Governing Body** is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Evaluating the incident data to analyse how and when positive handling is used and identify any trends to reduce the misuse and prevent abuse of positive handling.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling and are familiar with school policy.
- Maintaining positive handling logs (Appendix B) and reporting to the governing body at the end of each term for monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses positive handling completes the Positive Handling Report Form.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the governing body from pupils or parents regarding the use of positive handling.
- The headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the details surrounding the incident; this may include talking to witnesses, including staff and pupils.

The **SENCo** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils in school with SEND or medical conditions.
- Developing individual positive behaviour plans and Risk Assessments for pupils where applicable and ensuring all staff are aware of these.

The **DSL** is responsible for:



- Ensuring all members of staff use positive handling in accordance with this policy.
- Reviewing this policy in liaison with the headteacher and governing board.

### **What is Positive Handling?**

For the purpose of this policy, 'positive handling' is the positive application of a restrictive physical intervention with the intention of maintaining safety of pupils and staff and limiting damage to property.

The legal framework and national guidance often refers to the 'use of force' - this policy uses the term 'positive handling' whenever possible.

There is no statutory definition of reasonable force; it will always depend on the circumstance of the case.

The decision to physically intervene during an incident is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances and level of risk.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who subsequently gets injured, or injures another pupil, could be deemed as negligent.

Positive handling will never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

### **Use of Positive Handling**

All members of staff will be permitted to use reasonable force where they believe it to be appropriate in line with their training, as long as all necessary precautions are taken. The decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances and the pupil's individual needs.

The power to use reasonable force also applies to any individual whom the headteacher has identified as temporarily in charge, such as volunteers.

Staff members will use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances. Physical restraint will never be used routinely. Where reasonable force is required, the degree and type of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. their age or SEND.



The school is able to use positive handling in situations such as, but not limited to:

- Restrain a pupil who has lost emotional self-control and is presenting an imminent or immediate risk to themselves or others.
- Reduce the risk of harm that a pupil is presenting to themselves or others.
- Disruptive children are required to be removed from the classroom for their safety and have previously refused to leave.
- Members of staff need to maintain the safety of pupils who may display challenging behaviour on school trips, or similar.
- Members of staff may need to prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom when doing so would lead to a risk to their safety.
- A pupil is physically aggressive or violent towards others.
- A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves or others.

Where positive handling is required, the school will abide to the following guidance:

- The purpose will always be to maintain safety for all parties.
- Any positive handling will be limited to emergency situations and used only as a measure of last resort.
- It will be the least restrictive and for the least amount of time necessary to manage the risk presented.
- It will be reasonable and proportionate to the level of risk, taking into consideration the individual pupil's circumstances, including medical needs.
- Initial interventions will always focus on verbal de-escalation techniques, using the Thrive Approach 'Vital Relational Functions': attune; validate; contain; and regulate, in line with the behaviour policy.

### **Recording and Reporting Incidents**

A written report will be produced for any incidents where positive handling is used. This will be completed within 48 hours of the incident on a Positive Handling Report Form.

Incidents involving the use of positive handling will always be reported to the headteacher at the earliest opportunity.



Parents/carers will be informed when there has been an incident involving the use of positive handling with their child. Staff will endeavour to inform the parent/carer verbally on the day of the incident.

Where reasonable force or physical restraint has been used, the pupil's parents will be informed as long as this would not place the pupil at greater risk. If the decision is made that the parents cannot be informed as this would place the child at greater risk, a safeguarding referral will be made in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The headteacher will make the final decision as to whether it is appropriate to inform the pupil's parents of the details of an incident. If it is appropriate, the following will be adhered to:

- Parents will be informed in writing and a copy of this report will be given to the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.
- The report will inform parents of their right to complain about the use of positive handling and reasonable force, in line with the Complaints Procedures Policy.

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects the use of reasonable force, where another member of staff is actively involved in physical intervention, they will report this to the headteacher immediately.

Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

The headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

Where there is an incident that involves violence towards another person, it may be deemed necessary by the headteacher to inform external agencies such as, but not limited to, the Local Authority (LA) or the police where a crime has been committed.

Where necessary, an ANVIL form will be completed and reported to the LA.

### **Concerns and Complaints**

Most complaints are best dealt with informally. If there are any concerns, the matter may be discussed with the child's teacher at the earliest opportunity, in line with our Concerns and Complaints Policy.

Where a safeguarding allegation is made against a member of staff that involves physical contact, e.g. restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the



LADO will take into account that teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Where a safeguarding allegation is made against a member of staff that involves physical contact, e.g. restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO will take into account that teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher, DSL and governing body, who will consider any necessary changes and communicate the findings of the review to all members of staff.

## **Appendix A:**

### **Positive Handling Report Form**

We believe that positive handling should only be used when absolutely necessary. With this in mind, this form has been created to ensure that all incidents of this type are recorded in line with school policy. Incidents will also be documented in the Positive Handling Log by the Headteacher.



## POSITIVE HANDLING REPORT FORM

Name of pupil: ..... Teaching Group: .....  
Date of incident ..... Day of the week: .....  
Lesson: ..... Staffing for lesson: (initials): .....  
Other pupils present: (whole class/group/or individuals' initials) .....  
Place/s incident occurred: .....  
Reporting staff: .....  
Other staff involved: .....  
Other witnesses: .....  
Incident start time (24 hour clock): ..... Incident Duration: .....  
Intervention/s used (incl. staff placement): .....  
Duration of hold: .....

### How did the incident begin? (antecedents)

What led to the incident/triggered the behaviour?

### Behaviours of risk observed? (behaviour)

State actual behaviour observed, e.g. hitting rather than aggressive.

### What was done to defuse/de-escalate the situation? (consequences)

- ☐ Ignoring
- ☐ Distraction
- ☐ Thrive Approach: (attune/validate/contain/regulate)
- ☐ Behaviour Management Plan followed
- ☐ Other (please state):

### Reason why positive handling was thought necessary (please tick only 1):

- ☐ The pupil was at immediate risk of injury
- ☐ The pupil was placing other pupils at risk of injury
- ☐ The pupil was placing staff or others present at risk of injury
- ☐ Property was about to be damaged





☐ Other - please explain .....

**Brief description on incident:**

**Post incident support**

How was the pupil calmed after the incident?

- ☐ Safe Space
- ☐ Quiet time allowed: state .....
- ☐ Praised for appropriate/on task behaviour
- ☐ Other - please state:
- ☐ Incident discussed with pupil at level appropriate to their understanding
  - By whom? .....
- ☐ Pupil's views recorded via debrief sheet

**Parents informed**

- ☐ Yes- by whom? .....
- ☐ Means of communication: Phone call/verbally on collection/email/home school diary etc.....

**Injuries:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff injured                      | [ ] ANVIL report completed               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil involved in incident injured | [ ] ANVIL report completed               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other pupils injured               | [ ] ANVIL report completed               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other people injured               | [ ] ANVIL report completed               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Body maps completed                | Medical attention required-please state: |

**Significant damage to property:**

.....





All staff involved please sign to confirm this is an accurate record of the incident:

Signed: (Author/s).....

Print Names: .....

Copy given to Headteacher:

Signed: ..... Time: ..... Date: .....

Action taken by Headteacher:

- ☐ Positive Handling Log checked/signed
- ☐ Parents/Carers communicated with by Headteacher by:
  - o Telephone
  - o Letter/email
  - o Verbally after school
  - o Invited into school
  - o Other - please state:

**Was the pupil's Risk Assessment and Support Plan followed?**

- ☐ No plan was in place
- ☐ Yes, and was adequate to manage the incident
- ☐ Yes, but additional measures were needed and/or behaviour had not been experienced before.
- ☐ Behaviour Change Support Plan will need reviewing as a result of the incident

Next steps agreed: .....

.....

☐ Other professionals informed:

Name	Designation	Date informed and how

## Appendix B

### Positive Handling Log



## Positive Handling Report Form

[illegible]