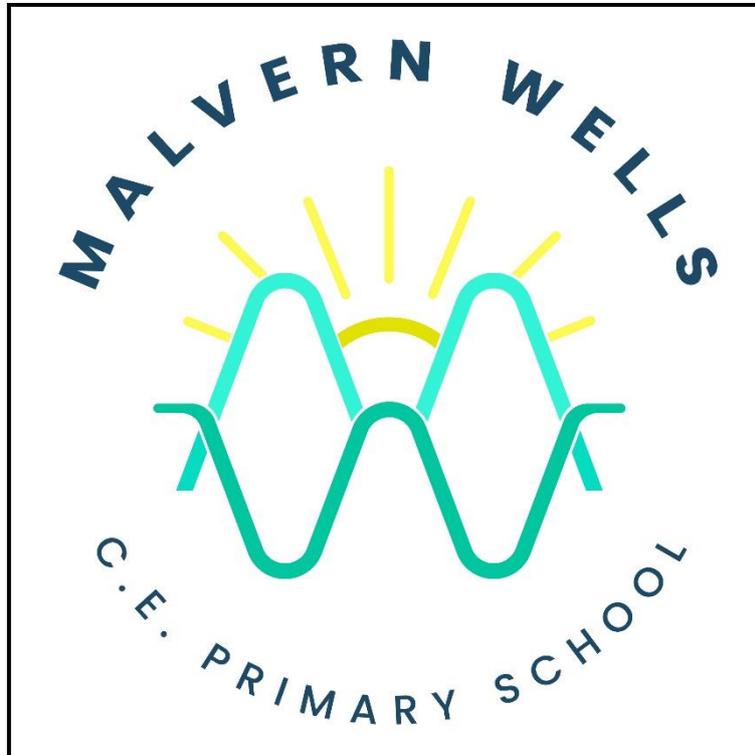


Malvern Wells CE Primary School

Positive Handling Policy 2025



‘Let Your Light Shine.’

We aspire for everyone at Malvern Wells to be the BRIGHTEST version of themselves, equipped with the knowledge that they are unconditionally loved by God who sees their intrinsic value, free to take risks, make mistakes and grow in the safety of his forgiveness ready for the plans and purposes He has in store for their bright future.

Let YOUR Light Shine by Letting His Light Shine through You!

Policy Author:	<i>Jen Afford</i>
Date of Policy:	06.02.2025
Date approved by Governors:	<i>T&G March 2025</i>
Next annual review date:	02 2026

Using Positive Handling at Malvern Wells C of E Primary School (hereafter Malvern Wells)

1. Vision and Values

At Malvern Wells which we want children to shine under our care, that they reach their brightest potential for a fulfilling future. Through our culture and values we aim to provide an academic, inclusive and therapeutic education for all pupils. The place of positive handling in this vision is that we must act to avoid or divert incidents involving children who lose control to the extent that they pose a threat to themselves or others. This way we promote safety for all and the sense of freedom and fulfilment which allows pupils to “shine”.

1.2 To paraphrase the Children Act 1989, the welfare of the child and children shall be the paramount consideration. Paramount in this context means that it is the first thing people should think about and it should take precedence over every other consideration. A balanced assessment of necessary action when managing behaviour and safety will always seek to promote safety and minimise risk for all present on site.

1.3 As part of our vision when using Positive Handling with pupils in our care, we will be mindful of the Equality Duty in line with the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding the rights of those with protected characteristics to allowing all to “shine” at school.

1.4 Malvern Wells acknowledges its duty of care to employees under Health & Safety Act 1974 “to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all ... employees”.

2 Positive Handling at Malvern Wells

2.1 Positive handling is the strategic use of physical contact with a child with the intention of protecting that child from harming his or herself, or other people, or from seriously damaging property.

2.2 The legal Framework underpinning Positive Handling comes from Section 93 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), (click to view) which makes clear that all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

2.3 The government has published a guidance document for schools, parents and governors outlining a school’s right and to use “reasonable force” in certain situations and suggesting best practice. [Use of Reasonable Force in Schools](#) is available online (click to view) and whilst it empowers schools to use reasonable force it states that positive handling should be used only in certain situations.

3 Policy Aims

3.1 We aim to provide an academic, inclusive and therapeutic education for all pupils through our values in fulfilment of our unique Christian vision.

3.2 We aim to enable the promotion of safety and good order through a controlled an appropriate enablement of staff to use their right to apply reasonable force.

3.3 This policy makes clear that reasonable force is a last resort; the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety and well-being and maintain good order and discipline in pursuit of our vision.

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3.4 This policy sets out the circumstances in which positive handling may be deployed, the safeguards and checks around this approach, and the procedure for logging and reporting these actions.

3.5 The specific aims of the Positive Handling Policy are to:

- a. protect every person in the school community from harm,
- b. protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive, untrained or harmful,
- c. provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are empowered and safeguarded, and are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and able to deal effectively with dangerous, violent or potentially violent situations.
- d. Provide a robust and transparent framework for accurate and open logging, effective communication and the receipt and processing of complaints, keeping all stakeholders as safe as can reasonably be expected.

4. Why Use Positive Handling?

4.1 Positive handling arises out of a school's duty of care, to the pupils on roll, to the staff who are employed, and to any other person who may be on the site, to promote a high quality of education, provide a safe environment conducive to learning, and maintain order.

4.2 Positive handling should be deployed as a last resort to avert or cease danger or harm by preventing or diverting a child's action. This may involve a light touch by diverting the child's progress physically (by walking them in a certain direction or directing them back to class) or briefly holding or restraining them to prevent serious harm to themselves, others, or property. Government guidance distinguishes between "control" (either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom) and "restraint" (to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control). We have adopted the inclusive language of "directing" instead of *control* and "holding" instead of *restraint*, as general terms when using and reporting incidents where positive handling has been necessary.

4.3 Positive handling is only appropriate if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour. Other strategies should have been tried and exhausted and, unless impossible, the support of other staff must be sought.

5 Alternative Strategies to avoid Positive Handling

5.1 There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives. This is a matter of judgement based on training.

5.2 However, in many circumstances there are alternatives to positive handling, e.g. use of de-escalation strategies such as:

- a. calmly repeating instructions until the pupil understands and complies,
- b. distraction, to divert or interrupt the behaviour long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective and for a consequence at the appropriate time,
- c. safe (maintaining supervision) withdrawal of attention (audience) to allow regulation,
- d. maintaining a calm and reassuring voice with calm and non-confrontational body language
- e. the use of humour (where appropriate)
- f. handing over to another member of staff to refresh the process with a new relationship.

5.3 Staff at Malvern Wells commit to using de-escalation strategies whenever and wherever possible before using Positive Handling.

6 When to Use Positive Handling

6.1 Positive handling is **never** a punitive sanction or consequence of behaviour. Corporal punishment remains illegal in the United Kingdom. It must **not** be used:

- a. in anger or temper,
- b. as a disciplinary measure
- c. when children are calm or regulated.

6.2 Staff will only seek to intervene in an incident using physical contact in order to prevent harm or damage being done or continuing to be done. Harm can include

- a. actual or potential physical harm to self or others or property,
- b. the disruption of lessons, learning and events to the extent that other children's right to learn is being contravened.

6.3 For example, but not limited to:

6.31 Directing, in order to:

- a. Changing the direction of travel of a child who is non-compliant or dysregulating to bring them to a safe place.
- b. Guiding or leading a reluctant or non-compliant child back to the place there are required to be.
- c. Removing a child from a room where they are significantly disrupting learning or upsetting other pupils and they have refused to follow an instruction to leave.

6.32 Holding, where a child, or children:

- a. is out of control and is likely to seriously injure themselves,
- b. has already done harm to themselves and seems unable to stop,
- c. is harming another child and is unable to stop,
- d. has already harmed another child and must be prevented from repeating the harm,
- e. is in the act of physically assaulting an adult,
- f. has recently assaulted an adult must be prevented from continuing this assault,
- g. are fighting and will not stop after verbal request or signal,
- h. is absconding, leaving the premises or otherwise endangering themselves,
- i. is leaving a room where it would be unwise or unsafe for them to do so,
- j. is causing significant and serious damage to property.

6.4 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 judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive or dangerous behaviour.

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6.5 Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they have a duty of care and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils and staff safety and wellbeing. Staff should, wherever possible, call for supervision or assistance if they feel physical contact in the form of positive handling is needed when dealing with a child's behaviour.

6.6 If a child is behaving dangerously, threatening harm or in the process of committing a crime, not acting is seldom an option. Failure to intervene with a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention and must exercise care of themselves as well as of others. Our duty lies in a considered balance between negligent inaction and reckless action, based on training, preparedness and adherence to policy.

7 Use of Positive Handling

7.1 Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of reestablishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should **never** be used as a disciplinary measure.

7.2 The government's advice document states that "All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force" and goes on to state that "This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit"¹.

7.3 This is important to remember if anyone with a duty of care to children or with proximity to a potentially crisis is empowered to act in the best interest of pupils and adults and minimise harm. Malvern Wells C of E Primary School would not preclude any person or persons from doing their duty to avert or divert a serious incident, whilst still having due regard to their own safety.

7.4 In everyday practice we have trained teachers and teaching assistants, including senior leadership in the best practice use of reasonable force, namely "Positive Handling" and in almost all cases it will should be these individuals, named in Annex 2 of this document, who will carry out positive handling interventions in the majority of situations. (As stated above, any employee or those given supervisory duties may use reasonable force and Annexe 2 does not preclude them from doing so in an emergency).

7.5 When lawfully using reasonable force, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. Responses should always be proportional, of minimal duration, and with the end of making the situation safer.

7.6 In all circumstances de-escalation strategies (5.2) should be used if appropriate or effective positive handling should be a last resort. When positive handling becomes necessary:

7.61 DO

- a. Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- b. Use the minimum force necessary for the minimum time necessary

¹ Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, July 2013, p.4

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- c. Involve another member of staff where possible. Light touch directing of children may be manageable alone but any firm direction or holding must have a minimum of two adults and should be witnessed.
- d. Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to in order to stop directing or holding (this may need frequent repetition)
- e. Use simple and clear language
- f. Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- g. Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance
- h. Stay calm, use de-escalation strategies and communicate through safe and reassuring vocal and physical language.

7.62 DON'T

- a. Act in temper (hand over to another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- b. Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- c. Attempt to reason with a pupil who is out of control
- d. Involve other pupils in the restraint
- e. Touch or hold the pupil in private or sexual areas
- f. Twist or force limbs back against a joint (hyperflexion)
- g. Bend or crush fingers or pull/hold hair
- h. Stand on feet
- i. Pull children or lift children by the hand or wrist
- j. Hold children down in a prone (front) or supine (back) position
- k. Exert any weight on children
- l. Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck, doubled up, or with head back.

8 Actions After an Incident Requiring Positive Handling

8.1 Positive handling will usually occur 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 pupil.

8.2 A member of the leadership team should be informed of any incident **as soon as possible** and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised.

8.3 Pupils

8.31 Pupils who have dysregulated to the extent that they have lost control must be given the chance to regulate again. This means being supervised (but not overwhelmed) by a safe person in a calm and quiet environment, potentially having a drink or something to eat if that is helpful.

8.32 Pupils must be given the chance to repair relationships with the members of staff who used Positive Handling. They must be told why it was necessary and informed it was to help them when they needed help and to keep safe.

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8.33. Positive Handling is **not** a behaviour consequence and when children are calm and regulated a sanction must be given in line with the school behaviour policy to ensure fairness and standards of discipline are upheld and to make clear that the Positive Handling was to make the child safe, not to punish them.

8.34 Any other child hurt, harmed or involved in the incident must be offered support and reparation. They must feel that discipline has been applied after the event and justice done. Their parents, where relevant should be informed, maintaining the confidentiality of the perpetrator.

8.4 Adults

Adults who have taken part in Positive Handling should debrief in three ways:

- a. Checking their wellbeing after a potentially distressing and alarming experience. They may need first aid treatment and in extreme cases counselling. Depending on the severity of the incident and its consequences appropriate support should be put in place by the headteacher.
- b. Ask for a recount of the incident, its triggers and response and reflect on its success and lessons learned. This should lead to formal recording.
- c. Thank any members of staff involved for their professionalism in supporting the child and taking effective action.

8.4 If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of an individual behaviour plan, seek advice from SENDCo or wider agencies and make appropriate referrals. The school is well supported by Perryfields PRU behaviour outreach and as part of a response to the need for Positive Handling the school should seek parental consent to refer and apply the appropriate behaviour toolkit. Education Psychology, Early Help and CAMHs may also be relevant referrals.

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

8.6 If the Positive Handling seems unlikely to be an isolated incident a Positive Handling Plan should be developed in consultation with parents with the aim of giving a planned response to unsafe behaviour which makes responses as safe as possible. Even when a plan is in place, Positive Handling must be a last resort after other avenues have been tried.

8.7 Dangerous and dysregulated behaviour may have underlying safeguarding implications and should be logged on CPOMs as part of the wider child protection and safeguarding picture.

8.8 All incidents where positive handling has been used should be recorded. All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available. A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

9 Risk Assessments and Positive Handling Plans

9.1 If it becomes apparent that a pupil is showing a trend of behaving in a way which may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- a. Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, Positive Handling approaches to be used where relevant),

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- b. Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- c. Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- d. Identification of additional support that can be sought if appropriate
- e. Requests for external advice, scrutiny or referral.

9.2 A Positive Handling Plan Proforma can be found at Annexe 3 of this policy.

10 Complaints and allegations of excessive force

10.1 The first line of the first paragraph of the Children Act 1989 in the UK states that the welfare of the child shall be the paramount consideration. Paramount in this context means that it is the first thing people should think about and it should take precedence over every other consideration. Complaints about Positive handling will be responded to in this regard.

10.2 A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to minimise complaints from parents. However, parents have the right to raise concerns or complaints about the management of their child's behaviour at school and at Malvern Wells we support this right. The school will signpost and apply its complaints procedure involving, where appropriate the advice of services and making, where relevant, the necessary referrals in line with statutory guidance.

10.3 All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated. Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.

10.4 When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.

10.5 Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to the "Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff" published by the DfE in 2012 and follow its local complaints and Safeguarding policies where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher.

10.6 Schools must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.

10.7 If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school should ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.

10.8 Governing bodies should always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the teacher.

10.9 As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that schools provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

ANNEX 1 Proforma for recording the use of Positive Handling

CONFIDENTIAL Malvern Wells C of E Primary School	
Record of Positive Handling	
Please complete in full as soon as possible after the incident with complete transparency and openness.	
Date of Incident:	Time of Incident:
Pupil Name:	DOB:
Member(s) of staff involved:	
Adult witnesses to intervention:	
Pupil witnesses to intervention:	
What were the triggers for this behaviour which necessitated Positive Handling?	
How did you try to avoid positive handling through de-escalation?	
Why was positive handling a necessary and justifiable action (what were you trying to prevent?)	
How did you manage the positive handling and what methods were used (include roles of personnel, duration and pupil's response)?	

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Summarise the outcome of the positive handling (including damage, injury and any subsequent behaviour sanctions or reparation post-handling?)

Description of any subsequent treatment for injury including off-site treatment.

How did you follow up this incident with support for all stakeholders?

Date/time parent/carer informed of incident:

By whom informed:

Outline of parent/carer response:

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Signatures of staff completing report:

Name:..... Signed:.....

Name:..... Signed:.....

Name:..... Signed:.....

CC Headteacher - Deputy Head - SENCo

Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action, including lessons learned:

ANNEX 2 Training Schedule for best practice training

Name	Role	Training Provider	Date
Jen Alford	Head Teacher	Team Teach	
Ali Dainty	Senior teacher in charge	Team Teach	
Tom Boyle	Class Teacher	Team Teach	
Michelle Elliott	Business Manager	Team Teach	
Emma Jackson	THRIVE leader	Team Teach	
Stevie Sharrock	SENDCo	Team Teach	03.02.25
Vicky Adams	Teaching Assistant	Team Teach	03.02.25

Training will be refreshed every three years.

ANNEX 3 Positive Handling Plan (PHP) Proforma

Malvern Wells C of E Primary School Positive Handling Plan (PHP) to safely manage crisis behaviours		
Child's Name	Age	Class
SEND Status	Medical Conditions	Allergies
LAC/PLAC	Pupil Premium Status	Child Protection Status
Behaviours which place the pupil or others at risk of significant harm (what, for how long, how often?)		
Known triggers for identified behaviours (when, why, with whom?)		
Suggested De-escalation Approach (what works, who is the best person to help?)		
Suggested and agreed Safe Direction (Moving or walking the child to a safer or alternative location)		
Suggested and agreed Safe Holding (2 persons) (Making the child safe through holding them still)		

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Any risk assessment or safety measures? (Think child and adult physical and mental health; apply proportionate risk management)		
Parent(s) signature	Headteacher signature	SENDCo signature
Date	Date	Date

Cc Head / Deputy Head / SENDCo / Class Teacher