



## St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

### Positive Physical Intervention Policy

'I try to live like Jesus: I love; I forgive; I pray. Come Follow Me.'

This Policy has been produced in order to promote the safety and well-being of the pupils of this school. It has been produced in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Guidance on the Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils 2007 (DCSF).

*Physical Intervention* ought to rarely happen within school as good relationships and clear expectations should be enough to support pupils who are becoming distressed or challenging. Nevertheless it is a fact that this may occur in extreme circumstances and it is incumbent on the school to ensure that any *Physical Intervention* is carried out in a professional way and that the school is fully accountable for its actions.

The use of *Physical Intervention* should only occur when staff are ensuring that they are doing so as a result of protection. It is inevitable that occasionally fights between pupils may occur. The role of the staff in such situations is to intervene as calmly as possible to separate pupils and thus ensure that they are not being allowed to harm each other.

On occasions one of the protagonists may overreact to this intervention and become threatening to staff. *Physical Intervention* then may well become necessary to try and calm the pupil's aggressive instincts. To not intervene when there is a likelihood of injury to a pupil would be a failure to carry out our duty of care.

There are very few other circumstances where *Physical Intervention* would be used within school. If a member of staff ever has a need to protect themselves from an assault by a pupil, the school would support whatever action the member of staff would wish to take against that pupil and their actions of *Physical Intervention* would be in line with their right to defend themselves from assault by way of the use of reasonable force. There is no legal definition of when it is equitable to use force but to be judged lawful, the force used would need to be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired outcome.

It would always be unlawful to use force as a punishment. To do so would be deemed to have used corporal punishment and be in direct contravention of section 548 of the Education Act, 1996.

The school will create an establishment where both pupils and staff see *Physical Intervention* as an exception rather than a rule, and that it is always done under the banner of protection. Never should a child feel that *Physical Intervention* was employed because of his or her refusal to comply with expectations or rules. It is important to communicate calmly with a pupil, using non-threatening verbal and body language and ensuring the pupil can see a way out of a situation. Wherever practicable, a warning should be given to the pupil that staff may have to hold/move them away from a situation.

A decision to use *Physical Intervention* should be justified by a mental risk assessment which typically has to be reached quickly with little time for reflection. Staff will try to assess 'the seriousness of the incident as the greater the potential for injury, the more likely that *Physical Intervention* may be justified'.

Following such incidents *Physical Intervention* reports must be written and the reason for the use of physical intervention stated clearly. Staff must provide clear evidence for the reason for their decision i.e. 'Risk to others or self'.

Report writing is crucial to ensuring that all our *Physical Interventions* are professionally motivated and executed. Even the clearest cut *Physical Intervention* can be challenged in a court and therefore every report must emphasise the reasons for, as well as the actual, form of *Physical Intervention* utilised. Good reports will see the whole process as a sympathetic approach to a difficult situation, with the interest of the child being held as paramount despite the violent aggressive behaviour being exhibited.

All such reports will be submitted to the school Designated Person for Child Protection and Safeguarding for the purpose of professional monitoring and staff de-brief. All records will be further monitored by the Governing Body and available for inspection by Ofsted.

Parents/Carers will be advised of the incident by a senior member of staff either by telephone or at the end of the day when they collect their child from school.

We would only ever hold children in extreme circumstances and then simply because we are caring for them; to do otherwise could be placing your child or others at serious risk.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the DfE's Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, July 2013.

Approved By Governing Body on 20/5/15
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