

Meare Village Primary School

Positive Handling Policy



Approved by:	Headteacher	Date: June 2026
Last reviewed on:	June 2026	
Next review due by:	June 2030	

Rationale

Meare Village Primary School students need to feel safe and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Most pupils will make the correct behaviour choices, but some (generally only a few and only occasionally) lose control and may put themselves or others in danger by their actions. Parents and pupils need to know that staff can physically intervene safely and within strict parameters (only when all other options have been unsuccessful or there is immediate risk of injury). Our pupils nearly always respond well to the school rules and conventions. Situations, in which positive handling may be needed, are therefore likely to be relatively few.

Meare Village Primary School staff need to be safe and confident in how they manage inappropriate behaviour. They must be clear about options open to them when all the normal systems have failed or when there is a clear emergency in which, for example, talking calmly to someone in danger would not be appropriate. They need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate positive handling; and need to know that we and the LA will offer support if they are challenged. Training for staff should be available at regular intervals (Team Teach). Meare Village Primary School parents need to know that their child and those who are teaching them are safe and free from disruptive influences or danger. They also need to know that they will be properly informed if their child is the subject of positive handling; and they need to know the nature of the intervention and the rationale for its use (a full, fact driven report). The school is open to any parental queries about its policy and review. The school will always strive to contact parents at the earliest opportunity to inform them about the use of positive handling.

Our approach: "Prevention is better than cure".

We always try to avoid using positive handling and regard it as a last resort for a minority of situations. We provide a properly planned and differentiated curriculum that provides appropriate levels of challenge to all pupils and maintains an effective school positive behaviour policy that is known and understood by all staff and pupils.

Positive Handling is our method of last resort, after all other approaches have been tried or in situations of clear danger or extreme urgency ensuring a dynamic risk assessment has been utilised. 95% of crisis situations can be dealt with through calm, dignified and skilled intervention. (The use of non-confrontational approaches and understanding of messages received from body language are vital).

We utilise only the minimum force required to resolve the situation safely. How we respond always has regard to the circumstances and to the age and understanding of the child or young person. Where there is a foreseeable risk that a pupil could behave in such a way as to require restrictive positive handling, we undertake a dynamic risk assessment in order to balance the risks to the pupil and to others of intervening or not. Planning is also undertaken to see if trigger situations can be avoided and other positive strategies (including Behaviour Smart software analysis) employed to lessen the likelihood of such incidents occurring.

Who may use physical intervention and when

The law allows teachers and support staff to have control or charge of pupils to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupils were not under the age of criminal responsibility);
- Injuring themselves or others;
- Causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property).

Although staff are allowed by law to physically intervene in the above scenarios, all other strategies will be utilised first - where appropriate.

Positive Handling Strategies

Reasonable force is not defined legally in isolation. It must be justified as appropriate by the circumstances. We use only the minimum force that is needed to restore safety or appropriate behaviour; and we take account of the age, understanding, need and gender of the pupil. The Team Teach approach advocates:

- At least two members of staff (if possible)
- Minimum force and time
- Maximum care and control

Last resort- when all other options have been exhausted, positive handling and only when it is appropriate

Team Teach foundation course.

(Friendly hold, single elbow, double elbow, caring C etc...) to allow:

- leading or guiding a pupil by the hand or arm, or shepherding them with a hand in the centre of the back;
- holding a pupil who has lost control until they are calm and safe and no longer a danger to themselves and others;
- physically moving between and separating two pupils who are at risk of injuring themselves or others;
- blocking a pupil's path to prevent them from injuring themselves or others or committing an offence;
- where there is immediate risk of injury, any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force' – for example to prevent a pupil running into a busy road or hitting or hurting someone;

At all times the health and wellbeing of the child must be considered. All incidents of positive handling are recorded on the Behaviour Smart system and reported to parents.

Using Physical Intervention

Except in cases where there is immediate danger, staff at Meare Village Primary School would normally try other ways of resolving or de-escalating a situation. These could include:

1. Calmly re-stating the rules and expectations for the situation
2. Removing other pupils from the situation and thus from danger from being in front of an audience
3. Following pupils' behaviour plan, risk assessment or positive handling plan
4. Encouraging the pupil to withdraw to a safer and calmer situation
5. Knowledge of the pupil and using strategies that have been agreed or within the pupil's bespoke behaviour plan
6. A change of face

Following an incident of positive handling, the teacher or adult responsible should, as soon as possible, inform a member of SLT. When the pupil is regulated, a reflection session should be conducted with the pupil and a trusted member of staff. The incident **MUST** be recorded on Behaviour Smart, by the staff member involved, and include the pupil voice.

Parents/carers/guardians must be informed of the incident as soon as possible and be given a comprehensive explanation of the pre and post incident.

Planning for Physical Intervention

Where we think a pupil might require positive handling, staff will plan in advance to mitigate the probability of occurrence and strategies to be implemented and at what stage. This may take the form of a

- Risk assessment
- Bespoke behaviour plan
- Positive handling plan

In all of the above examples, positive handling is always a last resort. Strategies, de-escalation techniques and interventions are always planned to reduce the need for positive handling. Often parents will be consulted for risk assessments and behaviour plans (where deemed appropriate) and parents will always be consulted and required to sign a positive handling plan/bespoke behaviour plan, once it has been finalised.

Training

We are clear that the training of staff is vital in this area if we are to be seen to adopt best practice and maintain a record of safe management of all school situations. We therefore make budgetary allowance to develop behaviour management in the school. Training and refresher courses will also be made available when needed via Team Teach training or other appropriate training courses.