



Positive Handling Policy

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1. Introduction

Queen's Park High School is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and emotionally secure environment for every student. Our approach is founded on trauma-informed and attachment-aware principles, recognising that behaviour is a form of communication that reflects underlying emotional needs. We aim to reduce distress and support self-regulation through connection, empathy, and calm communication. Positive handling is used only as a last resort to prevent harm and to protect safety - never as punishment or to control behaviour.

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy provides clear guidance for managing situations where a student's distress or dysregulation may pose a risk to themselves or others. It ensures that all staff are confident in using *positive, relational approaches* that uphold the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of everyone involved

3. Legal Framework

Queen's Park High School is committed to ensuring that any use of positive handling or reasonable force is lawful, proportionate, necessary and in the best interests of the child. This policy is underpinned by the following statutory and regulatory frameworks, which set out the rights, responsibilities and duties of the school and its staff.

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93)

This Act provides the primary legal basis for the use of reasonable force in schools. It states that all members of school staff, and individuals authorised by the Headteacher, may use reasonable force to prevent a student from:

- committing an offence,
- causing personal injury to themselves or others,
- causing damage to property, or
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school.

DfE Guidance: *Use of Reasonable Force* (2013)

This statutory guidance outlines the circumstances in which reasonable force may be used, the principles that should guide decisions, and the expectations placed upon schools. It highlights that reasonable force must never be used as a punishment and must always be the minimum necessary to achieve a safe outcome.

Behaviour in Schools – DfE Guidance (2022, updated 2023–24)

This guidance sets out the expectations for behaviour management in schools, including the requirement for clear policies on positive handling, and emphasises safeguarding considerations and the importance of a graduated and proportionate response to challenging behaviour.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The school has a statutory duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all staff and pupils. This includes completing appropriate risk assessments, planning safe responses to foreseeable behaviours, and providing staff with relevant training to reduce risk.

Children Act 1989 & Children Act 2004

These Acts establish the overriding duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Any physical intervention must therefore be in the child's best interests, be the least restrictive option available, and be used only when necessary to protect the child or others from harm.

Human Rights Act 1998

The school has a legal duty to act in a manner compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. Positive handling must respect:

- Article 3 – protection from inhuman or degrading treatment,
- Article 5 – the right to liberty and security,
- Article 8 – respect for private and family life, including physical autonomy.

Interventions must not be excessive, punitive or degrading in nature.

Equality Act 2010

The school must ensure that staff take account of students' protected characteristics, including disability and SEND. Reasonable adjustments may be required to support pupils whose behaviour is linked to underlying needs. Positive handling must not discriminate and must always take into account the individual circumstances of the child.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – Latest Edition

KCSIE sets out the school's legal duties in relation to safeguarding. All use of physical intervention must be recorded, reported and evaluated through safeguarding procedures. Staff must consider whether behaviour may indicate unmet needs or wider welfare concerns.

Searching, Screening and Confiscation: DfE Guidance (2023)

Where positive handling is used during a search for dangerous or prohibited items, the use of force must comply with statutory guidance and be limited to what is reasonable and necessary to prevent harm.

Local Authority Safeguarding Partnerships and Multi-Agency Guidance

The school adheres to the expectations set by the Local Authority and local safeguarding partnerships in relation to physical intervention, reporting, inter-agency communication and review processes.

4. Regulation and De-Escalation Approaches

Our primary goal is to *support regulation, not to enforce control*.

All staff are trained to use strategies that calm, reassure, and rebuild trust:

- **Active listening:** Allowing students to express emotions and concerns safely.
- **Co-regulation:** Using calm tone, supportive presence, and emotional sensitivity to model regulation.
- **Calm communication:** Speaking clearly and slowly to reduce tension.
- **Predictability and choice:** Providing clear options to help restore a sense of control.
- **Use of space:** Allowing time and physical space for recovery where safe to do so.
- **Distraction and re-direction:** Gently shifting focus towards neutral or positive activities.
- **Connection before correction:** Addressing emotional needs before behavioural outcomes.

Staff must always use de-escalation and regulation support before any form of physical contact is considered. The emphasis remains on empathy, understanding triggers, and rebuilding relational safety.

5. When Positive Handling May Be Required

Positive handling (supportive physical contact to maintain safety) is only used in *exceptional* situations when there is a clear and immediate risk of harm. It is not a disciplinary measure but a safety response.

This may include:

- Preventing injury to the student or others.
- Preventing a student from leaving a safe area and entering danger (e.g., traffic, unsafe environment).
- Preventing significant damage that could cause harm.

Even in these cases, positive handling should be the **minimum necessary** and end as soon as the learner and environment are safe.

6. Role of SLT and Positive Handling Nominated Staff

Only staff trained in Positive Handling will undertake interventions requiring positive handling. Their responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the incident is managed with care, proportionality, and compassion.
- Ensuring only techniques learned during training are practiced.

The role of SLT:

- Ensuring incidents are managed with care, proportionality, and compassion.
- Ensuring only techniques learned during training are practiced.

- Providing debrief and emotional support for the student and involved staff afterwards.
- Reviewing all recorded incidents to ensure consistency with trauma-informed practice and the school's safeguarding framework.

7. Guiding Principles for Positive Handling

When positive handling is unavoidable, it must always reflect the following values:

- **Safety first:** Protecting all individuals from immediate harm.
- **Proportionality:** Using the least intrusive action for the shortest duration.
- **Preservation of dignity:** Maintaining respect, privacy, and emotional safety throughout.
- **Restoration and reflection:** Supporting the student afterwards to understand what happened and to rebuild trust.
- **Learning and repair:** Reflecting as a team on how we can prevent recurrence by addressing triggers and unmet needs.

8. Recording and Monitoring

All incidents involving positive handling will be logged on CPOM's and Synergy following safeguarding and behaviour protocols, including:

- Date, time, and location.
- Staff present and those directly involved.
- Description of the incident, actions taken, and rationale.
- Any injuries or emotional impact observed.
- Post-incident reflection and planned follow-up support.

The Headteacher or designated SLT member will review all records to ensure the response was necessary, proportionate, and aligned with this policy.

9. Staff Training

All staff receive regular training in:

- Trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice.
- Co-regulation and de-escalation strategies.
- Reflective practice and emotional resilience.

Pastoral SLT and nominated Positive Handling staff receive training in:

- Positive handling techniques (using the least intrusive and most supportive approaches).

Professional external Positive Handling training is provided by certified, registered and licensed practitioners according to DFE guidelines to nominated staff and SLT members.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, to reflect best practice and statutory guidance. Staff will be updated and retrained as necessary to ensure consistent, safe, and compassionate application.