

De-escalation and Positive Handling Training Policy

Bristol Cathedral Choir School (BCCS)

1. Policy Statement

Bristol Cathedral Choir School is committed to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students. Our approach prioritises proactive strategies and de-escalation techniques to reduce risk and promote positive behaviour. Positive handling will only ever be used as a last resort, when all other strategies have been exhausted, and when necessary to maintain the safety of the student, their peers, or staff.

This policy aligns with the Bristol SEND Local Offer and the wider statutory framework for supporting children and young people with additional needs.

[Link: Bristol's OAP SEND Local Offer](#)

2. Aims of the Policy

- To ensure a consistent and safe approach to behaviour support, underpinned by positive relationships and de-escalation.
- To embed de-escalation strategies into IEPs (Individual Education Plans), risk assessments, and student passports where appropriate.
- To outline expectations for staff training in positive handling techniques, with a focus on preventative strategies.
- To ensure that Team Teach training underpins safe practice in positive handling as a last resort.
- To promote the dignity, rights, and emotional wellbeing of every student.

3. De-escalation in IEPs, Risk Assessments, and Student Passports

- Each student identified as at risk of behaviours that challenge will have their individual needs documented in a Student Passport.
- IEPs and risk assessments will include personalised de-escalation strategies based on individual triggers, motivators, and calming techniques if there is an identified need.
- Staff will be expected to implement the following common strategies consistently:

Common De-escalation Strategies

- Verbal communication: Using calm, supportive verbal advice and reinforcement.
- Non-verbal cues: Employing positive and supportive non-verbal signals.
- Meeting basic needs: Ensuring access to food, water, and warmth.
- Emotional support: Providing reassurance and support to the individual.
- Offering choices: Providing options to help reduce tension and restore control.
- Diversion and diffusion: Redirecting attention to a preferred activity or topic.
- Negotiation: Seeking a collaborative and mutually acceptable solution.
- Positive handling (last resort): Only used when de-escalation fails and immediate safety is at risk.

4. Positive Handling as a Last Resort

- Any use of positive handling must be:
 - Proportionate to the risk presented.
 - Reasonable and in line with Team Teach principles.
 - Recorded and reported promptly through the school's incident reporting system.
- Following any incident, students will be offered debrief and emotional support to help them reflect and rebuild trust.

5. Training Requirements

- All BCCS staff are trained annually in PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) approaches to ensure consistent and trauma-informed interactions across the school.
- Key staff receive annual training in Team Teach positive handling methods.
- Training will cover:
 - Core de-escalation and communication strategies.
 - Trauma-informed practice and relational approaches (PACE).
 - Individualised de-escalation planning and documentation.
 - Safe positive handling techniques in line with Team Teach principles.
 - Post-incident debrief and restorative practice.
- Training records will be maintained and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

6. Individualised De-escalation Strategies

- De-escalation strategies will be tailored to each student identified as at risk, and will be included in their Student Passport and risk assessment.
- Strategies may include:
 - Preferred calming spaces or sensory resources.
 - Specific staff approaches or relationship-based strategies.
 - Triggers to avoid
 - Preferred methods of redirection.
 - Non-verbal signals or cues between staff and student.

7. Monitoring and Review

- The SENDCo and SLT will monitor the use of positive handling and de-escalation through incident reports, student feedback, and staff reflection.
- Every use of positive handling is recorded on CPoms
- This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance or best practice advice changes.
- Parents and carers will be consulted and informed of relevant updates to their child's IEP, passport, or risk assessment.

8. Links to Other Policies and Guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Information Report
- Bristol SEND Local Offer
- DfE Guidance: *Use of Reasonable Force*