
Positive Handling Policy 2024



Kindness



Focus



Creativity



Responsibility



Collaboration

Contents

Revision Updates.....	2
1. Purpose.....	3
2. Legislation and guidance.....	3
3. Definitions.....	3
4. Implementation of Physical Intervention.....	4
5. Recording Physical Intervention.....	5
6. Links with other policies and documents.....	6
7. Headteachers Responsibilities.....	8
Appendices.....	9
Appendix 1 - Physical Restraint Incident Form.....	10
Appendix 2 - Guidance on Appropriate and Inappropriate Intervention.....	14

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to make clear the position of the school with regards to necessary physical interventions and to safeguard the well-being of pupils and staff when a situation or incident requires the use of physical intervention.

Physical intervention should only be used after all attempts to de-escalate a situation have been exhausted.

Wherever possible, and appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be made for SEND students after consultation with the SENDCo and/or Headteacher. It is the federation's priority to maintain consistent and safe practices in the use of handling, reasonable force and restraint.

There may be particular training needs for staff who work closely with pupils with additional needs or disabilities. However, all staff will be trained (as appropriate). Staff will be made aware of this policy and procedures during their induction. **Training will focus on the management of behaviour and the de-escalation of situations, as well as the occasions on which restraint may be necessary, and the ways in which this might be used.**

2. Legislation and guidance

The law allows all adults who are authorised by the Headteacher to be responsible for a pupil to use such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from;

- a) Committing a criminal offence (or for younger children that which would be an offence);
- b) Causing personal injury, injury to themselves or others or damage to property;
- c) Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline.

Staff should not hesitate to act in these situations provided they follow this policy and the attached guidance; however, they should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of their professional colleagues.

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#) and has been written using advice taken from [Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies DfE 2013](#) and further guidance has been sought from [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022](#)

In addition, this policy has been created to meet our legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years 2015.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Handling	Refers to any physical intervention applied by a member of staff where it is necessary to make physical contact with a student in order to manage their conduct or ensure their own or others safety. Handling strategies may be restrictive or nonrestrictive and include shepherding, guiding, supporting, blocking, confining, holding and, in the most extreme cases, restraining.

Reasonable Force (KCSIE, Paragraph 163, 2022)	The term reasonable force covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. Reasonable in these circumstances means using no more force than needed. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of the classroom.
Control	The term control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom.
Restraint	The term restraint means the positive application of force in order to actively prevent a child from causing significant injury* to him/herself or others or seriously damaging property. This could mean holding back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
*Significant Injury would include: actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning. It must be shown that on any occasion where physical restraint is used there were strong indicators that if immediate action had not been taken, significant injury would have followed.	

4. Implementation of Physical Intervention

The Headteacher and designated leaders are authorised to use reasonable force and /or to restrain pupils when all other de-escalation strategies have not worked.

- No member of staff should employ any physical intervention strategy if they are not trained to do so (save in unsafe or crisis situations, described below)
- No member of staff should intervene physically if they have reason to believe that to do so would worsen the situation/incident that is taking place.

Further support and advice about how to intervene can be found in [Appendix 2](#)

Staff can use reasonable force in an unsafe or crisis situation to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a student at risk of harming themselves or others or damage to property belonging to anyone through physical outbursts.

Staff should note that:

- no more force than necessary should be used;
- all non-physical interventions have been exhausted and restraint is a last resort;
- external professional support should be sought if restraint does not work.

5. Recording Physical Intervention

All incidents where staff feel that they have used force to modify behaviour or conduct should be recorded on the [attached incident form](#) and in a statement to the Headteacher.

It is not necessary to record every incident of contact with a child, but where a member of staff perceives that contact has been received at all negatively, they are advised to record the circumstances.

The Headteacher will ensure that parents/carers are appropriately informed. For

the safeguarding of both staff and pupils, any subsequent investigation of the situation/incident should be undertaken by a member of staff other than the one applying the physical intervention.

Use of behavioural procedures and restraint is a sensitive topic. This document is meant to provide reassurance and support to staff and to ensure that practice in schools is always in the best interests of the students concerned. In addition, staff should also record any intervention on CPOMS – our safeguarding management tool.

Guiding Principles

Positive handling should be applied only as an act of care with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Physical restraint should never be used to force pupil compliance with staff instructions, when there is no immediate danger present to people and property. It must only be used when there is no realistic alternative.

Staff should think proactively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective and prevent the situation escalating. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces rather than increases risk. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate and should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment. Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

1. Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint;
2. The child should be in immediate danger of harming themselves or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property;
3. Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied. Staff should always avoid acting in a way that might cause injury;
4. Staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. 'I am doing this to keep you safe';
5. Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.

The restraint should be discussed with the child and communicated with the parents at the earliest opportunity. It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All pupils who have been identified as presenting a behavioural risk should have a Positive Behaviour Support Plan. This plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Positive Behaviour Support Plans should be considered along with any Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) and any other planning document relevant to the pupil.

Training

The Federation has identified senior leaders to undergo training led by qualified trainers from Intelligensia. Physical restraint should only be used by those with appropriate training, however, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible and physical restraint may be used as an emergency measure by any member of staff to ensure the safety of children in their care. It is expected that trained staff would take over the situation as soon as possible.

Headteacher Responsibilities

It is the Headteacher's responsibility that the school keeps a record of all incidents where physical intervention involving the use of force against resistance from a child has been necessary. They should ensure that these incidents are recorded on the school's Restraint Form which must be completed within 24 hours, signed by all staff involved and shared with the Head Teacher. It may be necessary to complete a Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form if injury has occurred. These forms should be submitted to the Local Authority as per the Health and Safety Policy. The headteacher should contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, on the same day, to inform them of the actions.

A written report must be submitted to the Executive Headteacher and the Governing Body who will review all documentations and inform the Headteacher of key actions for the school including any referral to the LADO.

Positive handling often occurs 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. The Headteacher should take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and those involved in the incident should be offered support.

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The number and type of incidents in which physical intervention and/or restraint has been necessary will also be reviewed regularly. This allows the Headteacher to identify any patterns of behaviour resulting in the use of physical intervention and explore the relationship between the use of physical intervention and behaviour in school.

Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents however in circumstances where a complaint arises this should be dealt with in line with the school's complaints policy.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Physical Restraint Incident Form
- Appendix 2 - Guidance on Appropriate and Inappropriate Intervention
- Appendix 3 - Headteacher Report

Policy reviewed	April 2024
Adopted by Governing Body	June 2024
Review date	June 2026

New Wave Federation

Physical Intervention Report Form

This recording form is to be used following any application of physical intervention.

Please complete a separate form for each young person or adult with whom staff physically intervened.

This form must be shared with a senior member of staff with Section C to be completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

SECTION A: To be completed by the member(s) of staff involved in the incident
1. Name of young person
2. Date of birth of young person
3. Name of staff applying physical intervention
4. Role of staff applying physical intervention
5. Names of witnesses (staff and pupils)
6. Location of incident
7. Date and time of incident __ / __ / __ __ : __ __
8. Date and time reported __ / __ / __ __ : __ __
9. Is this a one-off or infrequent incident? Yes ☐ No ☐

Section B: To be completed by the member(s) of staff involved in the incident

1. Describe the incident

Continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary

2. What events led up to and may have triggered the incident (antecedent)?

3. What de-escalation techniques were used?

4. Why was intervention deemed necessary?

5. What restraining was used?

6. Were there any marks or injuries sustained by any person as a result of the incident?

If so, please describe

7. Describe any action taken in relation to injuries sustained

8. Describe any serious damage to property

SECTION C: To be completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL

1. Have the staff, young person/adult and witnesses been debriefed?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes

Date and time of debrief of young person/adult: __ / __ / __ __ : __

Date and time of debrief of staff: __ / __ / __ __ : __

Date and time of debrief of witnesses: __ / __ / __ __ : __

Who delivered the debriefing?

If No add reason why not

2. Views of young person/adult

3. Views of staff

4. Views of witnesses

5. Was the incident reported to Hackney Designated Officer for Safeguarding?
Yes ☐ No ☐

6. Is an appropriate behaviour management plan in place?
Yes ☐ No ☐

7. If yes, what date was this agreed and by whom?

-- / -- / -- -- : --

8. When is this due to be reviewed?

-- / -- / -- -- : --

9. Necessary follow up action or plan for review:

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Name of reporting staff member
Signature of reporting staff member
Date

Name of reporting manager
Signature of reporting manager
Date

Appendix 2 - Guidance on Appropriate and Inappropriate Intervention

How can you intervene – examples include:

- interposing of restrainer's body;
- blocking a student's path;
- holding;
- pushing;
- pulling;
- leading by hand or arm;
- shepherding with hand placed in the small of the back;
- minimum force/minimum duration.

You cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment;
- use the 'seated double embrace' which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing;
- use the 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest;
- use the 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose;
- use any hitting, kicking or punching;
- deliberately inflict pain restrict breathing;
- use any arm, leg, throat, finger locks or holds that result in students being put face down on the ground.

You must:

- avoid genital, breast or buttock areas;
- ensure no weight put on spines or abdomens;
- use minimum restriction of limb movements related to danger of injury to restrainer, student or others;
- avoid moving students unless they are in a dangerous location.