



Positive Handling Policy

Restrictive Intervention and Positive Handling of Pupils

Motivate • Educate • Achieve

Date of Policy: October 2022

Reviewed: March 2026 in consultation with staff

Ratified by the Full Governing Body: 17 March 2026

Date of Next Review: January 2027

Restrictive Intervention and Positive Handling of Pupils

Rationale:

Woodcock Hill is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for pupils' safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour and use physical intervention, as a last resort, and carried out with respect, and dignity. If it is used it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil, and be reasonable and proportional to the circumstances of the incident. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff. It is recorded, monitored, and shared with parents or carers in line with our safeguarding procedures and Team teach training.

Woodcock Hill Primary School encourages pupils to make positive behaviour choices. If pupils make an incorrect choice some form of physical intervention by staff may be needed. Our Restraint Policy is based upon the following ("Team Teach") principles:

- Physical intervention is used only as a last resort, when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Any physical contact is only the minimum required.
- Physical intervention is used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents are recorded and reported to the Head Teacher.
- Parents are informed of each incident.

The Legal Framework.

Our Positive Handling Policy is guided by a trauma-informed, relational ethos, but it also sits firmly within the current legal and safeguarding framework. It reflects the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- **Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006** allows, 'teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Head Teacher who 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:
 - causing injury to him/herself or others
 - committing an offence
 - damaging property
 - prejudicing the maintenance of good order & discipline'
- **The Equality Act 2010** – requires schools to make reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities and to prevent discrimination
- **The Children Act 1989 and 2004** – establishes a child's right to protection and care that promotes their welfare
- **DfE guidance: Use of Reasonable Force (2013)** – outlines the use of physical intervention in schools, including the need for proportionality, safety and recording
- **Behaviour in Schools (DfE, 2022, updated 2024)** – promotes preventative, relational and inclusive approaches to behaviour
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)** – requires schools to take safeguarding seriously in any physical contact with children
- **UNCRC** – particularly Article 19 (protection from harm), Article 12 (right to be heard), and Article 23 (support for disabled children)
- **DfE Guidance: Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools (effective April 2026)** - In line with this guidance, the term **restrictive intervention** is used as an umbrella term to describe any action that limits a child's movement or liberty in order to prevent harm.

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Definition of Reasonable Force, Restraint and Seclusion.

The DfE guidance (2013) on the 'Use of Reasonable Force' defines and explains these terms in the following way:

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances, such as separating pupils or, where a pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- "Control" means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact, such as leading a pupil by the arm.
- "Restraint" means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are unable to be separated without physical intervention.
- Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving – this is used only as a safety measure.
- School staff should always avoid acting in a way that might cause injury to any other party involved.

All members of staff who can use reasonable force have a legal power to use it. This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying pupils on a school organised visit.

The DfE Guidance 2013 on 'Use of reasonable force' states that schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive pupils from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, trip or a visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom, where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to separate pupils in the playground;
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts. Schools and school staff cannot:
- use force as a punishment - it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Head teachers and authorised staff can use such force, as is reasonable given the circumstances, to conduct a search for the following 'prohibited items': knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force cannot be used to search for other items prohibited under the individual school rules.

The School Policy.

We aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in a minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate. Staff exercise their own professional judgement in situations which may arise within the above categories.

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Staff act within our school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Once again, it is stressed that physical intervention is only used when all other strategies have failed to have the desired effect on a pupil's immediate behaviour.

NB It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- When comforting a distressed pupil
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To give first aid.

Pupils can be comforted, within reason, for example, a hand on the shoulder or arm. Under no circumstances is it appropriate for staff to sit a pupil on their lap or hug them. Pupils should be actively discouraged from overt physical displays of affection towards members of staff, for example, hugging or putting their arms around staff. Members of staff will need to be sensitive in this as we do not want pupils to feel rejected or uncomfortable.

Staff are aware that when they are in charge of pupils during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they have a 'Duty of Care' to all pupils within their charge. They may take reasonable action to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. School staff are not expected and not advised, to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention, which would include running after pupils.

Use of Physical Interventions.

A physical intervention is applied as an act of care and control 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 never takes a form which could be seen as punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint i.e. only applying force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. In all circumstances, alternative methods are used as appropriate with physical intervention or restraint as a last resort.

Supportive holding and other restrictive interventions are never used as part of a planned behaviour strategy, never used routinely and never used as a sanction. They are emergency safety responses only. Where a child has a trauma history related to touch, staff follow a personalised plan and avoid any touch that could trigger distress. Restrictive intervention is only carried out by staff trained in approved safe-handling methods (Team Teach).

All current staff have received “Team Teach” physical restraint training. In the exceptional circumstance, when physical restraint or intervention becomes necessary, staff:

DO	DON'T
• Summon help / involve another member of staff if possible • Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way • Use simple and clear language • Tell the pupil what s/he must do for the staff member to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition) • Use the minimum force necessary • Be aware of any feelings of anger • Hold limbs above a major joint if possible, e.g. above the elbow • Relax the restraint in response to the pupil's compliance	• Try to manage on your own • Stop talking even if the pupil does not reply • Act in temper • Allow a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil • Involve other pupils in the restraint • Use physical restraint or intervention as a punishment • Touch or hold the pupil in a way that could be viewed as sexually inappropriate conduct • Twist or force limbs back against a joint • Bend fingers or pull hair • Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck • Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

Alternatives to Physical Intervention.

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions to the students to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable students to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use ‘positive touch’¹ to guide or escort students to somewhere less pressurised.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

Reducing the likelihood of situations arising where physical intervention may be required.

All physical interventions at the school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The Behaviour Policy rewards effort and application and encourages students to take responsibility for their own behaviour. It also outlines the steps the school undertakes to ensure a calm, orderly and supportive school climate which minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind, thereby reducing the need for physical intervention.

¹ ‘Positive touch’ is a ‘Team Teach’ technique where the student is guided by touching the arm above the elbow. Please refer to the Team Teach training manual for specific guidance on the technique.

A structured approach to staff development is adopted through the 'Team Teach' programme, which allows staff to develop the skills of positive behaviour management and de-escalating incidents.

Staff should recognise the need to effectively manage individual incidents. It is important to communicate calmly with the student, using non-threatening verbal and body language and ensuring that the student can see a way out of the situation. Strategies might include, for example, going with the staff member to a quiet room, away from bystanders or other students, so that the staff member can listen to concerns; or being joined by a particular member of staff well known to the student.

Wherever practicable a student should be warned that physical intervention may have to be used before applying it.

Considerations for pupils with SEND are taken into account and staff, pupils and parents work in co-production to produce necessary behaviour plans (risk assessments).

Actions after an Incident has taken place.

Physical restraint usually 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 Head Teacher is informed of any incident as soon as possible and takes responsibility for arranging for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff debriefs the pupil concerned: the debrief includes consideration of the circumstances that precipitated the incident and exploring ways in which future incidents can be avoided. Any other individuals involved in the incident are offered support.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it will probably be necessary to address the situation through the development or review of an Individual Behaviour Plan, which may include a behaviour risk assessment or positive handling plan, in consultation with parents/guardians and possible involvement of external agencies.

In line with the DfE's statutory guidance – Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools (effective 01 April 2026).

- All '**significant incidents**' incidents are recorded immediately in the Team Teach Bound and Numbered Book v6 – located in the school office. All sections of the form are completed fully so that any patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed.
 - Records should include date, time, location, duration, reason, injuries incurred to adult or child, and medical treatment sought/administered.
 - A significant incident includes any restrictive intervention, prolonged physical guidance, or any event where a child shows distress requiring supportive holding.
- Incidents including seclusion must be recorded and reported in accordance with procedures outlined in recording and reporting duties.
- A member of the teaching staff will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident by telephone, unless doing so would place the pupil at further risk, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and that a 'Notice of Physical Intervention' letter will be sent inviting them into school to discuss the incident with the Head Teacher.
- In the event of any future complaint or allegation this record provides essential and accurate information. A copy is filed in the pupil's file, and a copy is kept by the Inclusion Manager (SENCo) The incident is also logged on MyConcern system, by the appropriate member of staff. The date and number of the Team Teach Bound and Numbered Book v6 form must be recorded within the MyConcern log for future cross referencing.

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The Head Teacher and SENCo monitor all incidents involving restrictive intervention to identify patterns, frequency, or potential disproportionality. Anonymised information is shared with governors as part of safeguarding and behaviour monitoring to ensure accountability, transparency and continual improvement

Risk Assessments.

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning (recorded on a positive handling plan) addresses:

- Strategies to be used prior to intervention
- Ways of avoiding 'triggers', if these are known
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- The school's duty of care to all pupils and staff

Allegations and Complaints.

This clear physical intervention and restraint policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation under our Complaints Procedure. If following preliminary investigations, it is deemed necessary, the Headteacher will contact the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) in line with Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (June 2023)

Appendix 1

Positive Handling Plan		
Name of pupil:	Class:	Date of plan:
Triggers Describe the situations which have led to a dangerous situation in the past. Include times, lessons, places, members of staff, other pupils etc.		Level of potential risk Describe precisely what the pupil concerned might do (e.g. slap, kick, bite, punch, throw ..) What does the behaviour look and sound like?
Prevention Describe any changes to routines, personnel or environment which might <u>reduce the risk</u> of this happening.		Diversion and distractions Describe interests, words, objects etc. which may <u>divert attention</u> from an escalating crisis.
De-escalation Describe any strategies which have worked in the past or should be avoided.		
Try		Avoid
Physical intervention Describe the strategy most appropriate for this pupil and staff involved		A copy of this plan has been placed in: - The pupil's record file ☐ - Class register ☐ - The SEN folder retained by the SENCo ☐ - Other ☐ RECORDINGS: All incidents involving a Restrictive Physical Intervention are recorded in the Bound and Numbered Book NOTIFICATIONS Parents/Guardians ☐ Other ☐ Signed: Designation: Signed: Designation: Signed: Designation:

Appendix 1

Recording words to be used with Woodcock Hill Primary School's recording and reporting system - MyConcern

- Guide (Team Teach)
- Support
- Physically intervene
- Hold (Team Teach)
- Escort (Team Teach)
- Secure
- Protect
- Help offered/ Help received – Change of adult
- Assist
- Comfort
- Reassure

When recording information consider:

1. Mentioning the **planned or dynamic** risk assessment.
2. Was the physical intervention and/or de-escalation interventions in the **best interests of the child?** Explain how the child's welfare was the paramount consideration?
3. Was the adult(s) response **necessary, reasonable, and proportionate** in the context of the child's or children's behaviour?

List of Team Teach techniques from training (all recorded on a risk reduction plan)

- Help hug
- Prompt
- Guide
- Bean bag – guide into and help hug

Recordable Interventions: Parents must be informed as soon as practicable