

Hollingwood Primary School



Positive Handling Policy 2026-28

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Author of policy: Chris Stewart (Headteacher)

Positive Handling Policy

1) Introduction

Hollingwood Primary School encourages pupils to make positive behaviour choices. However, pupils sometimes do make the wrong choices.

On rare occasions, our children can display behaviours that challenge which necessitate the use of physical intervention and restrictive physical intervention (RPI) to prevent injury to themselves, staff and pupils, damage to property, or the breakdown of a safe and enjoyable learning environment. The aim of positive handling is not punishment or control but to promote a positive and proactive approach to behaviour, including de-escalation techniques appropriate to the child or young person, to minimise the likelihood of or avoid the need to use restraint. This policy must be used in conjunction with the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Physical Intervention or Restrictive Practice is traumatising for all people involved and their use often damages relationships.

'Physical restraint can be humiliating, terrifying and even life-threatening. It should only be used as the last resort, when there is no other way of de-escalating a situation where someone may harm themselves or others' (Campbell, 2018).

Our Positive Handling Policy is based upon the following 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 contact should be reasonable and proportional using the minimum force for the shortest period.
- Physical intervention is used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents are recorded and reported to the Headteacher.
- Parents are informed of each incident.

As a school, we are committed to reducing the need to use restrictive practices. We recognise that restrictive physical interventions are only entered into as a last resort when dealing with potentially dangerous situations, where there is a risk of harm to children or adults. Restrictive physical interventions must only be used in a person's best interest and comply with Hollingwood School's duty of care to students, staff, and visitors.

This policy has been prepared using the following guidance:

- Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Keeping children safe in education 2024: part one (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Reasonable force, restraint & restrictive practices in alternative provision and special schools (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Reducing restrictive practices framework [HTML] | GOV.WALES
- TSS_diagram_REVISED (restraintreductionnetwork.org)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 - Section 93
- BILD code of Practice for minimizing the use of restrictive physical interventions; 4th Edition (BILD 2014)

2) The Legal Framework

Restrictive Practices

Restrictive practices are all practices which limit the freedom and independence of children to learn. They include the mildest of practices, for example, requiring children to follow a prescribed timetable and curriculum, through to the most restrictive of practices, for example, the use of physical intervention and restraint.

The key principle which underpins our decisions about the use of restrictive practices is that their use should be as minimal as possible whilst ensuring the safety of the child, other children, and the adults working with them. There will be occasions when to ensure safety and to minimise the risk of harm, adults may need to physically intervene, restrain a child, or impose a restriction on their liberty.

Restraint and deprivation of liberty

Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— (a) injury to any person (including the child); (b) serious damage to the property of any person (including the child). (2) Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate.

Seclusion

“Seclusion involves separating an adult or child against their will, restricting freedom of movement and forcing them to spend time alone.” Joint guidance from the Department of Health and DFES (July 2002)

Seclusion may only be used when:

A pupil is posing a risk of injury to themselves or others due to behaviours such as biting, head butting, kicking and they need time in a safe environment with a trusted adult to help them calm. No child should be left in isolation within a contained environment with locked doors or barriers in place which places the child’s well-being and/or safeguarding at risk.

Staff Authorised to Use Reasonable Force

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act (2006) the head teacher of our school is empowered to authorise those members of his/her staff who are enabled to use reasonable force. Here at Hollingwood Primary School, the following staff members have completed Team Teach training (Chris Stewart and Ben Lodge). The content of this course which was delivered by the East Midlands Education Support Service includes de-escalation strategies as well as safe restraint strategies for staff to deploy to reduce risk of harm, violence and aggression. All members of staff have the ability to enforce reasonable force to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, damaging property or from causing disorder.

Here at Hollingwood Primary School the Headteacher has empowered the following members of staff to use reasonable force:

- Teachers and any member of staff who have direct responsibility and a duty of care of pupils in school
- Other members of staff such as site management and administrative teams also have the power to use reasonable force if a circumstance should arise in which immediate action should be taken to reduce the risk of harm

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and their **Deputies** in our school are: **Chris Stewart,, Helen Hudson, Jade Thirkell, Lauren Robinson and Ben Lodge.** Safeguarding is the responsibility of all; however all staff, parents/carers and pupils need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns.

The **nominated Governor** with responsibility for Behaviour is **Malcom Hinitt.**

Definitions of PI and RPI

A restrictive physical intervention can be distinguished from a physical intervention by the use of force. For example, a physical intervention may be guiding an individual who is going with you willingly, but if the individual is resisting and force is used then it becomes a restrictive physical intervention.

Deciding Whether to Use Reasonable Force

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act (2006), members of staff are empowered to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from or stop them continuing:

- committing any offence;
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or,
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

All members of staff will make decisions about when, how and why to use reasonable force. To help staff in making decisions about using reasonable force the following considerations may be useful:

- whether the consequences of not intervening would have seriously endangered the wellbeing of a person;
- whether the consequences of not intervening would have caused serious and significant damage to property;
- whether the chance of achieving the desired outcome in a non-physical way was low; or the age, size, gender, developmental maturity of the persons involved.

Staff are also expected to remember that physical intervention is only one option and for behaviours involving extreme levels of risk it may be more appropriate to gain support from other agencies, including the police. Staff will be kept informed and have a duty to inform others about the plans around specific pupils who can present risks to themselves and others. This may include information about SEND, personal circumstance and temporary upset.

3) School Expectations

All staff should adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour to reward effort and build self-esteem. We work in partnerships with those who know the child best to:

- Establish the functions of behaviours being displayed
- Understand the factors that may influence a child's behaviour
- Identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing

This approach will help to ensure that the use of early and proactive strategies is common practice. It aims to reduce the incidence of extreme behaviours and supports the reduction of restrictive practices in school.

Staff should, where possible, avoid any type of intervention that is likely to injure a pupil, unless in the most extreme of circumstance where there was no viable alternative. Staff should try to avoid using force unless or until another member of staff is present to support, observe or call for assistance.

Reducing the need to Intervene Physically

Although preventative measures may not always work, there are several steps which can be taken to help reduce the likelihood of situations arising where the power to use force may need to be exercised:

- Creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind
- Developing effective relationships between pupils and staff
- Adopting a whole-school approach to Inclusive practice
- Taking a structured approach to staff development that supports staff to use positive behaviour management strategies; managing conflict and to support one another during and after an incident
- Effectively managing individual incidents using a low-arousal response. Communicate calmly with the pupil; use non-threatening verbal and body language and ensure the pupil can see a way out of a situation in a supported manner
- Teaching pupils strategies to use in a crisis (such as sensory integration, clear communication and non-verbal signals to indicate the need for support)
- Whenever practical, warning a pupil that force may have to be used before using it
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the pupils' Personal Safety Passport or Plans and understand situations which may provoke difficult behaviour, triggers, preventative strategies, and de-escalation techniques

Key Principles surrounding the use of a restrictive physical intervention.

1. Consider if you really need to use a restrictive physical intervention. If so then use the least restrictive first and return to the least restrictive as soon as possible.
2. Staff should not enter into a restrictive physical intervention if on their own, help must always be sought.
3. Physical Interventions should be employed using the minimum reasonable force for the shortest duration of time as possible and should not cause pain.
4. Staff should be assessing signs of injury or psychological distress during and after the intervention.
5. Staff should always avoid touching or restraining a pupil in a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct.

Use of restrictive physical interventions in unforeseen and emergency situations.

On occasion, staff may find themselves in unforeseen or emergency situations when they have no option but to use reasonable force to manage a child in crisis. E.g. where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury to the child or others. Any member of staff would be justified in taking any necessary action to safeguard the child from harm.

Staff should:

- Before using force- staff attempt to use diversion or diffusion to manage the situation.
- Staff should always report and record any use of physical intervention that occurs in unforeseen and emergency situations using school procedures.
- Parents/carers will always be informed immediately if physical force is used on their child.
- In line with Health and Safety Guidance on approved methods of physical intervention at NO time is a young person to be placed in a Prone Restraint (face down) or basket holds or wraps (the child's arms held around their own abdomen as these methods of restraint are barred under Health and Safety Guidance.

Staff training

Staff at Hollingwood Primary School, who have been identified as needing training in this area, will access Team Teach training. Pupils at Hollingwood Primary exhibit behaviour that challenge (verbal or non-verbal) as part of their way of communicating. Staff are trained to recognise the signs that a child is in crisis and respond in ways to reduce their anxiety. The Team Teach approach is at least 95% de-escalation and less than 5% physical intervention.

These courses provide participants with an insight into recent legislation and guidance that could impact on policy and practice, as well as a range of physical and non-physical strategies to help manage the risks posed by children and young people's behaviour.

Recording and Reporting Incidents

The governing body will ensure that a procedure is in place, and is followed by staff, for recording and reporting significant incidents where a member of staff has used reasonable force on a pupil, in line with the most recent safeguarding requirements issued to Governors and the latest advice given to OFSTED inspectors.

Any use of restrictive practice is seen as significant and must be reported clearly and concisely as soon as practicable after the incident.

School staff should consider and include in the report:

- the pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time
- the degree of force used and whether it was proportionate in relation to the behaviour
- the effect on the pupil or member of staff

Staff should also bear in mind the age of the child; any special education need or disability or other social factors which might be relevant. Sometimes an incident might not be considered significant in itself, but forms part of a pattern of repeated behaviour. In this case, although there is no legal requirement to record such incidents, schools are advised to let parents/carers know about them.

Records are important in providing evidence of defensible decision-making in case of a subsequent complaint or investigation. Staff may find it helpful to seek the advice of a senior colleague or a representative of their trade union when compiling a report.

Hollingwood Primary will use online recording system, CPOMS to ensure sufficient recording of incidents. These system enables members of staff to report, using a standardised format, any significant incident where force has been used, or any incident where violence to staff has occurred or been threatened. Staff have access to both systems to ensure recording of incidents is accessible. Parents / carers will be invited to meetings to discuss incidents when restraint has taken place.

4) Post-incident support

Incidents that require use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and can result in injuries to the child or staff. After an incident has subsided, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional and psychological support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries. Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures.

Repair and Restore Relationships through Restorative Conversations

Restrictive practice damages relationships. It is vital that the child is given the opportunity to reflect on the incident with the support of the adults involved to ensure the child's voice is captured and any restoration can be implemented as a result to repair any harm and facilitate open, direct communication.

Key questions to support a restorative conversation with the child:

- What happened?
- How did you feel.....?
- Who was affected by this?
- What needs to happen now?
- What could we have done differently?

5) Complaints and allegations

We will also make clear to pupils that they have a right, and are able, to question/complain about the use of reasonable force. We will ensure that mechanisms are in place for pupils, parents, carers and staff to voice the opinions, comments or concerns.

Complaints and allegations will be taken seriously and flowed through in accordance with our Complaints Policy.

The role of the LADO:

Working together to Safeguard Children (2023) requires each Local Authority to have a LADO. In Nottinghamshire the role of the LADO is undertaken by the Managing Allegations Service.

The purpose of the LADO role is to address allegations/concerns made against adults working or volunteering with children in Nottinghamshire.

Working together to Safeguard Children (2024) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) outline the criteria to be applied to allegations and concerns about an individual when it is indicated the individual may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- Behaved or may behave in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Concerns may relate to either a person's work/voluntary role or their behaviour outside the work setting.

LADO role in Restraints of under 18s

KCSiE 24 Paragraph 372.

If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion involving the police and/or local authority children's social care will be convened in accordance with the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children. If the allegation is about physical contact, for example restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO should take into account that teachers and other school and college staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain children in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

The LADO should be notified when:

- A child is injured or may have been injured as a result of appropriate/permitted restraint practice or actual/perceived use of excessive force,
- A child and/or parent/carer makes an allegation and/or complaint against a professional following a restraint of a child,
- A professional, other adult or child reports an observed or perceived inappropriate restraint of or practice with a child by another professional.

The responsibility of the employer/person receiving the complaint is to:

- Ensure the child is safe and refer to MASH/Police as appropriate
 - Consider the actions required to safeguard this child and other children in the setting
 - Refer to LADO using the LADO Online Contact Form (link below) providing clear details of the incident, the adult of concern (including personal details to safeguard the adult's own children- consider any additional voluntary roles the adult holds); details of the child and your own details.
- Link to LADO online Contact Form - [Submit a LADO Contact Form](#)

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed by the governing body annually alongside the Behaviour Policy. The Head Teacher is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and Rebecca Voodden-Page is the Link Governor, who also has responsibility in this area.

Further information

Staff should all have a working knowledge of the Derbyshire County Council's policy on the same subject.

