

Longsands Community Primary School



Positive Handling Policy

(including restrictive interventions and seclusion)

Implementation Date: September 2024
Adopted by Governors/HT: Governors
Review period: 3 Yearly
Last review date: March 2026
Next review due by March 2029
Person responsible for policy: C Lang

Statement of Intent

Longsands Community Primary School believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable all pupils to leave our school as resilient, motivated lifelong learners with high aspirations for their future. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, managing dysregulated behaviours through the use of appropriate restrictive interventions may be necessary in order to ensure the safety of individuals and the wider school community.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use approved positive handling techniques, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to effectively manage dysregulated behaviours when early support, prevention and de-escalation strategies have not had the intended impact.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that interventions including positive handling and reasonable force are used safely, appropriately and lawfully, in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

1. Legal Framework

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:
 - The Education Act 2011
 - The Children Act 1989
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
- 1.2. This policy has due regard to the following guidance:
 - DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force in schools'
 - DfE (2026) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
 - DfE (2025) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
 - Restrictive Interventions, Including Use of Reasonable Force, in Schools (2026)
- 1.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
 - Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Behaviour and Discipline Policy
 - Team Teach Workbook

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1. The governing board is responsible for:
 - Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
 - Notifying the Headteacher that the Behaviour Policy should include the power to use reasonable force.
 - Ensuring there is a procedure in place for recording each significant incident in which a member of staff restrictive intervention on a pupil.

- Ensuring that there is a procedure in place for reporting each significant use of restrictive intervention to the parents of the pupil involved.
 - Evaluating the Positive Handling Log to analyse how and when positive handling is used and identify any trends.
 - Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
 - Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the Headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.
- 2.2. The Headteacher is responsible for:
- Deciding whether members of staff require additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities, considering the needs of pupils.
 - Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling.
 - Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.
 - Ensuring that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes the Positive Handling Report Form.
 - Maintaining the Positive Handling Log and reporting to Governors.
 - Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy sets out the circumstances in which force might be used.
 - Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the governing board, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.
- 2.3. The SENDCO is responsible for:
- Providing training to members of staff on how to handle pupils with SEND.
 - Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force.
 - Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions.
 - Developing individual behaviour plans for pupils with SEND or medical conditions that are agreed with the pupil's parents, and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these.
 - Ensuring that staff understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.
- 2.4. The DSL is responsible for:
- Providing staff with reasonable force training where the Headteacher deems it necessary. At Longsands CP School, a number of staff have been trained via "Team Teach".
 - Ensuring all members of staff use reasonable force in accordance with this policy.
 - Reviewing this policy in liaison with the Headteacher and governing board.

3. What is positive handling?

- 3.1. For the purpose of this policy, 'positive handling' is the use of restrictive interventions to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil with the intention of protecting pupils and limiting damage to property.
- 3.2. Legal framework and national guidance often refer to the 'restrictive intervention and use of reasonable force' – this policy uses the term 'positive handling' whenever possible.
- 3.3. Positive handling is used in the school to:
 - Restrain a pupil who has lost emotional self-control until the situation is diffused.
 - Limit the amount of harm that the pupil involved can do to themselves or others.
 - Demonstrate to pupils that they are within a safe environment in which adults can contain pupils' anger and other erratic emotions.
 - Protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- 3.4. Positive handling will be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort after prevention, support and de-escalation strategies have been unsuccessful.
- 3.5. Where positive handling is required, the school will abide to the following guidance:
 - Initial intervention will always be without force.
 - Any physical intervention will follow other appropriate actions.
 - Staff will take a calm and measured approach in all situations.
 - A Positive Handling Report Form will be completed after an incident involving physical intervention and the incident will be logged on our online record system.
- 3.6. Failure to positively handle a pupil who subsequently gets injured, or injures another pupil, could lead to an accusation of negligence.
- 3.7. Positive handling will never be invasive, humiliating or flirtatious in nature or take a form which could be seen as punishment.
- 3.8. Positive handling will be 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.

4. What is reasonable force?

- 4.1. There is no statutory definition of reasonable force; it will always depend on what is considered necessary and proportionate, given the circumstance of the case.
- 4.2. The use of reasonable force is only acceptable to control pupils or restrain them, and involves using no more force than is needed in the circumstance.
- 4.3. 'Control' refers to either passive physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact, such as leading a pupil by the arm.
- 4.4. 'Restraint' refers to physically bringing a pupil under control, such as holding them back. This is typically used in more extreme circumstances, such as to separate two pupils fighting.

- 4.5. The degree of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. age.
- 4.6. Staff members will always use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances of the incidents.
- 4.7. All incidents that involve the use of reasonable force will be reported to the Headteacher, recorded in writing, logged electronically and communicated to the pupil's parents.
- 4.8. The following list is not exhaustive, but provides examples of situations where the school may decide to use reasonable force:
 - Children who become dysregulated will be removed from the classroom for their own safety and that of others when they are refusing to follow adult instructions requesting them to leave.
 - Members of staff need to support dysregulated pupils on school trips, or similar.
 - Members of staff will prevent a pupil from leaving a classroom where doing so would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the learning or behaviour of others.
 - A pupil is assaulting a member of staff or another pupil.
 - A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff will intervene to prevent this.
 - The Headteacher or authorised staff are conducting a search for items prohibited under the Education Act 1996, e.g. knives and weapons, alcohol and illegal drugs.
- 4.9. Physical intervention will never be used as a substitute for good behaviour management. De-escalation techniques will always be used in the first instance.

5. What is seclusion?

- 5.1 Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others and prevented from leaving
- 5.2 Seclusion should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation.
- 5.3 All incidents that involve the use of seclusion will be reported to the Headteacher, recorded in writing, logged electronically and communicated to the pupil's parents.

6. Use of Positive Handling and Reasonable Force

- 6.1. All members of staff will be permitted to use positive handling where they believe it to be appropriate, as long as all necessary precautions are taken.
- 6.2. The power to positively handle pupils also applies to any individual whom the Headteacher has identified as temporarily in charge, such as volunteers.
- 6.3. The decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances.

- 6.4. Staff will always calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it was necessary.
- 6.5. Staff will never give the impression that they are acting out of anger or are punishing the child.
- 6.6. All staff members will develop strategies and techniques for dealing with challenging pupils and situations, which they will use to de-escalate and calm a situation.
- 6.7. In non-urgent situations, staff will always try and deal with a situation through de-escalation strategies before using force.
- 6.8. Staff members will always avoid acting in a way that could cause injury; however, dependent on the circumstances, this may not always be possible.
- 6.9. Where a member of staff believes that they are at risk, such as where an injury is likely to occur, they will not intervene in an incident without help and assistance of another staff member.
 - Emergency intervention is necessary when there is a high risk of pupils being injured or property being damaged.
 - If emergency intervention is required, a member of staff will use other methods of de-escalating the situation, without physically intervening, until assistance arrives.
- 6.10. Following the event, the pupil involved may be subject to separate disciplinary procedures, in which strategies should be formed to help avoid reoccurrence of such incidents.
- 6.11. Where necessary, external agencies, such as the Local Authority (LA) or the police if a crime has been committed, will be informed of the incident.
- 6.12. Only positive handling techniques as trained via "Team Teach" will be used. These will only be used by trained staff. Positive handling techniques which present an unacceptable risk and will **not** be used include:
 - The 'seated double embrace' where two staff members force a pupil into a sitting position and lean them forward whilst a third staff member monitors their breathing.
 - The 'double basket-hold' in which a pupil's arms are held across their chest.
 - The 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the pupil's nose.

7. SEND and Medical Conditions

- 7.1. The school will have due consideration to the risks posed by the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions in terms of positive handling.
- 7.2. The SENDCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 7.3. The school will adhere to its SEND Policy at all times.
The SENDCO will establish Personal Positive Handling Plans for more vulnerable pupils e.g. those with SEND (appendix 1) This will be constructed with parents and the pupil

The SENDCO will liaise with the DSL/ Deputy DSLs regarding the use of positive handling on pupils with SEND and establish how training may need to be amended.

8. Reporting Incidents

- 8.1. A detailed written Positive Handling Log will be kept of any incidents where seclusion, non-force related restraint or restrictive interventions are used.
- 8.2. Immediately following an incident, or as soon as is practicable, the member(s) of staff involved will verbally report the incident to the Headteacher (or DSL) and provide a comprehensive written record of the situation as soon as possible, using the Positive Handling Report Form .
- 8.3. The written report of the incident must be thorough, including as much detail as possible as to what had happened before, during and after the incident, and describing any injuries incurred due to the event. School will record the following details as a minimum:
 - names of pupil and staff directly involved
 - any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
 - time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
 - brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force and details of any physical injuries sustained
 - brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
 - any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

The Headteacher (or DSL) will report each significant use of restrictive intervention to the parents of the child as soon as is practicable after the incident. School will communicate this in writing via our online communication system.
- 8.4. The report will inform parents of their right to complain about the use of positive handling and reasonable force, in line with the Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 8.5. If a member of staff witnesses or suspects the use of positive handling or reasonable force, where another member of staff is actively involved in physical intervention, they will report this to the Headteacher immediately.
- 8.6. Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Allegations Against Staff Policy.
- 8.7. The Headteacher will be responsible for conducting a thorough investigation to find out the correct details of what occurred; this may include talking to other pupils about the incident, for instance those who witnessed the event.

- 8.8. Once concluded, the Positive Handling Report Form must be documented in the Positive Handling Log.

9. Complaints

- 9.1. All staff should be aware of the consequences and legal retributions that can occur following the incorrect use of positive handling and force.
- 9.2. All complaints regarding the use of positive handling or force will be investigated in a thorough and speedy manner.
- 9.3. The person making the complaint is responsible for proving that their allegations are true, and therefore, it is not for the member of staff to prove that their actions were made reasonably.
- 9.4. In the case where a member of staff has acted within the law, this will provide a defence to any civil or criminal prosecution.
- 9.5. Members of staff accused of using excessive force will not be automatically suspended as a response to the allegations. The following procedure will be adhered to:
- Careful consideration will be given to whether the case warrants a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved.
 - The governing board will always take into account whether a staff member has acted within the law when considering whether or not to take disciplinary action against a staff member involved in an incident.
 - Where a member of staff is suspended, the school will ensure that the staff member has access to a named contact that can provide support and guidance.
 - The school can organise pastoral care through the EAP for any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation.

10. Staff Training

- 10.1. The DSL will conduct regular safeguarding training for all members of staff; the training should touch on the most effective positive handling strategies and use of reasonable force techniques ("Team Teach")
- 10.2. Staff should be aware of subsequent risks of their actions and fully understand when it is appropriate and necessary to use such actions.

Appendix 1

Positive Handling Plan

Child's Name:

Date of Plan:

Review date of plan:

What does the behaviour look like?

Stage 1 Anxiety Behaviours	Stage 2 Defensive Behaviours	Stage 3 Crisis Behaviours

What are common triggers?

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De-escalation strategies

	Try	Avoid	Notes
Verbal advice and support	☐	☐	
Giving space	☐	☐	
Reassurance	☐	☐	
Help scripts	☐	☐	
Negotiation	☐	☐	
Choices	☐	☐	
Humour	☐	☐	
Consequences	☐	☐	
Planned ignoring	☐	☐	
Take up time	☐	☐	
Transfer adult	☐	☐	
Success reminded	☐	☐	
Simple listening	☐	☐	
Acknowledgement	☐	☐	
Apologising	☐	☐	
Agreeing	☐	☐	
Removing audience	☐	☐	
Sensory/time out space	☐	☐	
Others			

Diversions and distractions / Praise Point

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Any medical conditions to be taken into account before using physical interventions

Preferred method of physical intervention

Intermediate

	Try	Avoid	Notes
Friendly escort	☐	☐	
Single elbow	☐	☐	
Figure of four	☐	☐	
Double elbow	☐	☐	
Single elbow in beanbag	☐	☐	

Are there any factors to consider when debriefing? E.g. Communication aids, staff etc.

How should we record incidents and who should we inform?

Headteacher:
Parent/Carer:
SENCO:
Social Care (if applicable)
Child
Other (state role)

Print name:
Print name:
Print name:
Print name:
Print name:
Print name:

Signature:
Signature:
Signature:
Signature:
Signature:
Signature:

Appendix 2
Positive Handling Report (using Team Teach Techniques)

Seen by Head:		Date:		Logged in book	
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Section A

Name of child		Class	
Date		Year group	
Place		Time	

Names of staff
Names of witnesses

Reason for Intervention

Immediate danger of personal injury to self		Immediate danger of injury to another person							
Disruption to other pupils		Fighting		Assault		Verbal threats		Accidental	
To avoid damage to property		To prevent /interrupt absconding				Off Site		Within Grounds	

Describe the lead up to the incident/behaviour

De-escalation Techniques Used					
Verbal Advice & Support		Humour		Distraction	
Reassurance		Options Offered		Step Away	
Calm Talking		Time Out Offered		Time Out Directed	
Non-threatening Body Language		Other (please specify)			

Details of the incident:					
Remained in class		Cool-off Room		Returned to class	

Section B (to be filled in if physical Team Teach controls were used)

Forms of physical control used as taught by TEAM TEACH					
Held by 2 or more		Friendly hold		Figure of four hold	
Holding only		Single elbow		Cup and pin – for smaller child	
Guided escort		Double elbow		Shield	
Taken to floor – sitting/kneeling		Inside double elbow		Approximate duration of physical control	

Medical Intervention Where appropriate					Injury Suffered by Child	Yes		No	
Child checked by:					Treatment Required	Yes		No	
Referred to First Aider	Yes		No		Specify:				
Referred to G.P.		Hospital							
Parent/Carer informed by:	Phone		Letter						
Injury suffered by staff	Yes		No		Damage to Property	YES		NO	
Specify					Details				

Action Taken					
Follow up talk		Recommend part-time		Review Meeting	
Complete work missed		Referred to Police		Exclusion	
Returned to Class		Letter to Parent/Carer		Other Sanction	
Signed				Date	

A copy of this must be uploaded to CPOMS