



# Physical Intervention Policy - use of reasonable force Summer 2025-Summer 2027

Approved by:	S&P Committee
Last Review Date:	May 2025
Next Review Date	Summer 2027

## **Physical Intervention Policy Arnold Mill Primary School (Use of Reasonable Force)**

### **Rationale**

- Any physical intervention should be consistent with the legal obligations and responsibilities of the staff of Arnold Mill Primary School and the rights and protection afforded to a child or young persons under law.
- Working within the "legal framework", Arnold Mill Primary School is responsible for the provision of care, including physical interventions, which are in a person's best interest.
- Physical restraint is deemed necessary to stop a pupil injuring themselves or someone else, damaging property or causing serious disruption. Restraint is always the final action when all other strategies have not worked.
- Physical interventions do not rely on achieving compliance through inflicting pain.

### **Values**

- The child or young person should be treated fairly and with courtesy and respect. The positive behaviour management policy underpins this approach.
- Physical interventions are only to be used in the best interests of the child or young person and in partnership with parents/carers.
- Where possible the child or young person gives informed consent to any agreed intervention or approach.
- In the context of any planned intervention, the child or young person is helped to make choices and be involved in making decisions that affect their lives.
- Any physical intervention must be reasonable and proportional in the circumstances and always be conducted in relation to the child or young person's age, gender, health, religious and cultural persuasion, and stage of development.
- Arnold Mill Primary School has a responsibility to ensure the safety, well-being and training needs of the staff and carers dealing with the children and young people within them.

### **Objectives**

At Arnold Mill, we aim to provide a happy, safe and secure environment for all our pupils to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential.

We take the safety of our pupils and staff very seriously. We believe that all pupils and staff have the right to be and feel safe whilst at school or on a school led activity.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our behaviour, discipline, child protection policies and the Understanding Behaviours in Schools Toolkit.

### **Working in partnership with parents/carers**

School will involve parents to the best of its ability and make them aware of how we put this policy into practice.

- The Head Teacher will invite parents/carers to an initial meeting to explain the policy if physical intervention is likely to be needed for their child.
- Parents are encouraged to give written consent to indicate that they have received the policy, understand the policy and support school using restraint where necessary.

### **Policy Development**

This policy was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from members of staff, governors, parents/carers, children and young people, and other partners.

Pupils contribute to the development of the policy through the School Council and pupil voice groups.

Parents are encouraged to contribute by the Parent Forum and annual Parent Questionnaire reference to achieving high standards of good behaviour.

This policy is also written in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's policy on the same subject, entitled 'Keeping Classrooms Safe for Learning and Teaching'.

### **Minimising the Need to Use Reasonable Force**

As a school we are firmly committed to creating a calm and safe environment which minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force. We use the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning curriculum to explore and strengthen emotional responses to situations.

We will only use force as a last resort and strongly believe in de-escalating any incidents as they arise to prevent them from reaching a crisis point. Staff will be skilled in promoting and rewarding positive behaviour and will utilise various appropriate techniques in the management of a class environment.

Staff will only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved by not using force.

### **Prevention of challenging behaviour (reckless, dangerous or violent)**

- Through the use of the careful management of the environment and context, we aim to reduce stressful stimuli and prevent challenging behaviours.
- Through ensuring clear, accessible and appropriate methods of communication, we aim to prevent challenging behaviours.
- The interaction between environmental factors and personal needs and responses is explored for each child or young person who presents a

challenge. Conditions are modified to reduce the likelihood of challenging behaviour occurring (primary prevention).

- Early diffusion and de-escalation procedures are developed to ensure that problematic episodes are properly managed with non-physical interventions before the child or young person becomes violent (secondary prevention).
- Successful early intervention and de-escalation depends to a large degree on an understanding of the causes of the behaviour and our ability to see the behaviour as a form of communication.
- For each child or young person who presents a challenge there are graduated, individualised behaviour support plans, and strategies for responding to incidents of violent and dangerous behaviour. When appropriate, the strategy should include directions for using approved physical interventions.
- Individualised plans are established for responding to children or young persons who are likely to present violent or dangerous behaviour. The procedures enable staff to respond effectively to violent or reckless behaviours, while ensuring the safety of all concerned.
- Unplanned or emergency interventions may be required in response to unforeseen events.

#### **Staff Authorised to Use Reasonable Force**

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act (2006) and subsequent guidance published by the DFE in February 2025 entitled 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools Guidance for schools in England'

'All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. Staff who are likely to need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions should be adequately trained in its safe and lawful use and in preventative strategies'.

#### **Deciding Whether to Use Reasonable Force**

Under English law, 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:

- Is it necessary? would the consequences of not intervening have seriously endangered the wellbeing of a person or significantly damaged property;
- Is it proportionate? consider the age, size, gender, developmental maturity of the persons involved.

#### **Leadership responsibilities**

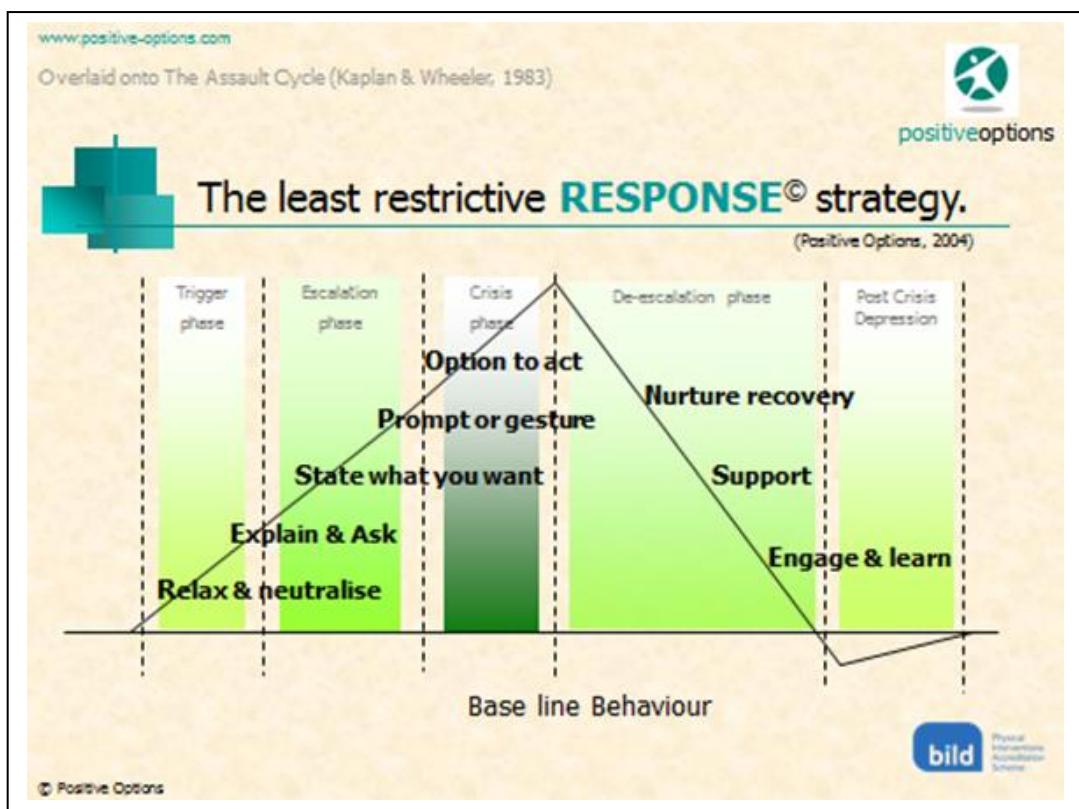
- The Head Teacher is responsible for implementing policy and practice on the use of positive handling strategies in line with this document.
- The use of any procedure is clearly set out in the form of written guidance for staff through a Behaviour Support Plan or risk assessment.
- Service managers are responsible for ensuring that all incidents that involve the use of physical interventions are clearly, comprehensively and promptly recorded.
- Parents and carers are informed in writing when unplanned restrictive physical intervention has occurred.
- All children or young persons and their families and representatives have ready access to an effective complaints' procedure, and they are made aware of it.
- Careful consideration is given to the impact of resource management on the use of physical interventions.
- Staff deployment is organised to ensure that appropriately trained staff are available to respond to any incident which requires physical intervention.
  - Staff, including agency staff, are made aware of the individual positive handling plan for each child they may work with.

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.

## Using Reasonable Force

When using force, members of staff should only use the minimum amount of force required in achieving the required outcome.



Staff should also use force within the context of existing good practice in non-physical skills and techniques, such as in the RESPONSE® Strategy:

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. Also, staff should avoid using force unless or until another member of staff is present to support, observe or call for assistance.

## Staff training

Staff at Arnold Mill, who have been identified as needing training in this area, will access Understanding Behaviours in Schools training (previously CRB training) through the County Council co-ordinator who delivers nationally accredited courses.

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.

Nottinghamshire County Council has adopted the Understanding Behaviours in School tool kit to help staff learn to de-escalate situations and respond to behaviours as a form of communication.

### **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 force on a pupil. The record must be made as soon as practicable after the incident.

While ultimately only a court of law could decide what is 'significant' in a particular case, in deciding whether or not an incident must be reported, staff should take into account:

- an incident where unreasonable use of force is used on a pupil would always be a significant incident;
- any incident where substantial force has been used (e.g. physically pushing a pupil out of a room) would be significant;
- the use of a restraint technique is significant;
- an incident where a child was very distressed (though clearly not over reacting) would be significant.

In determining whether incidents are significant, schools should consider:

- 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 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.

**Post-incident support**

Following the use of physical intervention staff and pupils will be supported, the immediate physical needs of all parties will be met and staff will ensure that positive relationships are maintained.

**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 we will be investigated by the Head Teacher.

**Monitoring and review**

This policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed by the governing body at least every 2 years or as required.

The Head Teacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy and the 'Behaviour' Link Governor has a responsibility to monitor this.

## Appendix One – Physical Intervention Monitoring Log

Pupil Name	Staff member(s) involved
Adult witnesses to incident	Pupil witnesses to incident
Outline of events leading to incident, including location, description of pupil behaviour and steps taken to defuse situation other than physical intervention	
Outline of incident including reason for use of reasonable force, how it was applied and duration	

Measures taken following incident e.g. respite for pupil, support for staff member

Description of any injury sustained, subsequent treatment, damage to property

Date parent/carer contacted and outline of their response

Name of staff member completing form:

Signature:

Date: