



Fly high. Soar

Positive Handling Policy

2025-2026

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Date: July 2025

Last reviewed on: July 2025

Next review due by: September 2026

Model Positive Handling Policy – Schools Using Team-Teach

1. Introduction
2. Team-Teach
3. Before Using Physical Interventions
4. Use of Restraint
5. Dynamic Risk Assessment
6. Positive Handling Plan
7. Post Incident Debrief
8. Recording
9. Monitoring and Evaluation
10. Complaints and Allegations
11. Other Physical Contact with Pupils

1. Positive Handling Policy - Introduction

Behaviour is always a form of communication. Understanding that children are communicating through their behaviour gives adults the opportunity to respond differently. When children feel valued, respected and have their needs met, there is no longer a reason to use challenging behaviour to communicate. Punishing a child for a behaviour may stop the behaviour for the moment, but it does not give the child support or provide alternate ways to act in difficult situations. When adults help children find positive ways to communicate their needs to others, children learn important social and problem-solving skills that will help them throughout their life.

Carleton Green Community Primary School is committed to a positive behaviour policy which encourages children to make positive behaviour choices. On rare occasions circumstances may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff. Our policy for positive handling and physical intervention is based upon the following principles:

- A child should have agency over their body and their wishes in respect of physical contact should be respected
- Physical intervention used to prevent challenging behaviour is unwanted physical contact, and is therefore unacceptable unless justified as means of preventing greater harm
- Physical intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed and/or where there is no alternative means of preventing immediate physical harm to people or property
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required
- Physical intervention must only be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned
- Incidents must be recorded and reported to the Head teacher as soon as possible
- Parents/Carers must be informed on the day of the incident.

This policy details how we will implement guidance provided by DfE, Team-Teach and other relevant advice.

- The term 'positive handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for supporting pupils and adults in managing behaviours that challenge. A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports all pupils, including those with social, emotional and mental health needs, within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.
- Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, damaging property, or in order to maintain expectations for positive behaviour. Furthermore, the school takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors to the school who may be at risk of harm where challenging behaviour is not addressed.

- Carleton Green has staff who are trained to look after pupils in their care and aim to focus on de-escalation techniques wherever possible. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically, they will follow the Team Teach protocol and the contents of an individual child's positive handling plan (where such a plan is in place).
- The DfE non-statutory guidance document 'Use of reasonable force' (dated July 2013- reviewed 2015) provides advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf
- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the Act) enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force; any unwanted touch is capable of amounting to "force", and the use of physical contact in response to challenging behaviour other than in accordance with this policy is likely to amount to unreasonable force.
- DfE guidance on the [use of reasonable force in schools \(2013\)](#) also states that in addition to the general power to use reasonable force, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for "prohibited items" which includes weapons, something else used or likely to be used to cause injury, alcohol or other drugs, pornographic material. Force may not be used to search for other items, even if those items are banned under school rules.
- DfE guidance and the Act make it clear that all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force, and that the power can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils, such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit. However, in our Trust schools, wherever possible, only staff trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategy techniques of Team-Teach will use physical intervention techniques with children, and only when necessary. **Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, damaging property or to maintain good order and discipline, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible.**
- In March 2019 the Equality and Human Rights Commission published the guidance document, 'Human rights framework for restraint'. This guidance sets out key principles of articles 3, 8 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), incorporated into domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998, which govern the use of restraint across all settings:
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/human-rights-framework-forrestraint.pdf>

2 - Team-Teach

- Team-Teach is accredited through ICM (Institute of Conflict Management). Staff undergo a one- or two-day course (depending upon the needs of the children they are working with) led by two qualified trainers with a refresher course undertaken every two to three years.
- Further details of the Team-Teach approach can be found on the Team-Teach website. The website address is www.team-teach.co.uk
- School staff trained in Team-Teach techniques meet together to share their experiences, and practice their techniques, in order to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

3 - Before using physical interventions

We take effective action to reduce risk by:

- Showing care and concern by acknowledging behaviour as a form of communication and supporting the pupil to find alternatives, using negotiating and reasoning
- Developing a personalised behaviour plan and positive handling plan where there is a risk that a child may need physical intervention, in partnership with parents/carers
- Giving clear directions for pupils to stop
- Reminding the pupil about rules and likely outcomes
- Removing an audience or taking vulnerable pupils to a safe place
- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used to injure, or threaten injury
- Using positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured
- Ensuring that colleagues know what is happening and call for help

4 - Use of Physical Intervention / Restraint

The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. Whilst or before intervening, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. "I am doing this to keep you safe." Or "we are doing this because so that the other children can carry on with their lesson whilst we work out how to help you feel better".

In our schools, we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative and for the shortest amount of time possible. We expect staff to conduct either a dynamic risk assessment or use the written risk assessment (child's positive handling plan). We expect staff to think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. 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 behaviour that challenges should be reasonable, proportionate and necessary, with an

understanding that the behaviour is communication. Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing the child is in immediate danger of harming themselves or another person, in danger of seriously damaging property, or deliberately damaging property.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure a minimum of two Team-Teach trained members of staff present before applying the restraint. Other staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, the restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, NOT punishment.
- Physical restraint should not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger to people and property
- After the event, the restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

Reasonable force other than restraint.

Where a child's behaviour does not pose (or no longer poses) an immediate danger of injury or damage to property, but is causing serious or persistent disruption so as to prevent others engaging in learning activities; and if clear and calm instructions to stop have not succeeded; and if attempts to remove the child, without physical intervention, to a less pressured environment have not succeeded, then two staff members trained in Team-Teach may use physical intervention to escort that child to a less pressured environment.

The definition of reasonable, proportionate and safe practice can change and evolve and that this will be kept under review.

5 - Responding to unforeseen emergencies (Dynamic Risk Assessment)

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet.

An unforeseen event may require an emergency response with a dynamic risk assessment. After that event, staff have a duty to plan ahead and prepare a risk assessment in the form of a Positive Handling Plan (PHP).

6 - Positive Handling Plan (including risk assessment process)

Risk assessments are required for pupils who exhibit behaviour that challenges. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. Parents/carers will be involved with the writing of the risk assessment.

When considering a pupil's behaviour and risks, staff and parents/carers will think about the following questions

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct the risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan?
- What further steps can we take to prevent harmful behaviour from developing?

Staff may also need to make an individual risk assessment where it is known that force is more likely to be necessary to restrain a particular pupil, such as a pupil who is considered to be at greatest risk of needing positive handling interventions due to their special educational need (SEN) or disability. Plans should be compatible with a pupil's EHCP and properly documented in the school records.

An individual risk assessment is essential for pupils whose SEND are associated with:

- Communication impairments that make them less responsive to verbal communication
- Physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments
- Conditions that make them fragile, such as haemophilia, brittle bone syndrome or epilepsy
- Dependence on equipment such as wheelchairs, breathing or feeding tubes.

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of positive handling planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk, should have a PHP. The plan details strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are to be avoided. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective should be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective, or which have caused problems in the past. PHP's should be considered along with the child's EHCP or any other planning document relevant to the pupil such as an IHCP or Pupil Passport. The PHP should take account of the age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context. Parents will be involved in the writing of each PHP and PHP review.

7 - Post Incident Debrief

After any incident a full debrief should take place so that learning can inform practice.

Following an incident, the Headteacher or appointed senior leader should offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning, and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that pupils and staff have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate another person's perspective.

It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the needs of all. As individuals we all vary in how much support we need after an unpleasant incident. Generally, a member of senior staff would expect to talk to staff and children involved in any incidents involving any restraint. If the staff or pupils need time to rest or compose themselves, then the Headteacher, Deputy or Assistant Headteacher will make arrangements for this to happen.

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the PHP, the school Behaviour Policy or this policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff or pupil will follow the appropriate procedures.

8 - Recording

Good practice requires that schools MUST ensure:

All incidents where friendly guides and escorts are used are to be recorded on CPOMS and tagged with the relevant code for monitoring processes (E.g. Positive Handling or Physical Intervention)

All other incidents involving restraint will also be recorded on CPOMS, on the child's record.

All physical and digital documentation must be held by the school for 25 years after the date of birth of the child, in the locked safeguarding files or stored securely on CPOMS.

9 - Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further actions as required.

Paragraph F2 of the [Human rights framework for restraint](#) states *'To know whether discrimination is occurring, public bodies should collect and analyse data on their use of restraint, to identify if restraint is being used disproportionately against people with particular protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, or who share other identifiable group characteristics, for example, women, ethnic minorities, or people with particular impairments such as learning disabilities.'* The Headteacher will regularly review the use of restraint to avoid unintended discrimination.

10 - Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints will follow the Complaint Procedure. Please see the policy on school website.

11 - Other physical contact with pupils (DfE Use of reasonable force 2013)

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. However, staff should respect that some children feel

more comfortable than others with physical touch, and the same child might feel different at different times and with different staff members.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper and necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child 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

This list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where physical contact might be proper and necessary, provided the child in question does not indicate that they are uncomfortable with that contact.

If a child indicates that they do not want a staff member to administer first aid, staff should apply the guidelines for physical intervention and restraint set out in this policy. Only if failing to administer first aid immediately would risk serious further harm to the child should the intervention continue.