

# Harrow Lodge Primary School



## POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

<b>REVIEWED:</b>	<b>Autumn 2023</b>
<b>EFFECTIVE PERIOD:</b>	<b>Spring 2023 – Spring 2025</b>
<b>DUE FOR REVIEW:</b>	<b>Autumn 2025</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S):</b>	<b>MRS S BOYES</b>

## Reference Points

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93)
- DfES Circular 10/98
- Use of Force Guidance ‘*The use of force to control or restrain pupils*’ – non-statutory guidance, DCSF 2007 (supersedes Circular 10/98) see [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/piguide](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/piguide)

### THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

- To ensure that Harrow Lodge Primary School fully discharges our duty of care to pupils, staff and everyone in the school community.
- To provide a framework for the management of physical interventions that is legal, effective, safe, appropriate and proportionate.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In Harrow Lodge Primary School we believe that pupils need to be safe, to know how to behave, and to know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. Only for a very small minority of pupils will the use of physical intervention be needed. On such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used.
- 1.2 The Governors and staff at Harrow Lodge Primary School aim to create a secure and caring environment in which children can experience success and achieve their full potential within a broad and balanced curriculum. We want children to gain confidence and develop independence.
- 1.3 The majority of pupils at Harrow Lodge Primary School behave well and conform to the expectations of our school. We have responsibility to operate an effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class, and individual pupils.
- 1.4 All school staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours might be communicating. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

## 2. OUR DEFINITION OF “RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION”

- 2.1 “Restrictive Physical Intervention” is the term used to describe interventions where bodily contact using force is used to control or manage a child’s behaviour.  
Restrictive physical interventions may include:
  - Bodily contact - where the physical presence of one or more people is used to control a pupil, e.g physically interposing between pupils; blocking a pupil’s path; holding or ‘shepherding’ a pupil; using agreed, approved restricted holds
  - Environmental – where a change is applied within the environment for example shutting a door or the use of locks or key pads to prevent access to a particular area

In what circumstances can physical intervention be used?

- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence (*this applies even if the child is below the age of criminal responsibility*)
- To prevent a child from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a child from causing serious damage to property (*including the child's own property*)
- To stop the child from engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school.

2.2 There is no legal definition of "reasonable force". However, there are two relevant considerations:

- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it;
- the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

### **3. WHEN THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS MAY BE APPROPRIATE IN HARROW LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

3.1 Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed and, therefore, only as a last resort. However, there are other situations when physical handling may be necessary; for example, in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain pupils may become distressed, agitated and out of control and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well-being of all staff and pupils are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

### **4. PERSONS AUTHORISED TO USE RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION IN HARROW LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

4.1 All staff employed by the school are authorised to have control of pupils and **must** be aware of this Policy and its implications. If the Head Teacher has lawfully placed an adult in charge of children then that adult will be entitled to use restrictive physical intervention if the need arises.

4.2 We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and that removing other pupils and themselves from risky situations may be the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the pupils.

### **4. PLANNING FOR THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION IN HARROW LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows:-

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions

- Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the legal criteria for its use are met
- Staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the pupil's and/or other pupil's best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion. The pupil will be warned, at their level of understanding, that Restrictive Physical Intervention will be used unless they cease the unacceptable behaviour
- Only the minimum force necessary will be used
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response incident
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses
- As soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control
- A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy
- Escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable.
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual pupil will always be taken into account.
- In developing Individual Education/Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstances.
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

## **5. ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF INTERVENTION IN HARROW LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

5.1 There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons, for example:

- to comfort a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age).
- to gently direct a pupil.
- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc).

- in an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils.
- in rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted.

5.2 In all situations where physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the pupil's age and level of understanding;
- the pupil's individual characteristics and history;
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present).

5.3 Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participants neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular pupil. [Should a pupil appear to **enjoy** physical contact, this must not be sought via Restrictive Physical Intervention.]

## 6. DEVELOPING A POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN IN HARROW LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This Plan will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing. The plan will include :-

- Involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- A risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- A **record** to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- Techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used
- Identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil.
- Ensuring a system to summon additional support.
- Identifying training needs (Please refer to Appendix 1)

### 6.1.1 HOW MAY PUPILS BE RESTRAINED?

- Whenever possible the child should be warned clearly that you are likely to take physical action before that action ensues.
- It is important to remember that the security of the child and, therefore the emotional stability, depends on the certain knowledge of the child that adults are in charge.
- A temper tantrum is naturally best dealt with by the demonstration of calm, unthreatened and unthreatening concern, and the assumption of total control by the caring adult.
- Adult action ensuing from temper loss is never acceptable.
- Whenever possible, more than one adult should be present during the use of restraint.

- It may be appropriate to observe from a distance or monitor regularly by entering the space in order to support and ensure the safety of both adult and child.
- In every case, the minimum strength and the shortest period of time should be used to achieve the necessary objective
- The pupil should be repeatedly offered the opportunity to exercise self-control and the restraint should stop at the earliest opportunity.
- As soon as possible the child should be removed from general circulation. Isolation can be calming and the removal of an audience is usually beneficial. Professional judgement should be employed to use the most suitable location
- Appropriate notes should be recorded, and the incident communicated to senior management as well as to other relevant members of staff.

Physical intervention may take several forms:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Standing in the way of a pupil
- Holding, guiding, pulling
- Leading a pupil away by the hand or gentle pressure on the back

In extreme cases more restrictive holds may be used

- No restraint may be used which may be considered to be indecent or which may be expected to cause injury to the child.
- Staff must avoid touching or holding pupils in ways that could be construed to be abusive (ref. Child Protection Policy)

## **WHAT TO DO AFTER AN INCIDENT OF RESTRAINT**

All incidents when restraint is used should be recorded as soon as possible in a numbered and bound Book (within 24 hours) and the Headteacher notified.

Reports should be recorded in the book and should include:

- Name(s) of pupil(s) involved / class
- Location of incident
- Date and time
- Staff involved
- Details of events leading to restraint
- Steps taken to prevent restraint
- Reasons for intervention
- Description of restraint used
- Pupil(s) response and outcome
- Details of any injury and / or damage
- Date and Time parent informed of incident
- By whom
- Parent response
- Statements from any witnesses should also be included
- Any staff injuries sustained will be recorded separately, in accordance with Health and Safety procedures.
- Pupils who have been restrained will be entitled to record their views when they have calmed down, and will be given assistance to do so if necessary
- Parents will always be informed of any incident with their child involving the use of physical restraint and will be given an opportunity to discuss the incident. How and when parents are informed is the decision of the Headteacher.

## **7. GUIDANCE AND TRAINING FOR STAFF**

7.1 Guidance and training is essential in this area. We need to adopt the best possible practice. In Harrow Lodge Primary School this is arranged for all staff at a number of levels including :-

- awareness of issues for governors, staff and parents
- behaviour management techniques for all staff
- managing conflict in challenging situations - all staff

7.2 Training in practical techniques of physical intervention may be required for staff where there is a significant likelihood of them needing to intervene physically due to the nature of the pupil (or pupils) that they are working with. Where there is an identified need for such training, staff will be trained by an approved instructor. *(NB there is no legal requirement for staff to be trained in the use of practical techniques so staff may exercise their legal right to physically intervene even if they have not had such training. However, they would still need to demonstrate that their intervention was reasonable and proportionate).*

## **8. COMPLAINTS**

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we can avoid the need for complaints. All disputes which arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.

## **9. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Governing Body and Head teacher are responsible for the monitoring of the policy. This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier, as needed.

**Appendix 1****Positive Handling Plan**

For assessing and managing foreseeable risks for children who are likely to need Restrictive Physical Intervention

Name:	D.O.B	Date:
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*Triggers / Behaviours / Situations likely to result in Physical intervention:*

**Strategies to use to de-escalate the situation and avoid physical intervention**

Chill out time		Planned ignoring		Negotiate	
Physical Timer		Praise		Reassurance	
Count down		Remove stimulus / trigger		Consequences	
Distraction		Take a walk		Supportive touch	

Other:

**De-briefing process following incident**

Signatures

Child (Where appropriate) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Head teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Review date \_\_\_\_\_