

# POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

# Positive Handling Policy – FULL STAFF VERSION

*(Formerly the Physically Intervention Policy)*

This policy has been designed to explain the school's guidance on physical contact in the care of students.

This policy was initially written to reflect the recommendations from:

*'The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils' Circular 10/98 issued following the Education Act 1996 (Section 550A)*

And

*"Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who Display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders" Ref: LEA/0242/2002*

*Equally it reflects more up to date guidance from:*

*DfE 2015 – Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies*

*Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff DfE 2016.*

*Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive physical intervention DfE 2019*

This policy should also be read in conjunction with other school policies: Promoting Good Behaviour, Disrobing, Use of Calm Spaces, Safeguarding etc.

## Purpose

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are important in our school. Most pupils respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school.

In exceptional circumstances the use of reasonable force may be required. If a member of staff ever needs to use reasonable force, they will follow this, the school's Positive Handling Policy. This policy aims to ensure that staff at Prospect House School, fully understand their responsibilities where reasonable force is required.

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school and seeks to ensure that staff at Prospect House School, clearly understand their responsibilities. It is designed to ensure that any such interventions are reasonable, proportionate, and absolutely necessary.

The school takes seriously its duty of care towards both pupils and staff. Hence staff protection is seen as an important part of child protection; both depend on the support of confident and competent staff. As such this policy has a clear focus:

The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the pupils in our care.  
The second is the welfare and protection of the adults that look after them.

### Appropriate Physical Contact

Staff within Prospect House have a responsibility to act professionally at all times. There are situations in which appropriate physical contact occurs in the school setting between staff and pupils.

Restrictive Physical Intervention can only be justified in the circumstances described in this policy, and staff have a responsibility to seek alternative strategies wherever possible.

Physical intervention is only one small part of effective behaviour management within the Trust. Wherever practical, staff should seek to utilise suitable de-escalation techniques and take steps to divert behaviours before they reach elevated risks.

Schools within the Trust strive to reward effort and application and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Similarly, parents and carers are also encouraged to contribute.

### Examples of Physical Intervention

Examples of “Different forms of physical intervention” are summarised in the table below taken from Section 3.1 of the 2002 DfES Guidance.

	<i>Bodily contact</i>	<i>Mechanical</i>	<i>Environmental change</i>
<i>Non restrictive</i>	<i>Manual Guidance to assist a person walking.</i>	<i>Use of a protective helmet to prevent self-injury.</i>	<i>Removal of the cause of distress, for example adjusting temperature, light or background noise.</i>
<i>Restrictive</i>	<i>Holding a person's hands to prevent them from hitting someone.</i>	<i>Use of arm cuffs or splints to prevent self-injury.</i>	<i>Forcible seclusion or the use of locked doors.</i>

### Justification for Use of Reasonable Force

Reasonable force may only be permissible when it is necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- injuring themselves or others;
- causing serious damage to property;
- committing a criminal offence;
- engaging in any behaviour which prevents good order and discipline being maintained in the classroom or elsewhere.

Staff at Prospect House School would not normally use force simply to maintain order or to avoid damage to property (unless this damage itself would present a hazard). Physical restraint should only be used when there is no realistic alternative, and should always be in the best interests of the pupils.

### Alternatives to Physical Intervention

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to attempt to de-escalate a situation and reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Remind them about choices, actions and consequences.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer.
- Guide pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and seek help if needed.

### Risk Assessment

Risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may at times exhibit extreme behaviours. Responsible staff should try to think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong.

Factors which might influence a more dynamic risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this the correct decision is to hold back from any physical intervention, whilst still actively doing something i.e. seeking assistance.

### Planned Interventions

For most incidents at Prospect House School, a planned intervention strategy, as outlined in a student's 'Behaviour Management Plan', will be sufficient to ensure that the incident is properly dealt with. This may include some form of restrictive or non-restrictive physical intervention. The plan will have been developed in response to assessed behavioural challenges and discussed in advance with parents / carers.

### Emergency Intervention Procedures

Occasionally, staff may find themselves in unforeseen or emergency situations. This may be where the strategies in the Behaviour Management Plan would be unsuitable or ineffective, or where a formal Behavioural Plan currently does not exist. Here, the use of an unplanned Emergency Intervention procedure may have to be considered by staff. As a result, staff may need to use a form of restrictive or non-restrictive physical intervention as detailed above.

In extreme emergency cases, in response to an individual's unexpected behaviour, that puts either, other students, or members of staff at high risk of physical danger, staff may need to resort to practice that may be deemed as 'seclusion', (e.g. observing a student at a safe distance from outside a room) then as per Section 3.12 of the 2002 Guidance it should be:

*"Only considered in exceptional cases and should always be proportional to the risk presented by the child or service user".*

*Extract from the July 2002 Guidance (Ref: LEA/0242/2002).*

Similarly any such practice should follow the BILD (British *Institute of Learning Difficulties*) Guidance on Seclusion, as follows:

*Therefore, seclusion should only be used when:*

- *It can be shown to be in the best interests of the person being secluded – and not for ease of management.*
- *It is normally an emergency rather than a planned response.*
- *It is the least restrictive response and its use is proportional to the level of risk presented.*
- *It is used for the minimum period of time to restore safety.*
- *Other strategies such as de-escalation have been used or are considered to be inappropriate in the circumstances.*

School has a policy that allows dangerous pupils who are an immediate risk to themselves or others to be placed in isolation/seclusion away from other pupils for a limited period. This sanction would only be used as a last resort, is planned into a student's BMP and is agreed across a multi-agency approach. The use of isolation/seclusion is always used reasonably and proportionately in all cases and is only to be used when it is in the best interests of the child and other pupils and all other options have been explored, evidenced and exhausted.

Any use of isolation that prevents a child from leaving a room of their own free will is only to be considered in exceptional circumstances and if it reduces the risk presented by the child to themselves and others.

As per Ofsted guidance March 2018 (Positive environments where children can flourish) whether an act is called seclusion or isolation should not be our focus. Children's experiences are what matters.

Emergency interventions, as planned ones, should always use the minimum force necessary and be for the shortest duration necessary to restore safety.

If an Emergency Intervention is carried out, this will lead to a more detailed Risk Assessment of the individual's behaviour by Senior Management (often in conjunction with the Behaviour Support Team) taking in to account the circumstances of the emergency situation. This may lead to enhanced "Behaviour Management Plan" to allow for extreme situations.

Any such enhanced plans will require approval from the Headteacher and consultation with Parents or Carers

#### Physical Intervention and COVID19

If non-symptomatic children present behaviours which may increase the risk of droplet transmission (such as biting, licking, kissing or spitting) or require care that cannot be provided without close hands-on contact, they should continue to receive care in the same way, including any existing routine use of PPE.

In these circumstances, to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission, no additional PPE is necessary as these are non-symptomatic children in a non-healthcare setting and so the risk of viral transmission is very low. However, additional space and frequent cleaning of surfaces, objects and toys will be required. Cleaning arrangements should be increased in all settings, with a specific focus on surfaces which are touched a lot. An enhanced cleaning regime is in place at school and has been shared with all staff.

Calm rooms/safe spaces – Where a child has the use of calm room/safe space as part of their behaviour management plan, this will be reviewed by the school behaviour lead to assess if an alternative could be used e.g. use of an outdoor space. Where this is not possible or appropriate for the child's needs e.g. a child who has behaviours which may include derobing would continue to need an individual room, in this instance, wherever possible the child should use the space independently with staff observing from a safe social distance. If staff do need to intervene this may include the use of PPE where appropriate and accessible. This would be included in an individual child's risk assessment. At all times staff have a duty of care to keep themselves and young people safe, any physical interventions must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

#### Authorised Staff

In line with LEA guidance on physical intervention, all teachers and teaching assistants within Prospect House Learning Trust are authorised, within the content of this Policy

and the legal justifications indicated above, to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. Staff will receive the appropriate training and support in this role.

#### Team Teach

It is the current policy that all staff working closely with high risk pupils are trained in the pre-emptive and responsive positive handling strategies and techniques of Team Teach. Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found on the Team Teach website: ([www.team-teach.co.uk](http://www.team-teach.co.uk)).

Where practically possible, it is staff that hold current and certified training in Team Teach who will be called upon to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils.

A decision to physically intervene, in the best interests of the pupils, may result in unavoidable consequences.

Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the service user remains safe.' (George Matthews – TEAM TEACH Director)

All peripatetic teaching staff and visiting LA staff will work within the policy of their own Service, which should reflect that of the LA and that of Prospect House Learning Trust. Whilst on school premises they will be expected to follow the procedures of the Trust and report any incidents in which they are involved in accordance with the Trust's policy.

#### Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils & Staff

Following a serious incident, the school will offer support for all involved. Immediate action should be taken to ensure that any necessary first aid or medical help is sought. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's IRIS systems.

When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long-term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Pupils should have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspectives. This 'de-brief' may take a number of forms depending on the communication needs of the students involved.

#### Recording

Whenever restrictive physical intervention is used the incident must be recorded using the approved format (IRIS). All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record, which ideally should be completed within 24 hours. However, these Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have had time to

recover from the immediate effects of the incident. The incident should be logged in the format currently approved by the school, these records will be retained and cannot be altered, and are open to external monitoring and scrutiny.

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible, and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded. Phone calls will be followed up with a letter home to parents/carers on the same day when physical intervention has been used.

The Headteacher (in conjunction with the behaviour Support Team) will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required.

### Policy Information and Review

Policy review dates (frequency of review: every 3 years)

Date	Changes made	By whom
1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020	Covid 19 section added	Agreed by LGB
1 <sup>st</sup> September 2021	None	Agreed by LGB
1 <sup>st</sup> September 2022	Reviewed in line with DfE Managing Behaviour in schools 2022	Headteacher