



Dream big, shine bright

St NICHOLAS

C of E Primary School, Alcester

Physical Contact and Restraint Policy

Including the use of force

Adopted: July 2025

Reviewed: July 2026

1. AIMS

- 1.1 Any citizen in an emergency may use reasonable force and self defence to prevent another person being injured or committing a criminal offence. Teachers have additional statutory powers to use force to control and to restrain pupils. The Headteacher authorises all other adult employees of the school to use force in accordance with section 93 of the Education and inspections Act 2006.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is:
- To ensure the safety of pupils and staff at the School
 - To prevent serious breaches of school discipline
 - To prevent serious damage to school property
 - To minimise the risk to staff and pupils by establishing clear guidelines concerning the use of force

2. CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE IT IS REASONABLE TO USE FORCE

- 2.1 Staff may use force to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:
- Committing an offence
 - Causing personal injury to or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself).
 - 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.
- 2.2 The degree of force must be in proportion to the consequence it is intended to prevent and should be the **minimum** needed to achieve the desired result.
- 2.3 Force must not be used to prevent trivial misbehaviour.
- 2.4 **It is unlawful to use force as a punishment.**

3. MINIMISING THE NEED TO USE FORCE

- 3.1 We aim to create a calm and safe environment for pupils and staff to work in. Our Behaviour Policy sets out guidance for maintaining discipline at the school through a system of rewards and sanctions. (See Behaviour and Discipline Policy)
- 3.2 The creation of a calm environment minimises the risk of incidents that might require force arising.
- 3.3 Through our PSHE curriculum (including Protective Behaviours) we teach pupils how to manage conflict and strong feelings.

- 3.4 Staff will communicate calmly with pupils using non-threatening verbal and body language in order to give the pupil a way out of the situation. Where appropriate, pupils will be given the opportunity to calm down away from other pupils.
- 3.5 Where possible, staff will warn the pupil that force may have to be used.
- 3.6 Force should only be used where the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.
- 3.7 Individual pupils may need positive handling plans and risk assessments to minimise the need to use force to control them.

4. SAFE TOUCH – Part of the THRIVE approach

- 4.1 THRIVE is a dynamic, developmental approach to working with pupils that supports their emotional and social wellbeing. It is based on the latest research in neuroscience, attachment theory and child development, drawing on research into the role of creativity and play in developing emotional resilience.
- 4.2 If children are behaving in unacceptable, threatening, dangerous, aggressive or out of control ways, they have not yet learned how their strongest emotional reactions (Discharge Behaviours) can be contained, channelled and communicated safely. The THRIVE approach supports children with these behaviours. Safe touch is used to calm, soothe and regulate a child's emotions and is an important developmental experience. The brain does not develop neural pathways to initiate calming and self-soothing unless and until safe emotional regulation has been experienced within a positive relationship with a significant adult. Where children have had insufficient experience of safe touch, calming and support with regulation, this may be a priority to help their brains develop access to thinking, judging, evaluating and choosing mechanisms.
- 4.3 Safe touch is one of the key ways of regulating children's emotions, but it is a strategy that staff should only use in the presence of another adult.
- 4.4 **Examples of safe touch:**
 - Holding the hand of the child for reassurance;
 - A hug when comforting a distressed pupil;
 - A reassuring hand placed on the shoulder or upper back
 - Using open hands to guide and encourage
 - Shaking a hand or placing a hand on a child's shoulder e.g. when a pupil is being congratulated or praised;

Other examples of acceptable physical contact:

 - To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
 - To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching in order to keep them safe and prevent injury;
 - To give first aid.
- 4.5 Alternate means of calming, soothing and containing children's strong emotions include:
 - Slowing one's pace
 - Lowering the voice

Breathing more deeply
Initially matching the pitch and volume of the child's emotional display and then regulating it down
Talking slowly, firmly and quietly in an unhurried unflustered way
Providing clear predictable consistently held boundaries

5. PUPILS WITH SEN OR DISABILITY (SEND)

- 5.1 Staff need to take appropriate account of individual pupils with special needs and/or disabilities. The SENCo should, through SEND files and discussion, make staff aware of the relevant characteristics of those pupils particularly situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and what de-escalation techniques are most likely to work.
- 5.2 The school will make individual risk assessments for pupils with SEND where their SEND and/or disability is associated with extreme behaviour.
- 5.3 Staff should know what is most likely to trigger a violent reaction, including relevant information relating to previous incidents. They should also know any specific techniques or strategies which have been agreed by staff, parents and the pupil concerned.
- 5.4 Positive handling plans or individual behaviour plans should be developed where appropriate in consultation with the pupil, staff, parents and any outside agencies involved with supporting the pupil.
- 5.5 Pupils who are at risk should be taught to communicate in times of crisis and be given strategies such as moving to a designated time out area. Staff should be familiar with these strategies.
- 5.6 Additional guidance in relation to pupils with learning disability, Autistic spectrum disorders, and emotional, behavioural and social difficulties is available from the DfE <https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs>

6. STAFF AUTHORISED TO USE FORCE

- 6.1 The Headteacher has authorised that all teachers and teaching assistants who have control or charge of pupils automatically have the statutory power to use force.
- 6.2 The Headteacher may also give temporary authorisation to staff or volunteers whose jobs do not normally involve supervising pupils e.g. volunteers on school trips or outings. The Headteacher will inform the staff with permanent authorisation in the event of giving temporary authorisation to another member of staff or volunteer.

7. DECIDING WHETHER TO USE FORCE

- 7.1 Often there is little time to consider but if you have time to think then: -
 - Consider how serious the incident is- What is the likely effect of injury, damage or disorder if you don't use force?
 - What other options are open to you and what are the chances of achieving

the desired result without force?

- What are the risks to the pupil, you and others associated with the use of force?
- Staff should minimise the highest risks e.g. calling the police if you suspect a pupil of having a weapon.
- Staff with temporary authorisation should be made aware by the head teacher of pupils likely to present particular risks and how to deal with them.

8. USING FORCE: TEAM TEACH

- 8.1 Staff have been trained in using Team Teach methods to restrain pupils in situations where the use of force may be needed.
- 8.2 Staff trained in Team Teach should only restrain children in the following situations: -
- If the child is at risk of harming themselves or others.
 - If the child is causing significant damage to property.
 - If the child is disrupting the good order of the school.
- 8.3 If a member of staff or supervisor requires assistance, wherever possible, another team teach trained staff member of staff should be alerted immediately.
- 8.4 Staff should be aware of the risks of using restraint and that it should only be used where there is no viable alternative.
- 8.5 Situations where restraint may be necessary can be stressful. Where a member of staff believes a staff member needs to step away from the situation as they are becoming frustrated or tired the member of staff will use a predetermined phrase to release them.
- 8.6 Restraining does not automatically mean a child should be sent home or excluded – this decision will be made at the Headteacher's discretion.
- 8.7 Staff should give a clear oral warning to the pupil that force may have to be used.
- 8.8 It is strongly advised that, where possible, help is sent for before using force to restrain a pupil. As far as possible, staff should not use force unless and until a responsible adult is available to observe, support or deal with other pupils who may be present.
- 8.9 An incident form must be completed and a phone call/letter sent to parents informing them of the events.

9. STAFF TRAINING

- 9.1 Team Teach training has been provided as whole school training for teachers and teaching assistants and will be updated every three years.
- 9.2 Any staff member requiring training in the interim should inform the Headteacher so that they can take part in training at another school. Local authority advice can be obtained from sen@warwickshire.gov.uk

10. RECORDING INCIDENTS

- 10.1 Incidents where physical restraint has been used should be recorded in the Team Teach record book. This is located in the Headteacher's office. Staff should also ask in the office for an incident form which should be signed by them and any witnesses and given to the Headteacher. The record forms part of the child's school record and will be scanned and added to CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System). Incidents should be recorded as soon as possible. Alternatively, staff can record incidents directly into CPOMS, although the forms should be referenced to make sure all required information has been included.

11. REPORTING INCIDENTS

- 11.1 Any incidents requiring the use of force must be recorded and reported to the Headteacher and the parents informed.
- 11.2 The Headteacher will be notified automatically where staff record incidents using CPOMS. When using the forms, the incident form must be given to Headteacher who will scan it and add it to CPOMS.
- 11.3 All incidents must be reported to the pupil's parents or carers. This should be through a telephone call and followed up with a meeting where possible.
- 11.4 The parents/carers should be told: -
- When and where the incident took place
 - Which members of staff were involved
 - Why restraint had to be used
 - What restraint was used
 - Whether there were any injuries
 - What follow up action will be taken in relation to their child
- 11.5 The incident should also be reported to any outside agencies involved in supporting the child such as Local Authority Children's Services.

12. POST INCIDENT SUPPORT

- 12.1 Members of staff who have been assaulted may wish to consider reporting that to the police.
- 12.2 A serious incident may involve the exclusion of the pupil concerned.
- 12.3 It may be appropriate to involve multi-agency partners such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Pupils and staff may need the support of outside agencies to repair relationships and develop strategies to prevent incidents recurring.
- 12.4 The pupil may need opportunities to develop social and emotional skills through intervention groups which will be organised by the SENCo.

13. COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

- 13.1 With any use of force there is the risk of an allegation by the pupil that they have been assaulted by a member of staff. Such an allegation will be processed under Child Protection procedures. Staff should be aware that the report of the incident may be required by the Police or crown prosecution service to decide whether a prosecution is warranted.
- 13.2 Pupils and parents also have the right to complain to the governing body and as such the complaint will be dealt with through an internal investigation in the school and possibly in a governor's complaints committee meeting.

14. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 14.1 The governors and Senior Leadership Team will monitor the impact of this policy on the use of force through recorded incidents and monitoring of behaviour generally in the school.