



**North Ridge Specialist Support School  
Positive Handling Policy**

Status	Statutory
Date reviewed	February 2025
Date agreed	
Next review	February 2027

Under the public sector equality duty, all schools/academies must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and to foster good relations across all protected characteristics. This means schools/academies must take into account equality considerations when policies are being developed, adopted and implemented.

### **Introduction**

Pupils at North Ridge High School have a wide range of differing needs and there are many different strategies used to support behaviour and teach pupils how to communicate their needs and regulate and manage their feelings, emotions and behaviour. Despite the range of strategies used, it is at times, necessary to use restrictive physical intervention to support pupils unable to regulate. The use of physical intervention can prevent injury to the pupil staff or others, prevent damage to property and to ensure a safe learning environment.

This policy explains the school's procedures for positive handling.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the child protection and behaviour policies.

### **Values and principles**

Everyone in the school community has the right to:

- Recognition of their own identity
- Be treated with respect and dignity

- Learn or work in a safe environment
- Be protected from harm
- Be provided with clear information and guidance about safeguarding and behaviour policies
- Be provided with a framework so that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the context of positive handling

North Ridge is a Gold Rights Respecting School. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) underpin our values and states that all rights must be realised for children to develop to their full potential. The articles that link to behaviour and positive handling are:

- **Article 19:** Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated
- **Article 29:** Children have the right to an education which develops their personality, respect for others and the environment
- **Article 37:** Children must not be punished in a cruel or hurtful way

All staff have a responsibility to follow this policy. Alternative strategies must be sought wherever possible to prevent the need for physical intervention. Strategies specific to each pupil are listed and explained in pupil behaviour plans. Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when de-escalation strategies have not been effective or when pupils, staff or property are at risk. All staff ensure they make a dynamic risk assessment before carrying out any physical intervention.

Unless in an unplanned emergency, all physical intervention should only be carried out by Team Teach trained staff, following the guidance and procedures in pupils' behaviour plans.

If physical intervention is needed to support a pupil for the first time, the agreed techniques will not be written in their behaviour plan. In this instance, Team Teach trained staff will make a dynamic risk assessment. Their response must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary. Following this, parents will be informed, a behaviour plan will be written, and parents will meet with the behaviour team and the class teacher to review and agree the plan.

### **Relevant legislation**

The use of all forms of physical intervention and physical contact are governed by law. The unwarranted and inappropriate use of force may constitute an assault. In addition, it may infringe the human rights of the young person.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing personal injury or damage to a property
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at a school or among pupils.

As included in the DFE 2010 guidance on 'The use of force to control or restrain pupils', it is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order. Therefore, at no time should a pupil be secluded (locked in a room) as do so is unlawful and can amount to false imprisonment.

### **Government Advice**

#### **Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (2013)**

- The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.
- Reasonable Force uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property'

#### **Who can use reasonable force?**

- All members of the school staff have the power to use reasonable force
- This can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as supply staff or therapeutic support staff

#### **When can reasonable force be used?**

- Reasonable force can be used to:
  - Prevent pupils from hurting themselves
  - Prevent pupils from hurting others
  - Prevent pupils from damaging property
  - Prevent pupils from causing disorder
- Schools cannot use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment
- Schools do not require parental consent to use reasonable force

## **Staff Training**

### **Team Teach**

- Team Teach is accredited through the Institute of Conflict Management (ICM)
- We aim to have two advanced Team Teach tutors in school and two additional intermediate tutors.
- Most of the staff team are trained in Team Teach Level 2. This is refreshed annually.
- A core team of staff are trained in Advanced Team Teach. These staff members have a full 6-hour first aid qualification and are carefully selected to ensure pupils are supported effectively.
- Staff have the duty to inform SLT of any injuries or disabilities that prevent them from using physical intervention.
- Physical intervention techniques only form part of Team Teach training. A significant part of the training covers the school approach to behaviour management, de-escalation and strategies.
- Some supply staff are trained by their agencies, proof of their successful training is held by the cover team.
- Training ensures that all staff are aware that the use of reasonable force will only be used as a last resort, when all other alternatives have been exhausted and that any force used will be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.
- All staff use the help script to support pupils and colleagues during incidents. The help script is displayed around school and covered in all training and refresher training.

### **Use of Physical Intervention at North Ridge**

This policy does more than simply outline the use of physical intervention at North Ridge. It aims to provide a transparent overview of how we use physical contact to both care for and, where appropriate physically support our pupils. Working within philosophy of 'Every Child Matters' with a particular focus on the strands of 'staying safe' and 'enjoying

and achieving', our Positive Handling Policy describes the acceptable physical interaction between staff and pupils on a daily basis. Based on the principles of moving from least intrusive to more restrictive holding we have divided interaction into three definable areas:

### 1. Physical contact:

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force may be necessary.

Examples of when touching a pupil may be necessary:

- Guiding a pupil 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 and
- To give first aid
- To provide personal care and postural management

Team Teach interventions that may be used at this level are:

- Caring C guide
- Safe hug/ help hug escort
- Friendly guide

### 2. Physical intervention

The term 'physical intervention' is used when reasonable force is used to overcome active resistance.

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the arm or shoulder with little or no force. The important factor within these situations is the compliance of the child as a result of the intervention.

Team Teach interventions that may be used at this level are:

- Friendly hold
- Figure of four
- Opening the oyster (in response to a non-threatening hair or clothing grab)
- Arm disengagements
- Neck disengagements

- Response to bites
- Any additional personal safety techniques as approved and taught by Team teach

### 3. Restrictive physical intervention

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property in response to the following scenarios:

- To prevent pupils from hurting themselves
- To prevent pupils from hurting others
- To prevent pupils from damaging property
- To prevent pupils from causing disorder

The use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a last resort. All such incidents are recorded and reported to parents and will be stored in an accessible way.

Team Teach interventions that may be used at this level are:

- Seated hold (hands in seatbelt position)
- Seated figure of four
- Half shield
- Single elbow
- Double elbow

Advanced Team Teach techniques are used to support some pupils in school. These pupils have a full risk assessment for these techniques. This is after all other options have been tried and only with authorisation from a member of SLT or an Advanced Team Teach Tutor. Only staff with Advanced Team Teach training can support with these holds:

- Full shield
- Cradle sitting shield
- Back ground recovery hold
- Front ground recovery hold
- Hip chair
- Dead weight off the ground

Physical Intervention will always stop if the child has:

- difficulty in breathing
- vomits
- has a fit or seizure
- experiences swelling or change of hue of skin

## **Unacceptable measures of physical intervention.**

In accordance with the Local Authority Guidelines and the law, the following are unacceptable methods of sanctioning a pupil and not allowed by the school:

- Use of prone (face down) restraint unless a pupil has front ground recovery holds in their behaviour plan and staff are appropriately trained
- Locking a child in a room
- Physical punishment
- Deprivation food/ drink/ medicine/sleep
- Restrictive clothing
- Restriction to breathing/ circulation
- Pressure on joints
- Use of a mechanical or therapeutic device

## **Before using physical interventions**

Staff take action to de-escalate and reduce risk by:

- Showing care, concern and support appropriate for the pupils
- Removing the pupil and taking vulnerable pupils to a safe place
- Making the environment safer if required
- Using de-escalation strategies as listed in a pupil's behaviour plan
- Reassuring pupils and using the help script where appropriate
- Ensuring colleagues know what is happening and requesting additional support if needed

## **Use of physical interventions**

Physical intervention should only be used when there is no alternative and for the shortest amount of time possible. Pupils who have been physically supported previously have written risk assessments which must be followed. In addition to this, staff continually make dynamic risk assessments. Actions and decisions are always made in the best interests of the child and endeavour to reduce risks. All responses are reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Physical interventions must only be used in accordance with the following:

- A dynamic risk assessment will be made, and physical interventions will only be used to prevent a pupil from hurting themselves or others, damaging property or causing disorder

- Following a dynamic risk assessment, Red Alert SAS may be used to request further assistance
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied
- Every effort should be made to secure a minimum of 2 Team Teach trained members of staff, or 4 for advanced holds.
- Other staff can act as assistants, witnesses or be available as a change of face
- Once safe, the intervention should be relaxed and then ceased following the Team Teach gradual and graded techniques
- Interventions should be an act of care and control, not punishment
- Physical intervention must not be used purely to force compliance if there is no immediate danger to people or property
- After the event, the incident should be discussed with pupils (repair and reflect) if appropriate and parents must be informed using a Team Teach letter

### **Post incident de-brief**

De-briefs should take place after incidents so that learning can inform practice. Support is available to those involved in an incident by the behaviour team, SLT or mental health first aiders.

Where appropriate, pupils should complete repair and reflect post incident learning to repair relationships and start to build self-regulation skills.

### **Advanced Team Teach physical interventions**

#### Team Teach Roles, responsibilities and safeguards

The Team Teach approach is designed to reduce risk, restraint and restriction. We follow the required and highly recommended safeguard standards when using advanced ground holds to support pupils. Guidance places these techniques in the elevated risk category. To ensure we are taking every measure to reduce and manage this risk, the following measures are in place:

- If a hold is not showing signs of resolution within 10 minutes, the hold will be released.
- If an individual pupil requires three or more repeated restraints within a 12-hour period, we will conduct a dynamic risk assessment and seek support from outside agencies (e.g. parents, police, doctors). For pupils at North Ridge, this will result in contacting parents/carers and requesting that they collect their child.

All required and recommended protocols are followed, and further information can be found in the Team Teach book: Roles and Responsibilities: Liberty and ground recovery safeguards.

### **Dynamic risk assessments – responding to unforeseen circumstances**

We recognise that there may be unforeseen circumstances or an emergency in which a behaviour plan and written risk assessment has not previously been needed. An unforeseen event may require an emergency response with a dynamic risk assessment. In these cases, after the event staff have a duty to plan ahead and write a behaviour plan and risk assessment

### **Behaviour plans:**

A number of pupils at North Ridge have a behaviour plan. These are working documents that support staff with preventative, teaching and de-escalation strategies to help manage behaviour. If physical intervention techniques have been used, staff will need to complete the positive handling part of the plan detailing strategies and holds used and ensure risk assessments detail the procedure for supporting the pupil in crisis. Following the written positive handling plan, parents or carers are invited in to discuss and review the plan and sign to say they agree. However, schools do not require parental consent to use reasonable force.

These meetings are led by the Deputy Head for behaviour and are supported by the class teacher. There must be a Team Teach Tutor present at the meeting.

The agenda for these meetings is as follows:

1. Introductions
2. Background information on PHPs and reason for pupil needing one
3. Discussion around PHP:
  - a. About Me
  - b. What is important to me?
  - c. Triggers and supports
  - d. Behaviours causing concern
  - e. Preventative strategies – discuss how these support the pupil throughout the day
  - f. De-escalation strategies – when they are used and how they help
  - g. Physical Intervention techniques – demonstration of each technique by Team Teach tutor

- h. Extra Information
  - i. Repair and reflect and what a repair and reflect is
  - j. Risk assessment
  - k. Crisis Management chart
  - l. Sensory profile and how it is used to support
4. Questions and feedback from parent/carer
  5. Signing of the plan

### **Reporting and recording**

- A written record must be kept of all instances of restrictive physical intervention. This is done through our behaviour incident forms on Iris Adapt.
- In addition to the record of physical intervention, the report also details what happened during the incident, what the triggers were, which behaviours occurred, how staff responded, and how the incident was resolved. There is also space to input injuries and records of violent incidents where applicable.
- Incident forms must be completed as soon as possible after the incident, within 24 hours.
- Parents or carers must be informed of a restrictive physical intervention. A Team Teach letter should be sent home and parents should be informed either through a telephone call or in person. This contact must be recorded on CPOMS.
- Injuries to staff or pupils during physical intervention need to be recorded on the Iris report and on the school medical tracker system.
- Violent incidents must be recorded on the Iris report and a de-brief must take place with SLT or the behaviour team to check on well-being.
- Incident reports are monitored and analysed by the behaviour team to inform behaviour support across the school.

### **Action after an incident**

Incidents are regularly reviewed and investigated as necessary on Iris Adapt. A full analysis is undertaken termly so we can track behaviours, triggers, successful strategies and physical intervention.

It is the responsibility of the senior leadership team to support staff who work with pupils with challenging behaviour. If further action is required following an incident, one or more of the following procedures may be undertaken:

- Review and update of behaviour plan
- Referral of pupil to behaviour team for additional support

- Fixed term suspensions (following policy)
- Additional risk assessments
- Referral to other agencies for additional support
- Changes to pupil timetables or class groups
- Meetings with parents/carers and other involved agencies
- Training refresher for staff
- Staff disciplinary procedures (following policy)

SLT will inform staff, pupils and families as appropriate of any action taken. In the case of action concerning a member of staff, they will be advised to seek advice from their professional association or union.

Counselling is offered to staff; this request is made through SLT.

### **Use of calm rooms**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the calm room guidance. Calm rooms are often used during behaviour incidents. They are a safe space for pupils to regulate and a space away from other pupils to protect dignity.

Visits to the calm rooms are logged and a reason given from the following:

- **Pupil request:** A pupil requests to use the calm room using an appropriate communication method for that pupil
- **Staff request:** Staff have seen the potential for an escalation in behaviour and have asked a pupil to use the calm room
- **Needed a calm environment:** Another pupil's behaviour is causing an escalation or is a known trigger. The pupil is beginning to escalate but it has been spotted early, and a calm environment is the best place for them
- **Unsafe behaviour:** A pupil has escalated to the point where they are displaying dangerous unsafe behaviours to themselves and those around them so need to be in the calm room
- **Unwell/Pain:** A pupil is currently unwell or in pain and need a quiet space to rest

Calm room logs are analysed so effective support can be put in place and to ensure staff and pupils continue to use the calm rooms appropriately. Calm rooms are not a sanction or a punishment, they are safe, clutter free environments to support pupils to regain control of their emotions, self-regulate or de-escalate. No pupils are ever shut in a calm room.

### **Complaints**

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Any complaints received by the Head Teacher from parents, staff or any other persons regarding alleged ill-treatment of pupils or injuries received by a student during physical intervention must be investigated fully by the Head teacher using the complaints procedure.

The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints.