

Physical Intervention & Positive Handling Policy 2025 - 2027



Kingsland School

Date of last review:	May, 2023
Date of this review:	April, 2025
Next review due by:	May 2027
Comments:	Proposed new guidance reviewed to ensure its relevant and up to date with the policy. Amendments to the location of PI forms.
Head teacher's Signature:	<i>E. Patel</i>
Approved by Chair of Governors:	On the Governor Hub (11.04.2025)

Physical Intervention & Positive Handling Policy

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1. Policy Statement

Staff at Kingsland School are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow this policy. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so via the school website or request a copy from the School Business Manager.

2. Introduction & Guidance

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a range of responses which may involve the use of force to control or restrain a pupil. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' (Guidance on reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention (updated June 2019) (special schools)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-the-need-for-restraint-and-restrictive-intervention>

Use of Reasonable force in schools Guidance published July 2013, Department for Education provides clarification on the use of force and is intended to help school staff feel confident about using this power. This departmental advice has been used to support this policy.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

At the time of reviewing this policy the guidance was under review with a consultation end date of 29th April, 2025. The proposed key changes have been actioned and Kingsland

School ensure the guidance is adhered to in terms of recording and reporting 'significant incidents' ensuring that staff working with pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), understand the "underlying triggers of challenging behaviour", are able to "identify and manage risk when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur" and "develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of reasonable force being used".

3. Positive Behaviour Management

Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Much of this information is collated during the initial visit including any potential triggers that might impact on the pupil's behaviour in school. This feeds into the pupil's support plan. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also offered the opportunity to contribute to such documents during the visit/meeting. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

4. Alternatives to Physical Controls / Using De-escalation

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. De-escalation skills are a key strength of the staff in Kingsland School and they proactively use these skills to deploy a range of strategies wherever possible, prior to making the decision to physically intervene.

Staff will:

- Show care & concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Swap positions (change of face) with staff who have been chosen by the pupil to support them when in crisis.
- Remind pupils about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Always provide a 'get out with dignity' opportunity.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

5. Modifications to Environment

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. In general it is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. For example:

- How is the availability of pointed implements such as pens, pencils & compasses controlled?

- What small items are available to a pupil in crisis who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Is the design arrangements or furniture safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with a pupil in crisis?
- Are protocols in place to encourage angry pupils to take themselves to a safer place?
- Key area chosen at Broadbent Road: Location: Visitors Foyer entrance / comfort chairs

6. Help Protocols

The expectation at this school is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and are always willing to accept it. Help does not always mean taking over, it may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. Staff in Kingsland School use short sentences to ensure support if offered and clear direction is given.

7. Positive Language

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry or upset staff must not get into an argument. Telling people to calm down can actually result in the opposite effect and pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

8. The Last Resort Principal

At this school we only use physical interventions when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

9. Physical Interventions

A restrictive physical intervention is always used as a last resort when all other strategies and interventions have been used. The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the child in our care. All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of Positive Behaviour Management.

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of the Pupil Support Plan. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces, rather than increases the risk.

Restrictive physical interventions may be appropriate when:-

- a) There is risk of injury to the young person or others.
- b) There is imminent risk of damage to property.
- c) There is imminent risk of an offence being committed.
- d) A young person is compromising good order and discipline e.g causing distress to other young people or continually preventing others from learning.

Restrictive Physical Interventions can be employed to achieve a number of different outcomes:

- a) To break away or disengage from dangerous or harmful physical contact initiated by a young person.
- b) To separate a young person from a trigger; for example, removing one pupil who responds to another with physical aggression.
- c) To protect a young person from a dangerous situation; for example; the hazards of a busy road.

10. Reasonable and Proportionate / In the Bests Interests of the Pupil

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Staff should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported. Restrictive physical interventions should only be used in the young person's best interests

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

Staff actions must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary, using the minimum amount of force for the shortest time. Techniques used are the least intrusive and maintain the dignity of the young person.

Staff have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for young people with special needs when using reasonable force.

In an emergency situation any person can assist in an intervention, but this must fall within the legal boundaries, all members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force and use their duty of care to prioritise the safety of our pupils.

11. Unreasonable Use of Force / Physical Interventions

It is NOT reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk.

- It is unacceptable to use Force as a punishment
- It is unacceptable to use physical interventions when it becomes routine

Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs).

Seclusion; (Definition); a young person is forced to spend time alone against their will.
Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should NEVER be used to seclude a pupil. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

Pupils with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 allows teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Head teacher to have control or charge of pupils, to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility)
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property (including the pupils own property)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

12. Health and Safety

We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which seems to involve the least risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school and policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical elements. The non physical aspects of positive handling training are also crucially important.

13. Risk Assessment Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Staff will be familiar with the documentation for children in our care. The risk assessment will identify strategies to minimise unacceptable behaviours and diffuse crisis situations.

Sometimes incidents arise that deem an immediate risk assessment must be undertaken. Other than in an emergency, 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 the physical controls.

It is helpful to distinguish between:

A **planned intervention**, in which staff employ where necessary, pre-arranged strategies and methods which are based upon a risk assessment and recorded in care plans.

And.....

Emergency or unplanned use of force which occurs in response to unforeseen events.

It is important to note that once an unforeseen event has taken place it then becomes foreseeable risk and all paperwork must be updated to reflect this.

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences.

The key principals are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school.

14. The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. 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. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put

into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

At Kingsland School the following support structures are in place:

- Following a serious incident staff and pupils will be given the opportunity to discuss the incident. The focus is to re-establish and promote positive relationships in school.
- The discussion aims to establish a more appropriate alternative behaviour for any future potential situations.
- Pupil support plans and risk assessments will be reviewed by staff involved in the incident and shared with all staff.
- Daily briefing sessions are held each morning to update staff on current issues and share information.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how the crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Staff have access to the free confidential advice & support offered by OMBC (EAP)

15. Positive Handling Plans

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk will have a plan which identifies the risks. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Pupils are asked to contribute to their plan, staff members are asked to review this with the pupils in their group on a half termly basis.

16. Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. Pupils should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We promote a transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection (DSL). Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety (The School Business Manager).

17. Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques should be trained. Team Teach Courses are affiliated by the Institute of Conflict Management and in accordance with DfES and Department of Health Guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors who are trained staff conforming to rigorous guidelines.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. Kingsland School's approach is for all pupil facing staff to undertake the training in positive handling strategies and techniques. This complements the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy.

Office, catering and premises staff do not require training in physical techniques as they are not working directly with pupils. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our service users (pupils).

Once trained, staff should practice regularly and are offered guidance from our in-house instructors.

'This provides an accredited framework designed to focus on positive behaviour approaches with an emphasis on de-escalation, risk and restraint reduction. The Team Teach approach employs gradual and graded responses which allow staff to move between techniques to respond to individual need whilst maintaining control'.

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".

18. Recording Physical Interventions

Kingsland School keep records of any incidents where physical interventions are used. They are retained for a period of 25 years from the date of the incident.

Parents/carers must be informed at the earliest opportunity of an incident involving physical intervention and have the opportunity to discuss this.

Whenever a physical intervention is used the incident **must** be recorded using the approved forms. See Appendix 1; Record of Incidents Requiring Physical Intervention. These records are checked by the School Business Manager and are then uploaded onto CPOMS. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours and pass to the School Business Manager.

Staff should:

- Take time to recover before completing the record of incidents (PI sheet).
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly.
- Include the 95%
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.

Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

19. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigate any further action as required. The Record of Physical Interventions is open to monitoring and evaluation.

20. Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Positive Handling Plan, Behaviour Policy or this policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures. (See disciplinary policy)

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

This policy was initially completed on 4th January 2018 by Chrissy Emerson and will be reviewed **every two years**.

Date of Review: 23rd October 2020 & 2nd December 2020

Reviewed by: C. Emerson & staff members within the team teach refresher training course.

Date of Review: 10th May 2023 **Reviewer:** Chrissy Emerson

Date of Review: 11th April, 2025 **Reviewer:** Chrissy Emerson