



**DUNSTONE**

— EDUCATION TRUST —

# Positive Handling and Reasonable Force Policy

**We Care • We Challenge • We Commit**

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## Introduction

This policy is written in conjunction with the DfE document: Use of reasonable force - advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE, 2013, revised 2015) and reducing the need for restraint and restrictive practices (DfE, June 2019) and the Behaviour in School document (2022)

**We Care** - Fulwood Academy is committed to creating a culture of respect and kindness, promoting positive attitudes to learning to all students. Where students and staff care about learning and each other, they are committed to being their best and confidently challenge barriers to learning.

**We Commit** - As a school, Fulwood is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for pupil's safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving physically challenging behaviour, and use physical intervention only as a last resort in line with DfE advice. If used at all, it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil, and be reasonable, necessary and proportional to the circumstances of the incident. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff, and that any interventions use the minimum of force for the shortest time

**We Challenge** - As a school we have responsibility to challenge our pupils to be their best, to challenge those who display unacceptable behaviours, teach our students what good behaviour looks like and ensure each student understands their rights and responsibilities and the potential impact of their decisions and actions on their own learning and that of others. We will do this by rewarding excellent behaviour with praise and by imposing consistent and clear sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. We will ensure that those pupils who struggle are supported in making better choices.

All staff employed by Fulwood Academy are authorised to use physical intervention. The school provides Team Teach training for all pastoral staff and keeps an up-to-date record of this training.

### What is reasonable force?

According to the DfE

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the 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. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. 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. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- 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.

## Who can use reasonable force?

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school.
- It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

## Physical Intervention/Positive Handling which can be regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances.

Our relationship with our pupils is built on 'unconditional positive regard', where all pupils are treated equally and as individuals and all pupils feel respected and valued at all times.

The school has a responsibility to support pupils to manage their emotions and behaviour. Most pupils can cope with the demands of their environment and respond positively to the strategies outlined in the school's behaviour policy. However, it is also recognised that there are occasions when the use of reasonable force or 'positive handling' is appropriate and necessary to support pupils to self-regulate.

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 allows 'teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Head Teacher who 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:

- Causing injury to his/herself or others;
- Committing an offence;
- Damaging property;
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order & discipline.

At Fulwood Academy we aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in managing situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our Behaviour Policy.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories.

Examples of situations where positive handling may be appropriate include:

- If a pupil attacks a member of staff;
- If a pupil attacks another pupil;
- If a pupil is engaging in, or on the verge of, committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- If a pupil is causing or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- If a pupil is at risk of absconding from class or tries to leave the school
- If a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom
- If a pupil is seriously disrupting a lesson

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this. What constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. Teachers should apply the training they receive to de-escalate where possible then use the appropriate holds as practised in the training. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below and should only be used when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

Staff are required to justify their decisions in writing through the recording and reporting procedures outlined later in this policy.

When circumstances justify, staff as a last resort, may:-

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Block a pupil's path
- Redirecting
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.
- In extreme cases use more restrictive holds

A pupil's behaviour may be adversely affected by the presence of an audience. Wherever possible, the audience will be removed, or if this is not possible, the pupil will be removed from the audience. The pupil and member(s) of staff will withdraw to a quiet, but not completely private, place (e.g., two members of staff should be present, or a door left open so that others are aware of the situation).

Staff will tell the pupil being restrained, in a calm and gentle manner, that the reason for the intervention is to keep themselves and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the pupil calms down, she/he will be released.

Pupils whose challenging behaviour may pose a risk to staff or pupils will be subject to Positive Handling Plan. These will be shared with all staff and stored on My Concern.

A positive handling plan will be necessary for all pupils that need this intervention on a regular basis – Appendix 1.

## Assessing and Managing Risks

Behaviours that challenge are often foreseeable, though it may be difficult to predict exactly when they will occur or the degree of challenge they will pose. Settings and services can seek to improve foresight by:

1. Exploring why children or young people behave in ways that pose a risk
2. Trying to understand the factors that underlie or influence the behaviour
3. Recognising the early warning signs which indicate that the behaviour is beginning to emerge
4. Developing the skills to manage difficult situations competently and sensitively.

A decision on whether or not to use restraint will always require a consideration of the individual circumstances and is a matter of professional judgement.

Any use of restraint carries risks. Risks may be to the child or young person whose behaviour challenges, other children and young people, staff, other adults or property. They may arise as a result of interactions between the child or young person and their environment, the direct impact of the child or young person's challenging behaviour, or measures and interventions used to limit or manage risks to the child and/or others.

Those risks need to be balanced against the risks associated with other courses of action, including risks of taking no action at all. Risks associated with applying restraint or deciding not to do so include causing physical injury, causing a flight response, psychological trauma, distress and emotional disturbance to the child or young person and to staff.

There should be a clear local protocol about the circumstances when, exceptionally, police may be called to manage a young person's behaviour within a setting. Staff should be alert to the risk of any respiratory or cardiac distress and continue to monitor the young person's physical and psychological wellbeing throughout the incident of restraint

## Training of Staff

Pastoral staff will receive Team Teach training. Team Teach focuses on the development of de-escalation skills and good practice includes improving the range of interventions and the quality of interactions in order to reduce risk and the reliance on physical restraint.

## Actions and support after an incident

The pupil and the member of staff will be checked for any sign of injury after an incident. First aid will be administered to anyone who requires it.

The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise her/him. When the pupil regains composure, a senior member of staff (or her/his nominee) will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain the reason for its occurrence. The pupil will be given an opportunity to explain things from her/his point of view. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish the relationship between the pupil and the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.

In cases where it is not possible to speak to the pupil on the same day as the incident occurred, the debrief will take place as soon as possible after the pupil returns to school.

Incidents outlined in this policy often occur in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. The Principal and Vice Principal should be notified of any incident immediately and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support. The parents/carers will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a Positive Handling Plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies. This may require additional support from other services.

In some circumstances an Education and Health Assessment (EHA) may be appropriate to help identify an additional need for a particular child.

A member of the leadership or pastoral team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, and usually (unless exceptional circumstances prevent this) on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

## Recording and Reporting

All incidents of Positive Handling should be reported to the Vice Principal using the Positive Handling Reporting Form. All sections of this report should be completed so that any patterns of behaviour can be

identified and addressed. In the event of any future complaint or allegation this record will provide essential and accurate information.

All reported incidents are logged on Positive Handling Tracker with the Vice Principal for recording, reporting and evaluation.

Governors will be informed of the number of physical interventions via the Principals Report to Governors.

The Principal will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Review of the Pupil Support Plan
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve the police and/or Social Care)
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedures
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff
- The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.
- In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, she/he will be advised to seek advice from her/his professional association/union.

A member of the leadership or pastoral team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, and usually (unless exceptional circumstances prevent this) on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

## Complaints

If a parent or child is concerned about any aspect of the management of an incident requiring physical intervention, he/she should inform the Principal of their concern.

If the concern relates to action by the Principal, the parent/carer should contact the Chair of Governors.



### Appendix 1: Positive handling plan

Pupil name	DOB	Form	Date completed	Review date
Additional information e.g medical conditions				

Trigger behaviours	De-escalation strategies	Preferred positive handling techniques. (to be used as a last resort)

Repair and rebuild post intervention	Evaluation and plan to reduce (complete during review)
Do you wish to be informed upon each occasion that a physical intervention is used? (delete as appropriate)	YES/NO
Staff trained in Team Teach are authorised to use the following techniques if deemed reasonable, proportionate and necessary at the time of any incidents	

Signed		Date
<b>Principal</b>		
<b>Parent/carer</b>		