

Old Clee Primary Academy

'Inspired to Believe, Learning to Succeed'

Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy



Approved by:	Head Teacher	Date: 16 th April 2026
Last reviewed on:	19 th March 2025	
Next review due by:	Spring 2027	

School Expectations

At Old Clee Primary Academy, we strive to have a safe, caring and friendly environment for all the pupils and staff. In the vast majority of incidents, no force is required to prevent children harming themselves, or others, or academy property. Academy staff are experienced in de-escalation strategies. However, if 'reasonable force' is needed this document sets out what reasonable force is and is not, who can use reasonable force, when reasonable can be considered and record keeping of such incidents. Wherever possible, staff should look to use other methods, such as distraction, giving clear directions and any other method, which does not require the use of any physical force. We only use physical interventions when the risks involved of doing so are outweighed by the risks of not doing so.

Positive Behaviour Management

All staff and volunteers adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to build self-esteem, and promote a safe environment for students and staff. All staff work in partnership with those who know the child to help those concerned:

- Find out why this child behaves as he or she does
- Understand the factors that influence this child's behaviour
- Identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing

This approach helps to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It reduces the incidence of extreme behaviours and makes sure that the use of physical intervention is rare.

Definition of term

The following term has been shared by the DfE as part of their "Call for evidence Use of reasonable force and restrictive practices in schools" document that came into circulation in February 2023. It describes the following:

Reasonable force – Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements in order to prevent or stop (1) a pupil from committing any offence,

(2) a pupil causing personal injury to any person including the pupil themselves, (3) damage to property, or (4) disruption to education and good order at the school. Reasonable force can also include physical restraint, such as holding a pupil's arms back to prevent a fight but is not limited to this. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is necessary; for example, guiding a pupil to safety by the arm or blocking a pupil's path.

Physical restraint is typically used in more extreme circumstances, such as when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate. Staff should try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases, this may not always be possible. In these instances, the Team Teach trained staff use the techniques from that training for as little time as possible. Certain techniques are unacceptable.

The following restraint techniques present an **unacceptable risk** when used on children, and should **not** be employed:

- The 'seated double embrace' - two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing
- The 'double basket-hold' - holding a person's arms across their chest
- The 'nose distraction technique' - a sharp upward jab under the nose

Who can use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force. It can also be used by anyone who's been put in charge of pupils temporarily by the headteacher, such as:

- Unpaid volunteers
- Parents accompanying students on a school trip.

Other forms of physical contact

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary, such as if you:

- Hold the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- Comfort a distressed pupil
- Congratulate or praise a pupil
- Demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- Demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- Give first aid

When reasonable force can be used?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from:

- Hurting themselves
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder

It can never be used as a form of punishment. It is up to staff's professional judgement to decide whether to physically intervene. This decision should always depend on the individual circumstances and if staff are unsure they should call a member of the Team Teach Team for support.

Examples of when it is acceptable

You may use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or stop a fight in the playground
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

Pupils with SEND

Reasonable force can be used on these pupils, but when deciding whether this is appropriate, staff should know and understand the needs of the pupil concerned.

Team Teach training

To ensure that reasonable force and positive handling is carried out in the most appropriate way, a select number of staff have additional Team Teach training. This training covers how to safely support children who may be in crisis. It also equips staff with the knowledge and understanding of de-escalating situations. We ensure that staff members are trained in the use of de-escalation techniques, which form 95% of Team Teach methodology. The other 5% is concerned with the use of prompts, guides and holds.

Team Teach is used:

- To promote the least intrusive positive handling strategy and a continuum of gradual and graded techniques, with an emphasis and preference for the use of verbal, non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before positive handling strategies are utilised.
- To enable our school to develop acceptable and authorised responses to disruptive, disturbing, angry and aggressive behaviours in a manner that maintains positive relationships and provides safety for all, by training in Team-Teach.
- To reduce the number of serious incidents involving physical controls in all school and to emphasise the importance of exhausting behaviour management strategies in the first instance.
- To increase the awareness of staff concerning the importance of recording and reporting, monitoring and evaluating, all incidents involving positive handling.
- To provide a process of repair and reflection for both staff and children.

Key points of Team Teach

- Where possible, the expectation is that staff will exhaust all behavioural management strategies before they physically intervene. Where and when there is time, the physical interventions should be viewed as a "last resort option" for staff.
- Where a pupil requires repeated positive handling, the strategies and techniques will be planned for and agreed in advance.
- Physical techniques will not be taught in isolation.
- Team Teach emphasises positive relationships as being the key element in our work with children. The physical techniques can help to protect and maintain these relationships. "If you treat an individual as s/he is, s/he will remain as s/he is, if you treat her/him as if s/he were what s/he ought to be, s/he will become what s/he ought to be and what s/he could be" (Goethe 1749-1832)
- The physical techniques have sufficient range and robustness to be appropriate across the age and development range, for both the intentional and non-intentional "challenging" individual.
- The positive handling techniques provide a gradual, graded system of response commensurate with the situation, task and individuals involved, allowing for phasing up or down as dictated to by the circumstances at the time.
- The use of force will always be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.
- The aim of positive handling is for the person to calm down sufficiently so that staff can return the physical control and help find a better way.
- A calm approach with staff using (Communication, Awareness /Assessment Listening/Looking and Making Safe skills - CALM) is expected at all times when managing such situations.
- Staff will make a risk assessment, both before, during and after any serious incident involving positive handling.
- The training will aim to comply and work within "good practice" guidelines produced by government departments. Team Teach has been actively involved with consultation by government departments looking at "good practice" principles in this area. Training complies with the Human Rights Act.

Reporting incidents/Informing parents

We will speak to parents about 'serious incidents' involving the use of force. When deciding whether something is a 'serious incident', staff should use their professional judgement and consider the:

- Pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- Degree of force used
- Effect on the pupil or member of staff
- The child's age
- Team Teach Training

Internal records

All incidents of force used must be reported via our CPOMs system to the Senior Leadership Team. Parents should also be notified of any incidents of force used, explaining what happened and why it was necessary to use force. This conversation will likely involve SLT and these conversations should also be noted as part of the child's CPOM record.

Incidents that are more serious would require the staff members involved to complete a Serious Incident Report (Appendix 1). This record would then be scanned and also added to the CPOM record.

Post-Incident Support

Incidents that require use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and could result in injuries to the child or staff. After incidents have subsided, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries. Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require other than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures. The school should take action to report any serious injuries to staff or students in accordance with LA guidelines (see First Aid and Medicines Policy and Practice).

We need to consider: -

- thoughts, feeling, emotions,
- emotional 'first aid'

Stage 1 – Immediate 'Are you ok' This should occur before people leave to go home. Stage 2 – De-briefing checking people have adjusted to an emotionally difficult event. This should occur within 48 hours.

Stage 3 – Counselling: formal support. Support may be available when requested by a member of staff, however it is not imposed. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Post Incident Review

Focus on actions and behaviours:

- Who did what, when, why, how?
- What was the outcome?
- What does it tell us about what we already know about the young person?
- What have we learnt and what or how does this inform our practice?

APPENDIX 1

Behaviour – serious incident record	
Name of pupil:	
Type of incident:	
Date of incident:	Time of incident:
Location where incident took place:	
Names of all other persons involved:	
Details of the incident including all steps taken to defuse the situation and resolve it:	
Outline of the incident including a description of any injuries suffered and/or any property damaged:	

What has happened in the aftermath of this incident to the perpetrator, other people involved, property?	
Staff signature (1)	Staff signature (2)

Ratification

Date ratified by Headteacher: 16th April 2026

Date of last review: 19th March 2025

Next review date: Spring Term 2027

Signed by Headteacher: Miss D Richardson

Date: 16th April 2026