



ABBEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

POSITIVE TOUCH POLICY

Introduction and aim

At Abbey Primary we look to provide a welcoming and secure place for children where the wellbeing of all is prioritised. This policy has been compiled to ensure that, should the situation arise, staff and parents are aware of the correct procedures in the use of force to restrain or physically direct a child. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary. It should be considered alongside the school's SEN, Behaviour, Safeguarding & Child Protection and Health & Safety policies. It has been informed by the document 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools' (February 2025), the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Positive behaviour management

We promote an attitude which looks to respect and support each other and seeks to care for and include everyone. We take a carefully considered approach to promoting positive behaviour in school which is founded on respect and trusting relationships. We look to encourage positive behaviour through praise and positive recognition and seek to know our children well so individual needs can be met. Our approach is one of early intervention and we de-escalate incidents when they do arise. We only use physical interventions when the risks involved of doing so are outweighed by the risks of not doing so.

What is physical intervention?

The use of force is illegal if the physical circumstances do not warrant it. The force used should always be the minimum needed to regain and ensure safety and control for everyone involved or present. The Positive Handling Policy should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Child protection/Safeguarding Policy.

Restrictive physical interventions may include:

- Bodily contact - where the physical presence of one or more people is used to control a pupil, e.g physically interposing between pupils; blocking a pupil's path; holding or 'shepherding' a pupil; using agreed, approved restricted holds
- Environmental – where a change is applied within the environment for example shutting a door or the use of locks or key pads to prevent access to a particular area

When might positive handling be required?

Physical Interventions including Restraint Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (which replaces section 550A of the DFES Circular 10/98) enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing any offence
- Causing, or being at risk of causing, injury or damage to themselves or others, whether by accident, rough behaviour or by misuse of materials or objects
- Committing deliberate serious damage or vandalism
- Preventing behaviour which is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline

Physical intervention would only be used as a last resort after all other attempts to intervene to calm and deescalate the situation have been employed. Strong and positive relationships are at the heart of our school culture and we know our children well. This enables staff to employ alternatives to positive handling in the vast majority of cases.

These alternatives include:

- Ensuring that the number of staff deployed and their level of competence corresponds to the needs and developmental ages and stages of the pupils.
- Ensuring the learning environment is orderly and promotes high expectation of behaviour, and that it supports pupils in remaining emotionally well regulated.
- Helping the pupils to avoid situations which are known to provoke violent or aggressive behaviour (SEN Support plans can capture needs/strategies and mitigate risks)
- Creating opportunities for pupils to engage in meaningful activities which include opportunities for choice and a sense of achievement (in some cases this means a modified curriculum).
- Continuing to develop, support and train staff in working with pupils with challenging behaviours.
- Continuing to consult other professionals and parents about the best methods and strategies for intervention, de-escalation etc. If de-escalation strategies fail, there are two types of intervention, planned and unplanned.
- Planned intervention is when staff employ pre-arranged methods and strategies which they have been trained to carry out and are recorded in the behaviour management plan/SEN support plan.
- Unplanned intervention is used in emergency situations and in response to unforeseen events.

There might be some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equal effective alternatives. Any physical intervention will be for the minimum time, be reasonable, proportionate and necessary and consider the pupil's welfare. At all times safety is our paramount concern. Staff should consider the following guidance when intervening physically

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)

- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance
- For pupils with difficulties with speech, language and communication, or with English as an additional language, verbal and/or non-verbal strategies should be used to ensure the pupil understands what is happening and has adequate time to process information and respond.
- Staff should seek to understand how the pupil is feeling and use this information to determine whether the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive intervention should be, or continue to be, applied, reduced or stopped.

Considerations for SEND

At Abey we seek to foster strong relationships with all pupils by getting to know them and their individual needs. We look to consider how our school culture and environment may be experienced differently by pupils with SEND and seek to support pupils to cope with situations that they may find distressing. We always look to explore the underlying triggers for behaviour to pre-empt and prevent future episodes of behaviour that could lead to positive handling. Behaviour support plans will be compiled in conjunction with parents and where it is determined that there is a greater likelihood of the need for positive handling, a risk assessment will also be completed and mitigate the risks through training and prevention strategies.

Reporting and Recording

As part of the school's duty under section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, following any positive handling incidents, school will complete the following:

- Any restraints will be recorded and reports will be available for scrutiny by parents and relevant authorities upon making an appointment at the office.
- The incident will be reported to parents
- Medical support will be offered where required
- We will hold a follow-up conversation(s) to facilitate reflection, learning and to support pupil and staff wellbeing
- We will evaluate the situation with a view to preventing further situations escalating resulting in the need for positive handling in the future

Complaints

Any complaints regarding the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions should be dealt with in accordance with the school's normal complaints procedure.

Date: **September 2025**

Date of Review: **September 2026**