



Willingdon

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

POSITIVE HANDLING AND PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

2024-2025

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To be reviewed: September 2025

Staff Responsible: Designated Safeguarding Lead

Link Governor: Safeguarding Link Governor

WILLINGDON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

POSITIVE HANDLING AND PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

Section 1: Values and Principles

1.1 Willingdon Community School believes that all students: should have the right to feel safe, secure, and cared for, and should have access to appropriate support, care and education which includes the support to manage their emotions and their behaviour including taking account of, and for their responsibilities.

The use of physical interventions must never be used as a punishment and always be a last resort.

The use of physical interventions should only be considered within the context of risk, be proportionate to that risk and appropriate given the age, understanding, gender and size of the child or young person. If at all possible physical interventions are avoided.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Vision Statement and Ethos of the School as detailed below.

We are Willingdon

We are a united, vibrant community which demonstrates personal excellence in all that we do. Learning at Willingdon transforms lives by igniting curiosity and expecting the very best from staff and students alike. We value opportunities, aiming for success today to prepare for challenges and opportunities tomorrow. We are respectful, honest, and courteous to empower each other on our unique learning journeys. We look after ourselves and each other, and show empathy, respect and compassion to all people and our environment along the way. We encourage tolerance, resilience, and reflection, which in turn allows everyone to make progress every lesson. We work together as a harmonious community to be the very best versions of ourselves.

This makes us Willingdon

Ethos

At Willingdon Community School, we aim to develop, in all our students, key values which we consider contribute to the achievement of what we refer to as, Personal Excellence.

Ambition

To strive to do your best on all occasions. Take on new challenges and challenge yourself to reach the highest possible standards and be personally successful.

Respect

To respect and value all members of our community, recognising and celebrating our differences. Respect ourselves, valuing what we can each bring to our community.

Compassion

Understand the needs of others and support those who sometimes need our help. Contribute to charitable work which supports those less well-off in the world.

Courtesy

Be well mannered in all situations, displaying the basic courtesies that we all value. Greet those you work with regularly; be particularly welcoming and polite to visitors and show appreciation for those who support and work closely with you.

Honesty

Always be honest, even when it may appear difficult. Be honest to yourself - know your strengths and your weaknesses.

Section 2: Defining terms

2.1 This policy applies to all students whose behaviour may place themselves and/or others at risk.

2.2 Restrictive physical interventions may include:

Bodily contact: where the physical presence of one or more people is used to control a child or young person, for example two people holding a person to restrict their mobility.

Environmental change: applying a change within the environment for example, the use of locked doors or keypads to prevent access to or from an area.

Willingdon Community School does not view as acceptable practice within its context **mechanical restriction:** the use of belts, straps or clothing that restricts the freedom of movement, for example the application of arm splints to prevent self-injurious behaviours.

Restrictive physical interventions may be assessed, in very extreme and unusual situations, as appropriate interventions within the Willingdon Community School setting but must always be accompanied by short and long-term behaviour support strategies that will work towards a reduction in the use of physical interventions if used in a planned or proactive manner. *(See section 2.3)*

2.3 Emergency physical intervention is the use of physical intervention in a situation of significant risk that was unforeseeable. Planned physical intervention is the proactive use of physical intervention as part of an overall behaviour support plan aimed at reducing the level of risk presented by behaviour and accompanied by appropriate preventative strategies.

Definitions:

Prosocial - Behaviour held in high regard by an individual, the community or the environment.

- Creates helpful feelings in self or others.
- Behaviour characterised by a concern for the rights, feelings, and welfare of others
- Behaviour which benefits other people or society

Antisocial - Behaviour that hurts or hinders an individual, the community or the environment.

- Creates unhelpful feelings in self and others.
- Behaviour that is likely to cause injury, harassment, alarm, or distress.
- Behaviour that violates the rights of others.

Section 3: Risk assessment

3.1 In order to ensure the health, safety and welfare of children, young people, and staff, it is essential that a risk assessment approach is adopted for all physical interventions. A record of these must be kept, with control measures and responsibilities noted and actioned.

3.2 When assessing risk the following must be considered:

- the environmental context of risk
- personal vulnerability factors affecting individual children and young people
- the probability of emerging risk and the seriousness of potential outcomes
- how preventative and proactive measures may affect the level of risk, and
- the potential outcomes of not intervening.

3.3 All children and young people who have behaviour support plans which include a written planned intervention must have an appropriate written behavioural risk assessment which dovetails with the written behaviour support plan.

3.4 Risk assessment procedures, policy and protocol must also take account of and minimise:

- The risk to students' physical and emotional well-being.
- The inherent risk that the use of physical interventions becomes routine
- The risk of abusive practices
- The risk of injury both physical and emotional to staff/employees

Section 4: Prevention strategies

4.1 Prevention of critical incidents and appropriate support of individual children and young people are paramount. Effective individualised support of children and young people can prevent challenging behaviour and reduce the likelihood of incidents escalating. A graduated response must be adopted.

4.2 Willingdon Community School will ensure that staff:

- identify personal and environmental factors, which impact on individual students
- assess the reasons why students use particular challenging behaviours
- ensure that we develop strategies that help prevent challenging behaviour through effective support, therapeutic input, and professional input
- ensure access to appropriate professional support for students
- monitor and evaluate behaviour and continue to review interventions accordingly.

4.3 Primary prevention will be achieved by:

- holding positive views of students and building on the relationships valued by the child or young person
- developing positive relationships with children and young people based on mutual respect and shared boundaries
- creating an environment in which students and staff feel safe and secure
- ensuring staff have the appropriate skills to effectively support students
- supporting students, as far as is possible, to understand their behaviour and learn alternative ways of expressing themselves or achieving their desired aim through alternative methods.
- encouraging effective and consistent support from the family unit or carers,
- involving, listening, and taking account of the views held by the student in their personal plan.

4.4 Secondary prevention should be used where primary prevention has been ineffective and is achieved by:

- ensuring staff have clear guidance and appropriate skills
- recognising the personal indicators exhibited by individual students when they are having difficulty in managing their emotional state or are reaching crisis
- identifying previously successful diversion and de-escalation strategies, these must be incorporated into the personal behaviour support plan
- identifying emerging risk indicators
- ensuring there is a written record.

4.5 Staff must be mindful of the elevated levels of risk associated with:

- use of clothing or belts to restrict movement
- holding someone on the floor or forcing them to the floor
- any procedure which restricts the airways
- extending or flexing joints,
- pressure on neck, chest, or abdomen.

The level of restraint employed must be the minimum necessary.

Section 5: Emergency physical interventions

5.1 On occasions it may be judged by a member of staff or team that the use of a physical intervention may be appropriate given a level of relative risk in a situation that could be described as unforeseeable. Staff will remain responsible and accountable for their actions or inaction and must still act within current legislation and guidance.

5.2 The use of force may be justified, and staff must remain aware of section 3 of this document. It is the case that in the event a member of staff/employee uses a physical intervention in an emergency the use of force must be justified and lawful. Staff/ employees are to be mindful of criminal and civil law as well as their duty of care. In an emergency the force used, and the actions taken must be reasonable in that there was no alternative course of action that would have achieved a similar outcome.

Section 6: Proactive use of physical intervention

6.1 If physical interventions are used in a planned manner the individual child or young person and/ or their parents and carers should wherever possible be involved in the plan.

6.2 The plan should follow a gradient approach, and it is an expectation that staff should

- ensure there is an appropriate assessment of the target behaviour(s), and the function of the behaviour has been identified as far as is possible
- identify actions which will reduce the anxiety levels which lead to the behaviour being exhibited
- identify the primary prevention strategies and link to a behavioural risk assessment
- clearly inform staff of the secondary preventative strategies or action
- be specific in identifying the target behaviours which are of concern and behavioural indicators
- be specific in terms of long term and short-term behaviour target, and

- identify when it may be necessary to use a physical intervention and if possible, identify which physical intervention technique is assessed as being the most appropriate.
- Review the plan at least every six months.

Section 7: Reporting and recording

7.1 A systematic reporting and recording process, which meets statutory obligations and is approved by East Sussex County Council, should be used. Appendix 1 shows the questions that are used to record an incident of positive handling, and we also have a google form which records responses centrally on the school system. [Positive Handling Google Form](#)

In the event of the use of restrictive physical intervention it will be important to record the following:

- personal information relating to the student
- the context of the incident, time of day, location, environmental issues
- who was present including other students, staff, members of the public or family members
- type of incident and relative risk
- antecedent factors, what happened before the incident
- what alternative actions had been tried to prevent the escalation of the incident
- the reason that physical intervention was used and identify the technique
- what occurred following the incident, de-brief, support and the care of the student, or adult including others present,
- information shared with others including the student and their parents/carers and other professionals.

To be retained in the student file and on MyConcern:

- A description of the behaviour(s) which led up to the use of a physical intervention.
- What alternative strategies had been tried and why they failed to be effective.
- A description of the technique, which was used, the length of time it was used and the outcome.
- Who used the physical intervention.
- Who was present.
- Any injuries that occurred throughout the incident to student/Staff/other people.
- De-brief notes and comments of the student.
- De-brief notes of any witnesses and their comments.
- De-brief notes of the staff members involved and their comments.

Section 8: De-brief

8.1 Following the use of restrictive physical interventions de-brief should be offered to the student, anyone present including other students and the staff involved in holding the student.

8.2 De-brief may be offered in a formal or informal manner. It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that de-brief is offered to people affected by incidents.

Section 9: Training

The Headteacher must identify ongoing training needs for staff to ensure they have the necessary skills to respond to pupils and to make arrangements for such advice training and support to be made available to their staff.

Risk Assessments (including the completion of paperwork) is included in MAPA training. MAPA (Management of Actual or Potential Aggression) Training is available to school staff. The provider we use is www.intelligensa.co.uk

The British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) recommend that the MAPA training is refreshed annually

This policy has been prepared in accordance with East Sussex County Council Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Guidance 2016 and should be read in conjunction with that document,

This policy shall be reviewed annually in September.

Appendix 1 - Physical Intervention Record Sheet – please note we also have this recorded on the:

[Positive Handling Google Form](#)



Willingdon
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

RECORD OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Student Name:

TG:

Date:

Form completed by:

1. Description of the behaviour(s) which led up to the use of physical intervention.
2. What alternative strategies were tried and why they failed to be effective?
3. A description of the technique, which was used, the length of time it was used and the outcome.
4. Who used the physical intervention?

5. Who was present?

6. Any injuries that occurred throughout the incident to child/staff/other people.

7. De-brief notes and comments of the child.

8. De-brief notes of any witnesses and their comments.

9. De-brief notes of the staff members involved and their comments.

Signed :

Appendix 2 - Notes on Positive Handling

The notes should be read in conjunction with our Positive Handling Policy.

The Main aim of Positive Handling is to manage a situation without the need for any physical contact. We need to try to deescalate situations and refrain from making them worse by presenting any type of challenge or confrontation ourselves. Generally speaking, we are very good at this and can talk students down very effectively. Sometimes, however, a situation will have escalated in the absence of any staff in close proximity e.g. on the playground or field. At other times we need to intervene physically to prevent someone hurting themselves or injuring another person.

We need to employ the lowest level of intervention we can. Usually, staff coming over and talking to those involved will defuse a situation. Try to move away those who may be fuelling the situation. Students are more likely to back down if there is not a large audience.

When students are already fighting or are at the point where they are just about to hit someone then we need to intervene and restrain. We need to ensure that we try as far as possible not to injure the student. It is recommended that we hold their arms above the elbow because this way we are less likely to hurt them. We must also avoid compressing their chest or neck. Usually, our instinct will be to hold their arms or possibly bear hug them. We must never bring children down to the ground. We must maintain contact for the shortest time possible.

We need to ensure that we maintain their dignity as far as possible and to try to get them to a private area as soon as possible.

You must always summon support from another adult as quickly as possible. This may mean sending another student to get the next-door teacher. Do not leave students who are fighting and get help yourself. Send a student.

Normally we should not stand in a student's way if they try to leave a classroom. The only time this may be justifiable is if we feel that he or she is intent on attacking someone and then we do need to restrict their path. However, other measures could also be taken such as moving the intended victim and other students to a safe place leaving the aggressor isolated. If a student does decide to walk out of your class you should alert Call out, but you do not need to try to stop them, even if you feel you have lost face. Other students know this will be followed up separately and their learning does not need to be disturbed.

Whenever we find ourselves facing a potentially violent situation, we should risk assess it immediately and decide what the most appropriate and least provocative course of action should be. We must always act in the best interests of the student, which may mean preventing them from carrying out a violent act which will have negative consequences for them.

Provided we have used proportionate and reasonable force we are indemnified by East Sussex County Council. If we do not intervene, we must also be able to justify why we did not decide to do this.

Behaviour Risk Assessments

Where we feel there is a strong risk of a student becoming violent HoY and SLT will undertake a Behaviour Risk Assessment. We need a bespoke plan for anyone we feel is potentially aggressive or who may hurt themselves e.g. by head banging. Note that Physical intervention was a last resort, and the other strategies put in place avoided the need for any further restraint.

Appendix 3

National Guidance and related documents;

Code of Practice for Trainers in the Use of Physical Interventions, BILD (2006) Kidderminster
Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Residential Care (1991)

London: HMSO

Department for Education and Employment (1998) *Circular 10/98 Section 550A of the Education Act 1996: The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils* London: HMSO

Department for Education and Employment, (2001) Letter and accompanying guidance on *Promoting Positive Handling Strategies* from the Head of DfEE Special Educational Needs Division to Chief Education Officers, issued on 24th April 2001

Department for Education and Skills, *Undertaking Risk Assessments on Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties*, LEA/0264/2003, London: HMSO

Department of Health (2001) *A Safer Place: Combating Violence against Social Care Staff, Report of the National Task Force and National Action Plan*, Brighton: Pavilion

Department of Health (1993) *Guide on Permissible Forms of Control in Children's Residential Care*, London: Department of Health

Harris, J. Alan.D. Cornick, M, Jefferson, A. and Mills, R. *Physical Interventions: A Policy Framework* (1996) BILD Publications

Lyon C. Pimor.A, *Physical Interventions and the Law* (2004) BILD, Kidderminster

Mental Health Act (1983) *Code of Practice*, Department of Health and Welsh Office, London: The Stationery Office (1999)

The Education and Inspections Act 2006
Chapter 40

Section 550AA of *The Education Act 1996*
(Inserted into *The Education Act* by s.45 of the *Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006*)

Section 93 of the *Education and Inspections Act* (2006):

This policy should be read in conjunction with;

Suspension Policy

Behaviour for Learning Policy

Section 10: Legal issues and responsibilities

10.1 An employee may have lawful excuse for the use of positive handling if:

- preventing a student causing harm to them self
- preventing a student committing a criminal offence,
- preventing the student causing harm to another person, this may include other staff, adults, volunteers, or members of the public.
- preventing any behaviour which is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school.

10.2 The decision to use positive handling or physical interventions must be taken in the context of the level of risk presented by the behaviour, the seriousness of the incident, and the relative risks of the use of any physical intervention compared with any available alternative.

10.3 The use of any physical intervention must also take account of the characteristics of the student including their age, gender, special educational needs, physical needs or disability, developmental level, or cultural issues.

Physical Contact with Students

10.4 It is not illegal to touch a student. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a student is proper and necessary. Examples include:

- Comforting a distressed student.
- Congratulating or praising a student.
- Demonstrating how to play a musical instrument.
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.
- Administering first aid.
- Using reasonable force or restraint (Appendix D)

Appendix D - Use of Reasonable Force/Restraint

The term reasonable force involves a degree of physical contact with students. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding the student to safety by the arm, through to the 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.

- School staff may have cause to use force to control students and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring the student under control. It is typically used in extreme circumstances, for example, when two students 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.

All incidents of restraint must be recorded on the physical intervention form, recorded on MyConcern, and alerted to a member of the Leadership Team.