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independence together

Positive Handling Policy

Non-Statutory

Reviewed Annually

Signed:  (Chair of the Trust)

Date: September 2025

Review Date: September 2026

1. Introduction

This policy provides a framework for the use of Physical Intervention within the Rivermead Trust and considers information provided in the Education Act 2006 part 7 93 as well as the DFES “Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who Display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders” and the DFE guidance of “Use of Reasonable Force in Schools” DFE-00295-2013.

As a Trust we have 2 trained tutors in the Team Teach method, this training is provided by Team Teach. The tutors are able to deliver in-house training on Team Teach methods to all staff who work with Rivermead Inclusive Trust. The training programme involves: Induction, Communication and Handling training. All staff that satisfactorily complete the full Team Teach training are authorised to use Physical Intervention, staff who complete only the risk reduction and de-escalation course will not be authorized to physically handle any pupil. A list of staff who have received Team Teach training is held centrally by the appropriate provision that they represent. All staff receive refresher training on a rolling programme, in line with Team Teach protocols and new staff are trained as soon as soon as tutors are informed that this is required.

2. The Legal Context

The Education Act 2006 part 7

The section allows teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Head teacher / Head of Provision 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 pupil’s 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.*
- Circular 10/98

3. Power of members of staff to use force.

A person to whom this section applies may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing a pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely:-

- (a) committing any offence,
- (b) causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself), or
- (c) prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency for fear that their actions might be interpreted as punitive. Teachers and other staff who intervene physically to avert danger on the spur of the moment, will be protected in the eyes of the law, provided that the danger was immediate and that they used reasonable and proportionate force. Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.

4. Placing Physical Intervention in Context

Physical Intervention is never seen in isolation, it is used alongside the school's Behaviour and Relationship policies. Physical intervention is one of many strategies available and should always be seen as a last resort when all other strategies have failed. Physical interventions can be placed in 2 broad categories:

- i) **Emergency Interventions** - these involve staff employing, where necessary, one or a combination of the strategies in a response to an incident. This will occur when all other strategies have been exhausted or the incident requires a rapid physical response (for example a child running on to a road).
- ii) **Planned Interventions** - will involve staff employing, where necessary, one or a combination of the strategies as an agreed response to an identified behaviour. This will be documented in a Behaviour Wellbeing Support Plan (BWSP) (Appendix 1) * and will be reviewed 3 times a year (bi-terminly). The BWSP lists accepted strategies to be used as well as strategies that may be used before and during an incident.

* In The Marlborough a Three Tiered system is in place to support those pupils who may require additional support for their behaviour. This means that BWSPs on Tier 1 are reviewed 3 times a year, whilst those on Tier 2 every 6 weeks and those of Tier 3 approximately every 3 weeks.

Once an Emergency Intervention has had to be used, a risk assessment is made of the pupil and a BWSP (Appendix 1) is reviewed highlighting the triggers and behaviours displayed, thus indicating to all staff the best way to handle similar subsequent incidents involving that pupil.

5. The Practice of Positive Handling

Training on Physical Intervention given to staff includes sections on the background, theory and rationale behind the Team Teach approach as well as an understanding of personal space and body language before any Physical techniques are taught.

Within the Rivermead Inclusive Trust we start from a perspective that respects the child's rights before we consider whether incidents of physical restraint or restrictions on children's liberty, if appropriate, comply with the legislative framework, national minimum standards (NMS) or relevant guidance.

We start from the premise that staff should work positively and confidently with children and find the least intrusive way possible to support, empower and keep children safe. The foundation of good practice in working with children should be:

- Building relationships of trust and understanding
- Understanding triggers and finding solutions
- If incidents do occur, defusing the situation and/or distracting the child wherever possible.

95% of positive handling is the use of other strategies including de-escalation, distraction, calm talking, body language, etc. whilst only 5% is actual physical intervention.

Listed below are the accepted Team Teach strategies that staff have been trained to use:

- i) A range of personal safety responses to deal with;
 - Wrist & Hair grabs
 - Neck holds
 - Body Hugs & Bites

- Punches & Kicks
- ii) A range of guides, escorts and restraints ranging from least intrusive to most intrusive;
- Friendly hold
 - Single elbow – this is usually with 2 people, but can on occasion be 1 person
 - Double elbow - this can be with 1 or 2 people.

Please be advised that the Team Teach technique of the T-Wrap is not to be used and was phased out of training after June 2019

Each of the above holds can be used in either standing or walking positions as well as sitting on chairs or on the ground (except double elbow, which **cannot** be used in a seated position due to the risk of asphyxiation).

These provide a graded and gradual response aimed at intervening with the appropriate amount of reasonable force. Restraint is most effective when 2 or more members of staff are involved. Not only can they both support the facts, if challenged later, but also assistance can ensure that the process does not degenerate into a struggle in which a member of staff is seen grappling for control. Far less danger exists for both staff and pupils when the forces for control are overwhelming but not excessive. It is safer to involve at least two members of staff in a situation. We recommend staff are not left on their own with a pupil.

As soon as it is safe, restraint should be gradually relaxed as pupil regains self- control.

Staff should remain calm throughout and should attempt to speak reassuringly to the pupil and explain that the restraint is an act of care and control and not punishment.

Physical restraint **must not** be used purely to force compliance with a staff instruction when there is no immediate risk to people or property.

Placing pupils in a locked room **must not** take place. “Time Out” should never involve any restrictions to the pupil’s liberty. Pupils’ should be removed to an area that is overlooked and has open access, they must never be left unsupervised.

If a pupil demonstrates the intention of leaving the school site, staff must first try verbal persuasion to encourage the pupil to make the right choice. Staff should be aware that pursuit of a pupil can provoke flight and potential danger.

Restraint, when possible, should be used to keep the pupil in safety on site. If a pupil habitually absconds, consideration should be given as to whether they are appropriately placed. Parents of absconding pupils and the police should be informed as a matter of course. These incidents always require completion of a serious incident form record on IRIS

Any special arrangements for certain pupils, such as the use of a mat to shield staff from blows, should be made in conjunction with Team Teach tutors and the Head of school and written into that pupil's behaviour support plan.

6. Reporting and Monitoring of Incidents

6.1 Hoo St Werburgh Primary School and The Marlborough

Reporting and monitoring is of paramount importance as it provides protection for staff and pupils and helps in keeping a record of the number of incidents/times they occur/ pupils involved/triggers to certain behaviours thus making tracking of incidents easier & measurable. When an incident has de-escalated and both the staff and pupil are calm, a debrief (if pupil is willing) needs to take place between them and the child's view of the incident should be discussed and recorded if appropriate. A discussion (if appropriate) should also take place at this time about strategies the pupil should use in the future.

As soon as is reasonably possible after an incident, staff need to fill out an IRIS form. This must be done within 24 hours of the incident. If physical intervention has been required this should be clearly indicated on the IRIS entry.

IRIS forms will automatically be saved and alert Team Teach Trainer that forms require checking. Team Teach tutors read all forms for The Marlborough and Hoo St Werburgh, agree actions detailed and follow up any issues. All other provision are responsible for monitoring their own forms and acting upon any issues identified. If a child has been involved in a serious incident the parents will be notified as soon as is feasibly possible on the same day. This may be once the child has left the school site and staff are able to contact parents. Notes of this conversation will be recorded on a Parent Contact Form (PCF) which will be completed on IRIS and SLT informed.

If any injuries are sustained, by either staff or pupils, during a positive handling incident a medical form should be completed on IRIS and this indicated on the incident form.

6.2 Other Schools in the Trust

Rivermead, Triple R, Academy of Woodlands, Luton and Walderslade will record incidents on IRIS.

SLT needs to regularly monitor incidents and discuss future strategies in co-ordination with Team Teach tutors.

7. Criteria for “Serious Incident”

A serious incident is one where a child’s behaviour is over and above those usually accepted within a school environment and where physical intervention may have been used. However, physical intervention may not always be required due to the use of the other 95% interventions. On these occasions staff would still be required to complete a form in order to keep a record of the child’s behaviour.

8. Links to other policies

This policy should be read alongside and in conjunction with other policies regarding the safety and welfare of children and these together make up the suite of policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- **Behaviour:** our policy clearly outlines school procedures that are followed when managing a pupil’s behaviours in the school environment or when on school trips/residentials. That policy states that levels of behaviours tolerated within the school and the appropriate rewards and consequences used as a result of certain actions. Staff may only use physical intervention as a last resort. We understand that physical intervention of a nature that causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.
- **Touch:** our policy clearly outlines that staff can have physical contact with pupils but it explains where on the body they may have contact and why. This policy also mentions use of positive handling.
- **Anti-bullying:** our policy on the prevention of management of bullying is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.
- **Racist incidents:** our policy on racist incidents is set out in a separate anti-racism or equal opportunities policy and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents, or a single serious incident, may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

- **Health and safety:** our health and safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically, within the school environment, for example in relation to internet use; and when away from the school for example when undertaking school trips and visits.
- **Child Protection and Procedures:** our child protection and procedures policy emphasises our commitment to the Prevention of Harm as well as Health and Safety. Staff are trained in positive handling in order to help keep children safe.

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