



Hazelwood Schools

Positive Handling Policy

Reviewed and Adopted: March 2025

Reviewed by: SLT/LTS committee

Next Review: Spring Term 2028

Review every three years

These Guidelines are intended to conform with Section 550A of the Education Act 1996, Article 5 of the Human Rights Act 1998, the Children Act, DfE Circular 10/98 and the 2002 Guidance on Physical Intervention.

At Hazelwood Schools, the safety and well-being of our children and staff are paramount. It is recognised that on occasions, and as a last resort, situations may arise where in order to ensure the welfare and protection of children or adults, it may be necessary for staff to use a physical intervention. We seek to protect all children from any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or unlawful. Our Positive Handling Policy is designed to provide clear guidelines on the use of physical intervention, ensuring that it is only employed as a last resort and in accordance with legal frameworks.

Aims of the Policy

We aim to provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children as per the vision and values of the school described below. This policy is in line with our vision and values and supports us to achieve a culture where our 12 values are at the heart of all we do.

Our Vision and Values

At Hazelwood, we believe in nurturing responsible citizens to achieve educational excellence by inspiring awe and wonder through a real, relevant, immersive and purposeful curriculum.

Respect, Kindness, Resilience, Responsibility, Courage, Appreciation & Understanding, Ambition, Creativity, Teamwork, Trust, Honesty, Fairness

Our shared values are at the heart of all we do.

Believe and Achieve

We believe that good professional relationships between all staff and children are vital to ensure good order in school. We recognise that the majority of children respond positively to our Good to be Green behaviour management system. We also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances that staff may need to take action in situations where the use of positive handling may be required and it is important to be clear about what this may look like and when this may be necessary.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff at Hazelwood Schools:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where positive handling is necessary and
- are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur.

The application of any form of positive handling places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for positive handling.

Positive handling should only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed (please refer to separate Positive Behaviour Policy) or when children, staff or property are at risk.

What the Law says

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use such force as is necessary in the circumstances to prevent a child from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing any offence (or, for a child under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older child)
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the child him/herself); or
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any child receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. That will always depend on the precise circumstances of individual cases. To be judged lawful, the force used must be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Use of force could not be justified to prevent trivial misbehaviour. Those exercising the power to use force must also take proper account of any particular special educational need and/or disability that a child might have.

Types of Incidents

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a child. These will fall into 3 broad categories:

- **Imminent Risk of Injury:** Situations where immediate action is necessary to prevent harm.
- **Developing Risk of Injury or Damage:** Instances where a child's actions could lead to injury or significant property damage.
- **Disruption of Order:** Situations where a child's behaviour significantly disrupts the learning environment.

Examples of situations that fall within the first two categories are:

- A child attacks a member of staff, or another child.
- Children are fighting.
- A child is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property.
- A child is causing or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- A child is running anywhere on the school premises in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him/herself or others.
- A child absconds from a class or tries to leave school; this applies if it is felt that the child will be at risk if not kept in the classroom or school – in most circumstances, it is best to allow the child to leave, the school site is fully secured and gated.

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- A child persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom.
- A child is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson or any other supervised activity during the school day e.g. at playtime or in the dining hall.

It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment. This is because it would fall within the definition of corporal punishment, abolished by section 548 of the Education Act 1996.

Preventative Strategies

This school actively promotes positive behaviour management strategies, thus reducing the need for the use of any form of physical intervention, except in an emergency situation and in exceptional circumstances. See our Positive Behaviour Policy.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is a strategy to prevent the risk of an incident escalating unnecessarily. In order for staff to plan accordingly, risk assessments will be considered only for those children who constitute a risk.

Risk assessment will be considered from two perspectives:

- **Environmental risk assessment** - what can be done in the class or playground environment to stop a particular child from feeling they have no option but to resort to violent outbursts?
- **Individual risk assessment** - are there particular activities, times of the day or areas that trigger aggression in a particular individual, and what controls can be put in place to combat this?

Positive Handling Approach

Definition: Positive handling is the positive application of force to protect a child from harming themselves or others.

Guidelines for Use:

- Only used as a last resort.
- Minimum force necessary should be applied.
- Staff should remain calm and composed during interventions.
- Document and report any incidents of physical intervention.

Ensuring Security and Emotional Stability of the child

- **Prioritise Safety:** Always focus on the child's security and emotional stability.
- **Calm Response:** Handle incidents with calmness and concern, maintaining control as an adult.
- **Avoid Anger:** Never respond with anger or frustration.
- **Adult Presence:** Whenever possible, have more than one adult present during physical intervention. If not, monitor the situation from a distance to ensure safety.
- **Use Minimal Force:** Apply the least amount of strength for the shortest time necessary to achieve the goal.
- **Encourage Self-Control:** Continuously offer the child chances to regain self-control and stop physical intervention as soon as possible.
- **Remove from Observation:** Quickly remove the child from the area to calm down, which helps prevent stubbornness.
- **Document the Incident:** Record the incident and share it with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and relevant staff

Action Steps for Serious Incidents

When dealing with a serious incident that may involve physical intervention, the following action steps should be applied where possible:

1. **Verbal Warning:** Clearly communicate to the pupil the need to stop their behaviour and possible consequences.
2. **Summon Assistance:** Call for another adult to support the situation.
3. **Maintain Communication:** Keep the pupil informed throughout the incident.
4. **Remove Intervention Promptly:** End the physical intervention as soon as it is no longer necessary.

Training - Do we have trained members of staff?

Some members of staff have had training in different positive handling approaches and de-escalation techniques. These staff should become directly involved, where possible, in the planned safe handling of children. Refresher training for the named members of staff also takes place, usually every two years to ensure that they are up to date with current procedures and legislation. These staff will discuss the procedures and legislation regularly to ensure that they are able to recall key strategies for positive handling. However, all staff have the duty of care to intervene using reasonable force when danger or harm is imminent.

Complaints

We all have a duty of care to the children in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving parents/carers when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by all the staff, should help to avoid complaints from parents/carers. It will not prevent all complaints however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation.

Staff subjected to physical violence or assault, have the right to be supported in making a formal complaint to the police and, if necessary, taking private action against the assailant. It is our intention to inform all staff, children, parents/carers and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply. Remember that adhering to the principles and procedures referred to in this policy is part of effective practice and should minimise risk to children in our care and enhance our own self-protection.

This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other policies and LA guidance, including:

- Safeguarding Children and Children Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Appendix 1



Hazelwood Schools
Use of Physical Intervention to Support a child: Recording Sheet



Name of child:						
Date:		Time:		Location:		
Staff involved:						
Any other witnesses:						
Description of events leading up to intervention:						
Setting/Activity etc:						
Any known Triggers:						
Any positive intervention/de-escalation techniques used?						
Form of restraint (describe how you physically intervened):						
Any injuries to staff or child?						
Parents Informed						
Further actions						
Reported complied by:				SLT action completed by:		
Name of role:				Name and role:		
Date:				Date:		