Green Shoots Partnership

Respect Reflection Responsibility Resilience

Policy for Positive Handling and Physical Intervention

Our Vision

Green Shoots Partnership is a nurturing federation with a strong sense of pride and belonging, with the belief that all have the potential to thrive.

Our Purpose

We exist to cultivate a love of learning by broadening horizons and opening minds to new possibilities. Through our Partnership Values, we grow confident individuals who aspire to shape the future.

Meadowside Primary School

Great Doddington Primary School

At Green Shoots Partnership we take professional responsibility seriously, this applies to:

- reinforcing and promoting a working environment free from discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying.
- a clear commitment to treat all information acquired through employment, both formally and informally, in strict confidence.
- to be aware of the school's responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1984 for the security, accuracy and relevance of personal data held on such systems and ensure that all processes comply with this.

Rationale

Green Shoots Partnership is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for students' safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour, and use physical intervention only as a last resort. If used at all it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the student, and be reasonable and proportional to the circumstances of the incident. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to students and staff.

It is recognised in both statute and Common Law that there is a need to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to students, staff, and property.

This policy is based on The Department for Education guidance Use of Reasonable Force Advice for Head Teachers, staff and Governing Bodies.

Objectives

The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Maintain the safety of students, staff and visitors
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent serious breaches of the federation's discipline

Deciding if the use of restrictive physical intervention is appropriate

The term Restrictive Physical Intervention describes the use of force to control a person's behaviour.
It involves the use of force to:

- Restrict movement
- Restrict mobility
- Disengage from dangerous or harmful physical contact

Staff will view physical intervention of students as a last resort every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent the need for restrictive physical intervention.

The decision to use physical intervention will based on a variety of criteria including

- Following the guidance issued by the Department of Education
- Following school policy on physical intervention
- Implementation of a Positive Handling Plan
- Recording of all incidents in the Bound and Numbered book
- Staff training
- Professional Judgement

In the following situations staff must judge whether or not physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate to control the following behaviours

- self-harming;
- injury to other children, service-users, staff or teachers;
- damage to property;
- an offence being committed;
- any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school or among any of its pupils.

Any member of staff who undertakes a restrictive physical intervention should be clear as to why it is necessary and be able to show that it was in the student's best interest and that it was reasonable and proportionate. For those students assessed as being at risk of restrictive physical intervention Positive Handling Plans will be developed. These plans outline what techniques should be used and not used along with de-escalation strategies. Green Shoots Partnership is aware that it has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs.

The judgement on whether to use physical intervention and what physical intervention should be used should always depend on the circumstances of each case and in the case of students with Special Educational Needs information about the individual concerned.

Staff need to make the clearest possible judgements about:

a. The seriousness of the incident, assessed by the effect of the injury, damage or disorder which is likely to result if force is not used. The greater the potential for injury, damage or serious disorder, the more likely it is that using force may be justified.
b. The chances of achieving the desired result by other means. The lower the probability of achieving the desired result by other means, the more likely it is that using force may be justified.
c. The relative risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies. The smaller the risks associated with physical

intervention compared with other strategies, the more likely it is that using force may be justified.

Using physical interventions

Before using restrictive physical intervention staff should be aware of the de-escalation techniques and supporting strategies and interventions outlined in the Positive Handling Plan. Staff will communicate in a calm and measured manner throughout the incident. Wherever practicable a student should be warned that physical intervention may have to be used before applying it. Staff should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

The types of physical intervention could include:

a. Passive physical contact resulting from standing between students or blocking a student's path.
b. Active physical contact such as:
    i) Leading a student by the hand or arm;
    ii) Ushering a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back;
    iii) In more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive interventions, which require specific expertise and training.

The restrictive physical interventions authorised by the federation are those techniques in which staff have received appropriate training and development through 'Team Teach'. Green Shoots Partnership keeps an up to date record of staff trained in positive handling. **Staff will re-new their training every 3 years in line with legislation.**

Team-Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the student, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the student remains safe.

The core principles of 'Team Teach' include:

- Minimum of two staff involved.
- Last resort minimum force and time.
- Techniques that do not rely on pain or locks and allow for verbal communication.
- Staff safety and protection addressed.
- Planned responses and techniques are written out and included in positive handling plans for individual students.

Where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury, any member of staff is justified in taking any necessary action (consistent with the principle of seeking to use the minimum intervention required to achieve the desired result.)

Alternatives to physical intervention

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk by implementing the federations relationships and regulation policy. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions to the students to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable students to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects that could be used as weapons.
- Use 'positive touch'[1] to guide or escort students to somewhere less pressurised.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

Reducing the likelihood of situations arising where physical intervention may be required

All physical interventions at the federation are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The federation's relationships and regulation policy rewards effort and application, and encourages students to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The policy also outlines the steps the federation undertakes to ensure a calm, orderly and supportive climate that minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind, thereby reducing the need for physical intervention.

A structured approach to staff development is adopted through the 'Team Teach' programme, which allows staff to develop the skills of positive behaviour management and de-escalating incidents.

Staff should recognise the need to effectively manage individual incidents. It is important to communicate calmly with the student, using non-threatening verbal and body language and ensuring that the student can see a way out of the situation.

Authorisation of staff to use physical intervention and staff development

As stated in the 2012 guidance use of reasonable force "All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force". However, it will only be used when the criteria outlined in this policy has been satisfied and it was in the student's best interest. Furthermore, staff are clear why it is necessary and it is reasonable and proportionate.

---

[1] *'Positive touch' is a 'Team Teach' technique where the student is guided by touching the arm above the elbow. Please refer to the Team Teach training manual for specific guidance on the technique.*

Some staff are trained in specific physical interventions and de-escalation strategies through the 'Team Teach' approach. This list is kept with the federation's business manager.

Positive Handling Plans

Individual students assessed at being at greatest risk of requiring restrictive physical intervention are placed on Positive Handling Plans developed in consultation with the federation, Parents/ Carers, and the student. They should include

- risks assessments where necessary and alert people to risks
- warn against strategies which have been ineffective in the past
- preferred strategies and suggest ideas for the future
- bring together contributions from key partners working in partnership and signed by all concerned
- reviewed regularly

Positive Handling Plans set out the situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and the de-escalation strategies that are most effective. Specific strategies and techniques that have been agreed by staff when physical intervention is required are also included. They will also warn against strategies which have been ineffective in the past and include preferred strategies and suggest ideas for the future. The process of developing positive handling plans will bring together contributions from all parties (Inclusion Team, SLT, parents/carers) working in partnership and signed by all concerned. These plans are reviewed regularly.

Recording and reporting incidents

Any individual pupil records are kept by the federation for a period of 25 years after the date of birth of the child or are passed to the next school and a receipt obtained. This retention period is the minimum period that any pupil file is kept.

The federation keeps a record of all physical interventions in the Bound and numbered book. The incident book is located in the Head of School's office.

In addition to the above, the federation keeps records / copies of incidents of restraint, for a minimum period of 25 years from the date of the incident and at least until the member of staff involved has reached normal retirement age if that is longer.

The purpose of recording is to ensure that policy guidelines are followed, to inform parents/ carers, to inform future planning as part of the federation's improvement process, to prevent misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the incident and to provide a record for any future enquiry.

Accounts of the incident should be taken from the member of staff who undertook the physical intervention, the student/s involved and any third party witnesses.

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as practicable when a significant incident requiring restrictive physical intervention has occurred. Parents/carers will be telephoned before details are confirmed in writing. Parents/carers will be informed of when and where the incident took place, which members of staff were directly involved (anonymised where necessary), why they decided physical intervention had to be used, what physical intervention was used, whether there were any injuries and what follow up action was being taken in relation to their child. Parents/carers will also be given a copy of the Policy.

The welfare of students is paramount and if for any reason the federation believe a student could come to harm as a consequence of a parent being notified a judgement will be made by the Executive Head Teacher and/or Head of School to notify the Local Authority.

Records will be

- completed after everyone has recovered
- the supportive strategies and intervention used for de-escalation
- state briefly exactly what happened
- signed and dated
- monitored and evaluated
- inform positive handling plans

Governors will be informed of the number of physical interventions on an annual basis.

Search for Weapons & Prohibited Items

Reasonable force may also be used in exercising the statutory power, introduced under section 45 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (and re-enacted by Section 242 of the ASCL Act 2009), to search pupils without their consent for weapons.
Head teachers and authorised staff can use force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following prohibited items
knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images, any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.
Reasonable force may be used by the searcher. Where resistance is expected school staff may judge it more appropriate to call the police or if they have one, their Safer School Partnership (SSP) Officer. See Green Shoots Searching, Screening and Confiscating Policy.

Post-incident support

The federation recognises the need to ensure that staff and students have appropriate emotional support.

The student and the member of staff will be checked for any sign of injury after an incident. Immediate action will be taken to provide first aid for any injuries requiring attention.

The student will be given time to become calm whilst staff continue to supervise. When it is deemed that the student is composed, a senior member of staff will discuss the incident with the student and ascertain the reason for its occurrence. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish a positive relationship between the student and the member of staff involved in the incident.

All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff (or his/her nominee) will provide support to the member of staff involved.

Parents/carers will be engaged in discussing the incident and for setting out subsequent actions and support.

Complaint procedure

If a parent/carer or student is concerned about any aspect of the management of an incident requiring physical intervention, the Head of School should be informed of their concern. The Head of School will respond to the complaint in accordance with the federation's policy and procedure.

Written: September 2025
Reviewed by: September 2026