



Osborne
Co-operative Academy Trust



Positive Handling Policy

Last reviewed: April 2025

Next review date: April 2027

Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust is a multi-academy trust (MAT) incorporated around the principles and values of the international co-operative movement. These are Equality, Equity, Democracy, Self-help, Self-Responsibility and Solidarity, along with the ethical values of openness, honesty, social responsibility and caring for others. These values and principles underpin all our actions.

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1. Introduction

Staff at Arthur Bugler Primary School are trained to look after pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically, which will be the last resort, they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy.

Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, we would expect accredited staff to take over as soon as possible.

The school takes its duty of care and its legal obligations to observe the health, safety and welfare of all staff pupils and visitors at the school seriously and places a particular consideration on safeguarding the health and welfare of the pupils at the school.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables a school's staff to use such force as is reasonable. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. This policy now includes examples relevant to primary settings, such as preventing injury to themselves, others or school property or stopping unsafe absconding.

Documentation that supports this policy is detailed at the end of the policy.

2. Before using physical controls staff will:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop
- Implement de-escalation strategies
- Use emotional coaching
- Remind pupils about rules and likely outcomes
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safe place
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons
- Use positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

All staff have been trained on the US Approach (Understanding behaviour and Supporting emotional wellbeing) which is based around trauma perspective practice. Staff will implement this approach to support the child to regulate. Training is reviewed regularly for staff. Children are also taught elements of this approach and should be guided through implementation of strategies by supporting adults.

3. Implementing physical handling

The school act *in loco parentis* while the child is on site. This means that adults working alongside children are required by law to demonstrate a 'duty of care'. This places upon members of staff a responsibility to intervene, either by implementing a physical intervention or by informing an individual who has been designated the responsibility of intervening.

Members of staff have a responsibility to intervene (not necessarily physically intervene) when:

1. A child is prejudicing the good order and discipline of the school environment
2. A child is about to, or in the process of, causing significant damage to property which could in turn cause harm
3. A child is at significant risk of causing injury to themselves or others

It is unlikely that physical handling would be necessary in the case outlined in point 1 as alternative means of managing this behaviour can often be planned for in advance.

In situations that mirror the elements of points two and three, the decision to use physical handling should be made as a last resort. **Staff will be able to refer to the decisions flow chart (appendix f) to help them with making this decision.** When physical handling is used those involved in its implementation should use skill, good judgement and should be aware of methods of control that are approved. Adults who work alongside pupils which regularly display challenging behaviour will ideally have been trained in physical handling techniques by a company that are accredited by the British Institute of Learning Difficulties

(BILD). Records of those adults who are trained, the nature of their training, date of their accreditation and date of re-certification are held on file by the school.

4. Restraint

At this school we only use physical restraint when there is no other realistic alternative. We expect staff to risk assess and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to experiment and think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it **reduces rather than increases** risk. Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming his/her self or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property.
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing this.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint. These staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Physical restraint should not usually be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property.
- The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity.

In addition, whilst or before intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. I am doing this to keep you safe.

5. Post Incident Debrief

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of the school to offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other peoples' perspective. Debriefs are conducted by SLT within one school day, and a pupil debrief form is completed to capture their voice.

It is difficult to devise a framework of support that meets the need of all staff. As individuals we all vary in how much support we need after an incident. Generally a member of senior staff would expect to talk to staff and children involved (if appropriate) in any incidents where positive handling has been required. If members of staff need time to rest or compose themselves, then a member of SLT will make arrangements for the class group to be supported.

6. Recording

School keeps a record of all incidents where physical intervention involving the use of force against resistance from a child has been necessary. The record should be completed by **the end of the working day** on which the Incident took place. The Head Teacher will be told at the earliest possible time after an incident.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team or the learning mentor will discuss the incident with any children or staff who were present using the Positive Handling Incident forms and, where appropriate, collect a written account from them.

School will regularly review the number and type of incidents in which physical intervention and/or restraint has been necessary. This will be used to ensure that there is adherence to this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the school. The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The Head Teacher will also report to the Local Governing Body (LGB)

7. Parents

Parents will be informed following any physical intervention involving their child, as soon as possible.

When there is concern about a child, parents will be invited to contribute to a risk assessment and written parental agreement will form part of this.

8. Responding to unforeseen emergencies

Even the best planning system cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. An unforeseen event may require an emergency response. After that event, staff have a duty to plan ahead and prepare a risk assessment.

9. Risk Assessment

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have a Positive Handling Risk Assessment completed. Risk assessments are reviewed termly or following a significant incident, and must be updated in consultation with the SENCO and key staff.

Risk assessments are required for pupils who exhibit **extreme** behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. When the risk assessment indicate the likely need for school staff to use positive handling techniques to prevent an injury, the school should record this in a Positive Handling Plan.

10. Complaints and Allegations

Any complaints will follow the school's complaints procedure.

Appendices A - Advice for staff

At Arthur Bugler Primary School, we believe that physical intervention and/or restraint should be the last resort. In the majority of cases de-escalation and diffusion are the appropriate methods of dealing with situations that might result in a threat to the health and safety of any individuals.

On extremely rare occasions it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically with or between pupils. These include:

- Injury, or risk of injury, to themselves or another pupil
- Injury, or risk of injury, to a member of staff
- Serious damage to property

Any intervention should be a last resort and be **proportionate, reasonable and appropriate**, and be done with the aim to **reduce** not **provoke**.

All staff owe a **duty of care** to pupils. To take no action, where the outcome is that a pupil injures him/herself, or another, including staff, could be seen as negligence.

Members of staff facing confrontational situations with pupils are reminded that the following behaviours can either reduce or inflame incidents, and that a brief moment of risk assessment may allow the time to decide on the appropriate action necessary.

Staff are strongly advised not to physically stop pupils from leaving their room. They should give a clear choice and spell out consequences, but unless there is a risk of injury should never block a pupil's exit.

Remaining calm – the ability to try and remain calm and appear relaxed is less likely to provoke. A relaxed posture and a non-threatening (CALM) stance, i.e. not toe-to-toe, are recommended.

Awareness of Space – try to be aware of the space around you and avoid stepping into another individual's personal/intimate space. Try to take a step back outside the circle of danger.

Pacing and Chasing – angry people often pace around in tense situations and staff should try to avoid the temptation to follow as they attempt to help them calm down. This can be counter-productive as it may trigger an animal chase response and drive the other person away. Where possible it is preferable for the staff member to stand still, speaking calmly, clearly and confidently – or even sit down.

Intonation - when people are anxious or angry they tend to talk faster, higher and more loudly. In a potential crisis situation staff need to deliberately speak slower, lower and more quietly

Read the situation – in some circumstances talking may cause the situation to escalate, in this case talking would not be appropriate.

Help Script and Emotion Coaching

- Connect by using pupil's name
- Recognise the feelings
- Tell the pupil you're there to help
- You talk and I will listen
- Give direction

Diffusing body language responses

- Social distance
- Sideways stance, step back
- Intermittent eye contact
- Relaxed body posture
- Palms open

Calm Stance

Think of the values of stepping back from a situation, both physically and emotionally:

- Allows a more considered response
- Time to make a 'dynamic' risk assessment and seek assistance
- Allows other person 'take up' time to make their own choices

Application of Force ([DfE advice to schools](#))

Staff should NOT act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. This includes:

- Slapping, punching, kicking or tripping a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against joints
- Indecently touching, holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- Other than in circumstances that are exceptional, using reasonable force to hold a pupil face down on the ground

In the event of a serious incident e.g. a fight, staff should:

- Make their presence felt – “stop fighting, stop fighting”
- Send for assistance
- Spell out sanctions
- Remove the 'fuel' by clearing the 'audience' away
- Be a witness
- Intervene physically if confident and having assessed the degree of risk
But should not ignore or walk away.

SOME NON- PHYSICAL CRISES INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES

Do	Don't
appear calm and relaxed	appear afraid and unsure of yourself; appear bossy, arrogant; assume an "I don't give a damn about you" attitude
keep the pitch and volume of your voice down.	raise your voice
feel comfortable with the fact that you are in control (if you control yourself, you control the situation); project a calm assured feeling that you will see the situation through to peaceful end no matter what happens	appear to expect an attack (or you will have one)
talk <u>with</u> the pupil and assess the situation	give commands; make demands
be very matter of fact if the pupil becomes agitated; be sensitive and flexible; be flexible yet consistent; be aware of body language; monitor breathing (chest movements) which can telegraph aggressive responses	make threats (Especially any that you are not absolutely sure that you can carry through!); maintain continuous eye contact; gesticulate (this may provoke confrontation)
stay close to the pupil and attend to him/her	turn your back or leave; invade the pupil's personal space
be patient; if a pupil is agitation increases to the verge of attack: * Acknowledge his/her 'feelings'; * Continue with a matter of fact attitude; * Always leave the pupil an avenue of escape	display emotion; argue; corner the pupil physically or psychologically
where possible, remain seated as long as the pupil does; avoid crowding	get up and move towards the pupil
stay near him/her, about one arm's length away; stand to one side; give the pupil more space if appropriate	give up
seek to relax your muscles and keep them under control.	tense your muscles

ü Behaviours that occurred:		
Verbal abuse	Slapping	Punching
Biting	Pinching	Spitting
Kicking	Hair grab	Neck grab
Clothing grab	Body holds	Arm grab
Weapons/missiles	Head butting	Self-mutilation
Pushing	Disruption	Damage to property
Who was at risk?		
Describe any changes made to routines, staff or environment in an attempt to reduce the risk:		
✓ Diversions, distractions & de-escalation strategies attempted:		
Verbal advice	Limited choice	
Clear directions	Distraction	
Negations	Planned ignoring	
Take-up time	Consequences	
Time out	Humour	
Change of staff	Success reminders	
✓ Physical interventions used & duration of restraint:		
Why was this action in the best interest of the pupil?		

What authority/powers were you acting under or in accordance with?	
Was the action necessary? Was the threat or threat of harm imminent?	
Were the actions proportionate? Did you have any other non-use of force options available?	
Outcome of physical handling	
Description of any injury sustained and any subsequent treatment:	
Date/time parent/carer informed of incident: By whom informed: Outline of parent/carer response:	
Signatures of staff completing report:	
Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action:	

Appendices C:

Pupil Record of Positive Handling Incident

Date of incident:	
Name:	
Member(s) of staff involved:	
Describe what happened before the incident:	
What instructions were you given by the member of staff?	
Did you follow this instruction?	YES / NO
If you didn't follow the instruction, what did you do?	

What happened next?

What could you have done to stop the incident occurring?

Signed _____

Class _____

Appendices D: Risk Assessment- Physical Intervention and Positive Handling

Risk assessment completed by:	
Name of child:	
Child's Date of Birth:	Class:
Ethnicity:	Gender:

Identification of Risk	
Describe the foreseeable risks:	
<p>Is the risk: potential occurring</p>	
Assessment of risk	
In which situations does the risk usually occur?	
How likely is it that the risk will occur? (unlikely, possible, probable, likely)	
If the risk arises, who is likely to be injured or hurt?	

What kinds of injuries or harm are likely to occur?

How serious are the adverse outcomes? (severe, substantial, minor, minimal)

Risk Reduction Options

What actions are being taken to minimise the level of risk?

(Consider changes to environment, awareness of triggers, de-escalation strategies, varying staff deployment, varying teaching group/size, access to quiet area)

Any immediate actions to be taken, by whom and by when?

Signed:

Role:

Date:	Copy to:

Assessors name:	Date of Assessment:	Head Teacher:
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Hazards	Who may be harmed & How	Existing Controls	Risk Rating	Further Controls	Residual Risk	Actions by whom & when	Implemented Y/N

Review date:	Date communicated to staff:
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If a new activity/equipment/any changes have been identified then Risk Assessment must be reviewed otherwise it should be reviewed annually.

Risk Matrix

The matrix below is designed to help you in identifying a risk level for a given task or activity. Using your experience, the available evidence and existing precautions/ control measures in place you will have already determined the consequence of harm, and the likelihood of the harm being realised. The level of risk for the respective task or activity can now be determined using the following matrix.

CONSEQUENCE	Catastrophic	5	5	10	15	20	25	17-25 Unacceptable Stop activity and make immediate improvements
	Major	4	4	8	12	16	20	10-16 Tolerable Look to improve within specified timescale
	Moderate	3	3	6	9	12	15	5-9 Adequate Look to improve at next review
	Minor	2	2	4	6	8	10	1-4 Acceptable No further action, but ensure controls are maintained
	Insignificant	1	1	2	3	4	5	
			1	2	3	4	5	
			Very unlikely	Unlikely	Fairly likely	Likely	Very likely	
			LIKELIHOOD					

Appendices E: Important questions/points to consider when writing a positive handling post incident report

- Reason for taking action
- What authority/powers are you acting under or in accordance with?
- Is the action you are taking necessary?
- Is the threat or threat of harm imminent?
- Are your actions proportionate?
- Do you have other non-use of force options available?
- What action will you take after the event?

Example

On the 7th January 2022 at 2.15pm I was sitting on the carpeted area in class 4b with Tommy.

I provided one to one support for Tommy in accordance with a plan drawn up to meet his circumstances and needs.

I was around 15minutes into the activity that Tommy seemed to experience a negative stimulus and trigger he then started to express himself in a verbally aggressive way

I gave Tommy the appropriate space to allow him to self-regulate but was also close by to provide extra help and comfort and support to him should he need it. I also used refocus techniques with limited success.

It is then Tommy very quickly crawled under a table that was placed against a concrete wall. This table had several heavy items place upon it including a computer and book.

Tommy after a couple of minutes of being under the table started to bang the back of his head very hard against the concrete wall.

Because I have both a legal and moral duty of care for Tommy, I have to do something to stop what he was doing.

Therefore, I exercised my common law power and statutory powers afforded to me under section 93 of the education and inspections act, both laws allow for a physical intervention to be made to prevent a person coming to harm.

I leant into the space under the table and pushed Tommy's back with both hands, so he came out from under the table.

I honestly believed the action I took was necessary and proportionate behaviour there was an imminent threat to Tommy's safety and possibly his life, because of Tommy's aggressive actions and the harm he was causing himself I felt I had no other option but to use physical intervention because it would have waited, I honestly believe Tommy would have come to more harm.

Ordinarily I would not undertake physical intervention without having appropriate assistance available, however due to the dynamic nature of the incident the situation required immediate positive action to prevent a greater ham.

After the incident I ensured Tommy was checked over by a staff member who is a paediatric first aider.

A new risk assessment will be carried out to reflect the new information available regarding Tommy's behaviour.

Appendix F: Staff Decision-Making Flowchart

1. Observe unsafe/disruptive behaviour?



2. Use de-escalation and US Approach strategies

- Emotional coaching
- Verbal redirection
- Reduce stimulation



3. Did the pupil respond?

YES → Monitor and support recovery

NO → Continue to Step 4



4. Is there immediate danger to pupil, others, or property?

YES → Call for help

→ Use reasonable, proportionate physical intervention

→ Ensure safety of all involved

NO → Use non-physical responses (Time out, support)



5. After incident:

- Inform SLT
- Complete Positive Handling Forms
- Debrief with pupil and staff
- Inform parents (within 24 hrs)



6. Review:

- Update Risk Assessment if needed
- Log and monitor via SLT

Appendix G: Glossary of Key Terms

Positive Handling: A planned and considered approach to physical intervention that prioritises the safety, dignity and wellbeing of the pupil, while minimising harm. It includes techniques for de-escalation, prevention, and, where necessary, safe physical intervention.

Physical Intervention: Any physical contact made with a pupil to prevent harm, disruption, or damage. This includes guiding a pupil to safety or physically blocking unsafe actions.

Restraint: A form of physical intervention where a pupil's movement is restricted against resistance, usually to prevent serious harm. Must be reasonable, necessary, and proportionate.

Reasonable Force: The minimum level of force necessary to prevent harm, damage, or disruption, as defined in Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Force must be proportionate to the circumstances.

De-escalation Strategies: Techniques used to reduce the intensity of a situation or prevent a behavioural crisis, including emotional coaching, verbal redirection, or removal from triggers.

Duty of Care: A legal obligation placed on staff to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils and others.

Risk Assessment: A written plan that identifies foreseeable risks of harm and the strategies in place to minimise or manage those risks. Required for pupils with a history of challenging behaviour.

SLT (Senior Leadership Team): The school's leadership group responsible for strategic decision-making and oversight of policy implementation.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities): Pupils who require additional support due to learning differences, disabilities, or emotional/behavioural needs.

