



Positive Handling Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: November 2025
Last reviewed on:	Nov 2025	
Next review due by:	Nov 2027	

Striving for Excellence. Achieving Together.

Striving for excellence. Inspiring to achieve collaboratively through respect, happiness and creativity. We are independent and reflective for continuous improvement.

HARRINGTON HILL POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

The policy has been developed in response to the following statutory guidance: 'Use of reasonable force with pupils' – DfE, July 2013, Ref: DFE-00295-2013

It also follows the guidance in the Hackney Education Positive Handling Policy. The policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils, specifically the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Wellbeing and Behaviour Policy and Health and Safety Policy.

The policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff in contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for the care and control of pupils presenting very challenging behaviour.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. At Harrington Hill Primary, we understand and recognise that all behaviour is communication. We treat pupils with respect, dignity and support pupils to make good decisions throughout their school careers. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school/provision respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in Harrington Hill Primary School. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required.

Harrington Hill Primary School acknowledges that physical techniques are only part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in Harrington Hill Primary School:

- clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care for taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

IMPLICATION OF THE POLICY

The Education and Inspection Act 2006 stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within the school (this includes authorised out-of-school activities);
- self-injuring;
- causing injury to others;
- committing an offence.

Individual members of staff cannot be required to use physical restraint. However, teaching and nonteaching staff work in loco parentis and should always operate with an appropriate 'Duty of Care'; they could be liable for a claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this policy.

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

Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk.

DEFINITIONS

Reasonable force

No legal definition of reasonable force exists. However, for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in Harrington Hill Primary School:

- positive handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming him/herself, others or property.
- the scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.

Physical contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, e.g. in the care of pupils with learning disabilities; in games/PE; to comfort pupils.

Physical intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, e.g. guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

Physical control/restraint

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a "last resort". The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint.

UNDERPINNING VALUES

Everyone attending or working in Harrington Hill Primary School has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity;
- be treated with respect and dignity;
- learn and work in a safe environment;
- be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school/provision and their parents have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school;
- be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

The school will ensure that pupils are given support to understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits, which govern behaviour in the school.

AUTHORISED STAFF

In Harrington Hill Primary School, all staff are authorised to use reasonable force within the context of The Education and Inspection Act 2006 – 'The use of reasonable force to control and restrain pupils'.

The school provides training for all staff and retains a list of all those staff trained. The list is reviewed on an annual basis (or more frequently if the context requires it).

The Headteacher is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given (in what circumstances and settings they may use force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last). The Headteacher will ensure that those authorised are aware of, and understand, what the authorisation entails. Those

whom the Headteacher has not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where control or restraint is needed.

Staff from the Local Authority working within the school

Support services will have their own policies for care and control of pupils. When working within the school, it is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that colleagues from support services are aware of school policy and practice.

TRAINING

It will be the responsibility of the Headteacher to arrange suitable training. Harrington Hill Primary School acknowledges that physical techniques are only a part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management. The governors of the school are committed to working within Hackney Education's framework for accessing training in that:

1. It will review its behaviour policy on a yearly cycle;
2. Training will be delivered on a needs-based approach and procedures are in place to monitor incidents, following a behavioural audit and implementation of appropriate risk management procedures;
3. All training will include theory on at least the following:
 - causes of challenging behaviour;
 - prevention strategies;
 - positive behaviour management;
 - de-escalation;
 - risk assessment;
 - behaviour support planning;
 - de-brief following incidents.
4. Physical techniques are not treated in isolation and the school is committed to ensuring that, as a result of incidents, learning opportunities are created for children that allow them to 'own' and take responsibility for their behaviour.

In addition, procedures are also in place to ensure that appropriate support is provided for staff and that following an incident pupil/staff relationships are rebuilt and repaired to ensure that a positive learning environment is maintained.

All the techniques used take account of a young person's:

- age;
- gender;
- level of physical, emotional and intellectual development;
- special needs;

- social context.

Also, they provide a gradual, graded system of responses.

Where appropriate, Positive Handling Plans are written for individual children and, where applicable, these will be designed through multi-professional collaboration. These should be included in any Pastoral Support Plans/SEND Support Plans.

Risk assessments need to be completed against each child when physical restraint may need to be used, in the context of identified target behaviour(s) and environments in which they occur. The assessment should identify the benefits and the risks associated with the strategies being proposed.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

As endorsed in the school's Wellbeing and Behaviour Policy, staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- verbal acknowledgment of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain (this includes negotiation, care and concern);
- further verbal reprimand stating:
 - that this is the second request for compliance;
 - an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable;
 - an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies.
- If possible summon assistance from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- physical intervention. Reasonable force being used to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.

TYPES OF INCIDENTS

The incidents fall into three broad categories:

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
- Where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property;
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations, which fall within one of the first two categories are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway such that he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB: this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations which fall into the third category are:

- a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

ACCEPTABLE MEASURES OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Harrington Hill Primary School will put in place systems for managing and reviewing the following:

- Strategies for preventing the occurrence of behaviours which precipitate the use of a physical intervention;
- Strategies for 'de-escalation' or 'de-fusion' which can avert the need for a physical intervention;
- Procedures for post-incident support and de-briefing for staff, children, service users and their families.
- The concept of reasonable force where 'reasonableness' is determined with reference to all the circumstances, including:
 - the seriousness of the incident;
 - the relative risks arising from using a physical intervention compared with using other strategies;
 - the age, cultural background, gender, stature and medical history of the child or service user concerned;
 - the application of gradually increasing or decreasing levels of force in response to the person's behaviour;
- The approach to risk assessment and risk management employed;
- The distinction between:
 - Seclusion** where an adult or child is forced to spend time alone against their will in a locked room or room which they cannot leave (NB: this is not a permissible form of control).
 - Time out** which involves restricting the service user's access to all positive reinforcements as part of the behavioural programme;
 - Withdrawal** which involves removing the person from a situation which causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities;

- The distinction between planned physical interventions (where incidents are foreseeable in that they have occurred previously and a response planned following a risk assessment) and the use of force in emergency situations (which cannot reasonably be anticipated);
- First aid procedures to be employed and those responsible for implementation in the event of an injury or physical distress arising as a result of a physical intervention;
- **Unacceptable** practices that might expose service users or staff to foreseeable risk of injury or psychological distress.

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff.

Positive handling at Harrington Hill Primary School is seen as a proactive response to meet individual pupil needs.

RECORDING

Where physical control or restraint has been used, a record of the incident will be kept. The incident must be logged on Arbor under the 'Behaviour' and 'incidents' tab in the child's profile. This log should make brief reference to the detailed Restraint Form. The Restraint Form will be completed as soon as possible after the incident, normally prior to staff going off duty and be signed by all staff involved and the Headteacher. After the review of the incident, copies of the Restraint Form will be placed on the pupil's file. A Health and Safety Accident/Incident Form will be completed and returned to Hackney Education in situations where injury has occurred to either members of staff or pupils. Where staff have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force, they should have access to support as appropriate.

MONITORING INCIDENTS

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use reasonable force, this will always be recorded and documented following agreed procedures. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour may require the use of reasonable force. Monitoring of incidents will take place on a regular basis and the results used to inform planning to meet individual pupil and school needs.

ACTION AFTER THE INCIDENT

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Review of behaviour programme;
- Child protection procedure (this may involve investigations by police and/or social services);

- Staff or pupil disciplinary procedure;
- School behaviour policy;
- Exclusions procedure in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff.

The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.

In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

COMPLAINTS

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the school's Complaints Policy. If necessary, the complaint will be dealt with by the Staff Disciplinary Procedures and/or Child Protection Procedures.

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

Other relevant policies that cross reference with this one are:

Wellbeing and Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (including Safe touch policy – see APPENDIX THREE), Health and Safety Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

See link to:

DFE Use of reasonable force advice Reviewed July 2015

[Use of reasonable force in schools](#)

APPENDIX ONE



RESTRAINT OF PUPILS – INCIDENT REPORT

DATE OF INCIDENT :	TIME OF INCIDENT :
NAME (s) OF STAFF INVOLVED :	
NAME (s) OF PUPIL(s) INVOLVED :	
NAME (s) OF OTHER STAFF/PUPILS WHO WITNESSED INCIDENT:	
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT: <i>(Please be objective and factual, outlining how the incident began and progressed, details of pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, steps taken to defuse/calm the situation, degree of force used, how applied, and for how long.) Please continue on a separate sheet, if necessary.</i>	
REASON THAT RESTRAINT WAS NECESSARY (Highlight): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Danger of personal injury to pupil(s) or member(s) of staff• Prevent criminal act/interrupt current criminal act• To prevent absconding /to retrieve from running away• Damage of property anticipated/actual• Prevent interrupt disruption	
PUPIL'S RESPONSE & OUTCOME OF INCIDENT :	
DETAILS OF ANY INJURY SUFFERED BY THE PUPIL, ANOTHER PUPIL, OR MEMBER OF STAFF, OR ANY DAMAGE TO PROPERTY	

Has record been logged in incident book? Yes/No

SignedDATE

Headteacher's signatureDATE

APPENDIX TWO

RISK ASSESSMENT

Name of pupil:
group:

Age: Year

Risk assessment completed by:

Date:

Types of behaviour causing concern

	Frequency	Intention	Probability of harm	Likely location of behaviour
	Hourly Daily Weekly	Deliberate Accidental Involuntary		
Disruption				
Vandalism				
Bullying				
Fighting				
Violent and aggressive				
Absconding/ absence				
Substance/ alcohol abuse				
Impulsive dangerous behaviour				
Self harm				
Discriminatory behaviour				
Inappropriate sexual behaviour				

Medically related behaviour				
Other (please specify)				

Likely Triggers/Reasons for Behaviour

Please tick behaviour and list the source

Reason		
Frustration		Source (eg. teacher/parent/ support teacher/LSA/CA)
Conflict		
Pressure		
Inappropriate response to challenge		
Failure to anticipate/accept consequentiality		
Poor response to structured environment		
Peer dynamics		
Alcohol abuse		
Drugs/substance abuse		
Control issues		
Learned behaviour		
Sexual perpetrator		
Educational difficulty		
Racial attack		

Gender issues		
Psychological/psychiatric		
Other		

Flash points

(locations, times, and people at greatest risk)

At risk behaviour	Location	Persons to whom behaviour may be directed

5. Rewards/Motivators

List motivators and rewards which the pupil may respond to:

Safe Touch Policy

Contents:

1. *Statement of intent*
2. *Legal framework*
3. *Roles and responsibilities*
4. *What is safe touch?*
5. *Types of safe touch*
6. *Reasonable force*
7. *Reporting inappropriate touch*
8. *Training of staff*
9. *Monitoring and review*

1. Statement of intent

1.1. At Harrington Hill Primary School, we understand that appropriate relationships between staff and children are paramount in promoting the safeguarding of children.

1.2. The DfE's guidance document, 'Use of reasonable force in schools', which was published in 2013, makes clear that there are occasions when physical contact with a child, other than reasonable force, is appropriate and necessary.

1.3. This Safe Touch Policy has been created with the aim of ensuring that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities in terms of appropriate and inappropriate touch when involving children.

1.4. All children are entitled to receive an education in an environment where they feel safe, secure and respected. The school will dedicate itself to ensuring that no children feel threatened or disrespected, in terms of physical contact between themselves or a member of staff.

1.5. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Positive Handling Policy; the Toilet and Personal Care Policy; and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

2. Legal framework

2.1. This policy has due regard to the following legislation, including, but not limited to:

- The Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010

2.2. This policy will also have due regard to the following guidance:

- Use of Reasonable Force in Schools, DfE, 2013
- Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE, 2018

- Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE, 2024
- Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention HMG, 2019

2.3. The school will implement this policy in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Behaviour Policy; Positive Handling Policy; Toileting and Personal Care Policy and Equality & Inclusion Policy.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. All members of staff at our school have a duty of care towards children and must be aware of the boundaries involving physical contact.

3.2. The Headteacher and DSL are responsible for arranging regular safeguarding training for all members of staff and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

3.3. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all staff engage in safe touch with children, and only where absolutely necessary.

3.4. All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that no child feels threatened or unsafe at our school as a result of inappropriate touch.

3.5. All members of staff have a responsibility to report any instances of inappropriate touch to the Headteacher.

3.6. The Headteacher is responsible for communicating with parents/carers and ensuring that they are aware of this policy.

3.7. The Governing Body has a responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented and monitored; and that it creates and promotes a culture in which children's wishes and feelings are respected.

4. What is safe touch?

4.1. For the purpose of this policy, "safe touch" is defined as physical contact that, if otherwise avoided, would be unkind, inhumane or potentially emotionally or physically damaging for the child.

4.2. Safe touch should never be invasive or humiliating and should take place with prior consent from the child.

4.3. The school understands that the following examples are instances of safe touch which may occur between staff and children:

- Comforting an upset or distressed child
- Congratulating or praising a child (e.g. a 'high-five', handshake or side-hug)
- Holding the hand of a child to guide them, such as when crossing a road or walking to assembly
- Giving first aid to a child
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons
- Administering medicine
- When teaching a child how to handle specific equipment or musical instruments

5. Types of safe touch

5.1. Staff should ensure that safe touch only occurs in the presence of other adults or responsible children, and that it does not indicate favour towards particular children.

5.2. Children should never be touched in a way that could be misinterpreted as anything other than appropriate adult-child support. Similarly, children should not touch adults in any way that could be misinterpreted as inappropriate.

5.3. Children should not be touched between the waist and mid-thigh, or on/near the chest (unless specifically required during a First Aid procedure or physical intervention).

5.4. Types of Physical Contact

The school recognises that certain types of physical contact between staff and children are inappropriate - e.g. cuddling, lap-sitting.

Safe touch should never be invasive, humiliating or without prior consent from the child. The school places the following restrictions on hugging:

- At our school staff using touch for reward or comfort will use the 'shoulder-hug', rather than a 'front' embrace, which the school would deem inappropriate.
- The shoulder-hug is a sideways hug whereby the member of staff places their hands on the child's shoulders. This type of hug prevents the child from turning themselves towards the member of staff (thus engaging in a 'front' embrace).

Lap-sitting is inappropriate and prohibited. A child may only sit on an adult's knee for a short period and a specific purpose (e.g. for First Aid or if they are extremely distressed) – they should not sit too close to the body.

5.5. For children within the Early Years Foundation Stage, it may be more appropriate on occasion for closer physical contact, while appropriate child-adult relationships are being established. The points above still apply, however, except that sitting on the knee and shoulder-hugs might occur more regularly, if such support is required by the child.

5.6. If a child requires assistance with changing clothes, great care must be taken to ensure that all physical contact is specifically and only for the purpose of the operation being carried out.

5.7. For intimate care (especially toileting), see the school's Toileting and Personal Care Policy.

5.8. The school understands that children are not always aware of the boundaries between staff and children and thus may try to engage in physical contact such as lapsitting or inappropriate hugging/touching. Should a child try to engage in any inappropriate physical contact, the member of staff will explain to the child why it is unacceptable and encourage them to engage in the school-hug instead.

5.9. If a member of staff attempts to use one of the safe methods of touch and a child is unhappy with this, the member of staff will cease contact immediately in order to respect the child's wishes.

5.10. Appropriate touch involving children with SEND will be in line with their EHC plan.

6. Reasonable force

6.1. The school understands that there are times when members of staff must provide physical intervention if a child presents danger to themselves or others.

6.2. All staff have the legal power to use reasonable force. In these instances, staff must always explain the reasons for their actions to the child, the parents/carers and the Head of School. The member of staff must also provide a written record of the incident in line with the school's Positive Handling Policy.

6.3. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Positive Handling Policy.

7. Reporting inappropriate touch

7.1. If a child attempts to engage in any inappropriate touch, the member of staff involved will report this immediately to the Headteacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team, in order to pre-empt any allegations of inappropriate physical contact. The member of staff should also record this on My Concern.

7.2. If another member of staff suspects or witnesses inappropriate physical contact, whereby the member of staff is willingly involved, they will report this to the Headteacher immediately (in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and/or the Whistleblowing Policy).

7.3. Where it is reported that a staff member has engaged, or is suspected to have engaged, in touch that is not appropriate in line with this policy and the Staff Code of Conduct, this will be handled in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and/or Staff Discipline Policy. The Headteacher and/or DSL will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

7.4. The Headteacher will keep a written record of all instances of reported inappropriate touch.

8. Training of staff

8.1. The Headteacher and the DSL will ensure regular safeguarding training for all members of staff in relation to safe touch.

8.2. All staff will be regularly reminded of the methods of safe touch employed by our school and will communicate this to the children they are in contact with.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors, as part of the school's wider Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.