



Positive Handling Policy
September 2025

Context

Introduction

At Cayley Primary School we believe that pupils need to be safe, know how to behave, and know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. For a very small minority of pupils the use of restrictive physical intervention may be needed, and, on such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention will be used.

The majority of pupils behave well and conform to the expectations of our school. We have responsibility to operate an effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class, and individual pupils.

All the school staff need to feel able to manage inappropriate risk and behaviour, and to have an understanding of what and how challenging behaviours might be communicated. They need to know what the options open to them are, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

Definition of 'restrictive physical intervention'

The law allows for teachers and other persons authorised by the Headteacher to use Restrictive Physical Intervention to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property
- engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school

'Restrictive Physical Intervention' is the term used to include interventions where bodily contact using force is used. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has to, in specific circumstances, use 'reasonable force' to control or restrain pupils. There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force.' However, there are two relevant considerations:

- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident make it necessary to intervene.
- The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

The definition of physical force also includes the use of mechanical devices (e.g. splints on the pupil prescribed by medical colleagues to prevent self-injury), forcible seclusion or use of locked doors. It is important for staff to note that, although no physical contact may be made in the latter situations, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

It is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order except in an emergency, for example where the use of a locked room is a temporary measure while seeking assistance. Where there is significant danger in a situation, if possible contain rather than restrain.

When the use of restrictive physical interventions may be appropriate

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. However, there are other situations when physical management may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain pupils may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is unresisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well being of all staff and pupils are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an overriding factor.

Who may use restrictive physical intervention

The following staff (as well as the teachers employed at the school) are authorised by the Headteacher to have control of pupils, and must be aware of this Policy and its implications. All staff have a legal right to use RPI, where necessary, but the following staff are preferred as they have had formal training.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger, and that removing pupils and themselves is the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the pupils.

Planning for the use of restrictive physical interventions

Staff will use force which is reasonable in the circumstances that is believed to be necessary to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows:

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions
- Staff will only use it when there are reasonable grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary. The safety of all children at the school and the staff team will be balanced with the best interests of the child.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion and at the level of understanding of the child or young person
- Force will only be used where it is necessary as a last resort and then in a way which is proportionate to the risk in the immediate circumstances.
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was in keeping with the incident
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses

- As soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control
- A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as an individual positive handling plan
- Escalation will be avoided, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual pupil will always be taken into account
- In developing positive handling plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance
- procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times

Acceptable forms of intervention

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons, for example:

- to comfort a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age) -
- to gently direct a pupil
- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc)
- in an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils
- in rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted

In all situations where physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the pupil's age and level of understanding
- the pupil's individual characteristics and history
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)

Physical contact is never made as a punishment. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participants neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints.

Elevated levels of risk are associated with:

- holding someone who is lying on the floor or forcing them onto the floor
- any procedure which restricts breathing or impedes the airways

Developing a positive handling plan

If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This Plan will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing.

The plan will include:

- any medical conditions or known injuries which the child has which could preclude the use of certain physical interventions or inform a team about decisions they make during an incident.
- involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- a risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- a record needs to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- managing the pupil, strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention is to be used
- identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil
- ensuring a system to summon additional support - at Cayley we call "help" to summon a nearby member of staff, or use walkie talkies to request support from a member of SLT.
- identifying training needs

Guidance and training for staff

Guidance and training is essential in this area. We need to adopt the best possible practice. This is arranged at a number of levels including:

- awareness for governors, staff and parents
- behaviour management for all staff
- managing conflict in challenging situations - all staff
- specific training on Restrictive Physical Intervention techniques - relevant staff

Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we could avoid the need for complaints. All disputes that arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.

Physical Intervention: Procedures for Planned Interventions

- 1 The person responsible for authorising staff to use restrictive physical intervention as part of a structured and planned intervention within this school is Tom Foster
- 2 The person responsible for ensuring that all planned use of restrictive physical intervention is risk assessed is Tom Foster.
- 3 Copies of all risk assessments are held in medical boxes and are reviewed after every use of force and termly.
- 4 As of 2nd September 2025, the people who are authorised to use reasonable force in planned restrictive physical interventions are listed here. No other person should engage in a planned intervention.
 - Those named above
- 5 Only those trained in appropriate techniques within the last twelve months may be authorised. The person responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is provided, including regular updates, is Tom Foster.
- 6 Training records are held digitally on Arbor.
- 7 Those not involved in risk assessment but whose roles include the supervision of children, including supply staff or parent volunteers, may use reasonable force in an emergency unplanned intervention where it is necessary to prevent a serious injury from occurring.
- 8 Every use of restrictive physical intervention is to be reported the same day to the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher if the Headteacher is off- site. The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will ensure that a parent of the child who has had force used against them is notified that day.
- 9 In addition, the details of each use of physical intervention must be recorded on the Pupil Incident Report Form that is held on CPOMS. The person leading the planned or unplanned intervention must complete this form. The Headteacher will review every use of physical intervention.

Additional issues for schools to address

Which staff other than teachers will be authorised to use Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) in your school?

- Senior leadership team
- HLTAs, TAs and Nursery Nurses

By what process will staff be elected and authorised to use RPI in your school?

- Any member of staff may use RPI in an emergency situation to prevent serious risk to the child or another member of staff

- In a planned or anticipated RPI, trained staff members will be authorised to use RPI.

In what situations would the school consider it appropriate for teachers and other authorised school staff to use RPI?

There are 4 reasons that staff might use RPI:

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property
- engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school

Prior to using RPI, staff should attempt:

- Non-verbal communication (e.g. pointing or directing)
- A verbal instruction
- Distraction or redirection
- Containment

There may be situations where these strategies are not possible, e.g. if a child is in immediate danger.

What kind of actions would be viewed as using restrictive physical intervention in your school?

Any intervention in which physical force is used to prevent a child doing any of the following:

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property
- engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school

What kind of actions involving use of physical intervention would be viewed as unwarranted, excessive or punitive in your school?

- The use of physical force as punishment
- The use of physical force where a child is not:
 - committing a criminal offence
 - injuring themselves or others
 - causing damage to property
 - engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school
- The use of physical force that is disproportionate to the risk to the child
- The use of physical force that is not recommended by our training provider

What course of action will be taken in the event of staff failing to comply with this policy?

Failure to comply with the policy will be managed under the school's disciplinary policy.

How will the school involve parents and others who know the young person in the process of developing positive handling plans?

This policy will be shared with parents and will be available on the school website. Positive handling plans are prepared with parents and signed by them.

What process is to be used to agree and ratify individual behaviour management plans for use in school?

Plans are written by either Alice Winter, Nicky Pear or Jess Waghorn and are agreed with parents. These plans are checked and signed by the Headteacher.

What actions will the school take to assess techniques and methods for implementing planned use of physical intervention?

Techniques and methods are provided by our training provider, Dynamis Training. Selection of methods for individual pupils will be a joint-exercise between the writer of the plan, and parents.

What kinds of unforeseen or emergency situations might staff find themselves in within your school? What techniques will the school acknowledge for use in these situations?

It is not possible to plan for every unforeseen situation or emergency event. In an emergency, staff are authorised to use physical force that is proportionate to the perceived risk.

Risks may include:

- Absconding from school or from a school trip
- Attempting to run into the road
- Refusal to leave an area in which they are potential danger

In these situations, staff will attempt non-physical methods before using RPI, where possible.

The school acknowledges that the following techniques might be used in an emergency situation:

- Single person restraint (two-person restraint is the usual expectation)
- Lifting or carrying a child to safety

Who will provide staff and pupils with support after incidents?

Following an incident, a senior member of staff will offer support to involved staff, including:

- A break from their usual role
- Cover for their usual role
- Temporary change of role
- Direction towards emotional support available through the school

- Coaching or mentoring to reflect on the incident

Who will check for injuries, provide first aid and arrange for medical aid?

One of the school's first aiders will be required to provide first aid if required.

Who will report injuries to LBTH?

Alison Perisic, School Business Manager, will complete an AIR form to send to Tower Hamlets.

How are incidents to be reported, recorded and notified?

Incidents are reported using the school's online monitoring system, CPOMs.

How will the school monitor and evaluate the use of restrictive physical intervention?

This policy will be reviewed annually. In bi-weekly safeguarding meetings, the safeguarding team will review restraint incidents and identify patterns. Where patterns are emerging, the senior leadership team will consider how to address issues.

How will complaints be investigated and by whom?

Complaints will be managed under the school's complaints policy.