

Positive Handling Policy

This policy has been written for...	All staff at West Heath School who have contact with students, their parents and carers and for those who sponsor student's places. All staff should have a working knowledge of this policy. Whilst students will not be familiar with the details of this written policy they will be made aware of its contents.
Copies of this policy be obtained from...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School web site - http://www.westheathschool.com It is available as a hard copy on request from the school office
This policy links with the following policies	Promoting Positive Behaviour, Exclusions, Staff Handbook, Health & Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies
Participants and consultees in the formulation of this policy were...	The Principal, Senior Management Team, Health & Safety Committee and the Trustees of the School.
Edition, Review frequency and dates	<p>This is edition 14 released November 2024</p> <p>This policy will be reviewed annually</p> <p>The policy will be reviewed November 2025</p>
Relevant statutory guidance, circulars, legislation & other sources of information are...	<p>The Education Act 1996</p> <p>National Guidance (DfES/DoH 2002)</p> <p>LA Policy Statements</p>
The Lead Members of staff are	Principal, Team Teach Coordinator and HR
Definitions and key terms used in this policy...	<p>The terms Positive Handling, Physical Restraint and Restrictive Physical Intervention are defined in the Introduction.</p> <p>PHP – Positive Handling Plan</p>
The Rationale and Purpose of this policy	Staff at this school are trained to look after the students in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent students from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the school or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request.
Appendices	This policy has 1 Appendix Appendix 1 Positive Handling Plan Form

Introduction

Ethos of mutual respect, care & safety

The term 'Positive Handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve proportionate, reasonable, necessary restraint as the last result. The term 'physical restraint' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' in national Guidance (DfES/DoH 2013). A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports student students who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, care, safety and dignity.

Reasonable force

Student Students with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and fully trained staff members may use reasonable and proportionately necessary force to control or restrain student students. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to themselves, other people or damage to property (R1, R2, R3 maintaining a good order).

Reasonable, proportionate & absolutely necessary

This policy details how we implement the guidance in this school. It should be considered alongside the most recent LA policy statements and recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

The Aims of this policy

To help ensure that staff are equipped to respond appropriately when students are in danger of hurting themselves, others or school property or of seriously disrupting the good order of the School.

The Objectives to meet the above aims

The management takes seriously its duty of care towards students, employees and visitors to the school. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the management. This policy has a clear focus.

- The first and paramount objective is the welfare, safety and protection of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare, safety and protection of the adults/staff who look after them.

Procedures & Practices

Positive Behaviour Management

Preventative approach

Early warning signs

Student participation

All physical interventions at this school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management (Team Teach). The school behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage student students to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence bad behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards foreseeable risk. Student Students are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Behaviour Support Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all student students when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

The School adopts the Team Teach approach for de-escalation and restraint is used as a last result. Physical restraint is a last resort, if all other methods of de-escalation have failed.

Alternatives to Physical Controls

Effective actions to reduce risks

All staff can take an active part to avoid incidents; such as:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions for students to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable students to a safer place. (Policing Incident).
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use positive touch (Caring Cs, Gather & Guide) to guide or escort students to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and call for assistance.
- Maintain good communication throughout.

Modifications to Environment

Equipment, storage & design

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a dynamic risk assessment of the environment. We know that some students at this school may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. In general it is a good rule to keep the environment clutter free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. For example:

- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils, compasses and darts) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry student who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Do they all need to be left out all the time?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?
- Are the design arrangements or furniture safe and appropriate for students who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with an agitated student?
- Are protocols in place to encourage angry students to take themselves to a safer place?

Safe places

Help Protocols

Help offered, help accepted

Real support

Agreed scripts

The expectation at West Heath School is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and have a duty of care for themselves and students. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted. They need to agree scripts so that all parties understand what sort of assistance is required and what is available, maintaining a professional manner throughout.

Well-chosen words (De-escalation)

The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent escalation

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When students are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can actually wind them up. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

The Last Resort Principle

At this school we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies (e.g. de-escalation methods), before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to use best practice when working with students and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention, which may be effective. Always use de-escalation strategies to calm the situation.

Alternatives to physical intervention

Reasonable, Proportionate and Necessary

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable, proportionate and necessary. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported. De-escalation strategies must always be used prior to any physical restraint.

Useful questions

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the student?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be a reasonable, proportionate and necessary action.

Unreasonable use of Force

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should students be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a student secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school

Personal Searches

The school follows Government guidelines set out in Department of Education, Searching, Screening, Confiscation document these can be found through the following hyperlink <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

Team Teach

It is the policy of West Heath School that all staff (except for those with medical exemption) undertake training in L1 or L2 (de-escalation and Caring Cs) of Team Teach, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the School Behaviour Policy. Further details of the Team Teach approach can be found in West Heath School Team Teach documents and on the Team Teach website (www.team-teach.co.uk).

Health & Safety

Shared responsibility for the identification and reduction of risk

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety in the school. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we must try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which seems to involve the least risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with health and safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school and policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so. This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non physical aspects of positive handling training are crucially important too.

When considering a student's behaviour staff should think about the following questions:

Assessing risks associated with students

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this student's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

Risk Assessment

Thinking ahead

Informal risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with students who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Immediate risk assessments

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the students concerned. Confidence and competence are often related to the level of staff training. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls.

Getting Help

Support structure

At West Heath School the following support structures are in place:

- Daily briefing sessions in the morning to update all staff on current issues and share information.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a student.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the student(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Annual refresher meetings in the Team Teach strategies and techniques for all student-facing staff, and continuous review by SMT to inform these. This is carried out by an external provider.
- Staff have access to Support Line counselling service.

Positive Handling Plans

Known effective strategies identified

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All students who have been physically restrained have a Positive Handling Plan. The plan details any triggers/strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any specific responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Positive Handling Plans should be considered alongside the Statement and any other planning documents which relate to the student.

They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special need and social context. Positive Handling Plans should result from multi-professional collaboration and be included in their EHCP.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Key principles

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff must think on their feet (Dynamic Risk Assessment). It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences. The key principles are that any physical intervention should be:

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable, proportionate and necessary;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.
- Student dignity must always be considered.

Verbal warning

Only approved techniques

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning. Where possible, staff should always attempt to use de-escalation strategies in preference to physical interventions.

Staff should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school. If staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable, proportionate and necessary and fall within the school policy they will be supported:

- Hold used for minimum amount of time
- Student's medical and physical conditions taken into consideration
- Offer alternative exit opportunities.

The Post Incident Support Structure for Students and Staff

Priority to reduce risk & calm situation Reporting

Repairing relationships takes time

Positive outcomes

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of West Heath School to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase. Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the school's systems. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong. Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that students have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships. All incidents of restraint must be reported/recorded, communicated to parents, carers and where appropriate social worker.

Complaints

Formal procedures for both staff and students

It is not uncommon for students to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The school has a formal Complaints Procedure. Students should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and students alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for child protection. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

Training

Accredited

Teachers and student facing staff are expected to use planned physical techniques denoted by the Team Teach Training. This school has adopted the Team Teach Model of training. All training courses have been fully accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) in accordance with DfES and Department of Health guidance. Positive handling training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines. The school will have two trained instructors who will be required to keep their training license up to date in accordance with the criteria defined in the Team Teach quality assurance programme.

Level of training related to level of risk

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by the member of staff. Our preferred approach is for whole staff team training (L1 6hrs every 2 years, L2 6hrs every year). Admin) staff may not require the same level of training in physical techniques as those working directly with the most challenging students, however all staff benefit from the whole school training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our clients. Once trained, staff should regularly practice guidance of our in-house instructor and bring any problems or concerns to them.

West Heath School has several members of staff who are trained to Advanced Team Teach level. These onsite staff deal with any physical intervention (restraint) that involves objects that can be used as weapons. These staff are

highly trained in techniques to remove objects that can be used as weapons from students and if necessary take a student to the floor using “Floor Ground Recovery” Team Teaching Training. This method is used as an absolute last resort when dealing with students brandishing objects that can be used as weapons.

Team Teach training complements the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the Promoting Positive School Behaviour Policy. Team Teach training reflects West Heath School ethos as it transforms relationships, equipping everyone to manage distressed behaviours and conflicts safely and respectfully.

Reasonable, Proportionate and Necessary

A response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported. De-escalation strategies must always be used prior to any physical restraint.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the student?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions, it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Unreasonable Use of Force/Safety of Student

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should students be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs). Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a student secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

The dignity of the student should always be taken into consideration.

Seizure and Confiscation

If an investigation or an allegation leads to reasonable suspicion and the search of a student’s clothes, bags and lockers is deemed appropriate, a search may be carried out by the Deputy Principal and/ or Heads of School or staff authorised by them. Staff will follow the latest DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation when conducting a search. Staff will take into consideration the age and needs of students being searched or

screened. This includes the individual needs or learning difficulties of students and making reasonable adjustments that may be required.

The Deputy Principal will oversee the practice of searching to ensure that a culture of safe, proportionate and appropriate searching is maintained, which safeguards the welfare of all students and staff with support from the Head of Safeguarding and Care or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Deputy Principal will ensure that enough staff are appropriately trained in how to lawfully and safely search a student who is not co-operating, so that these trained staff can support and advise other members of staff if this situation arises.

Staff may confiscate or seize items in the possession of students that pose a risk to staff or students, are illegal or banned by or is evidence in relation to an offence and may confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary sanction so long as it is reasonable in the circumstances. Confiscation of a student's property will be proportionate and aimed at maintaining an environment conducive to learning and one which safeguards the rights of other students to be educated. Where appropriate a member of staff may retain or dispose of a student's property as a punishment and are protected from liability for damage to, or loss of, any confiscated items. Guidance on what to do with particular confiscated items can be found in the latest DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

Recording

Approved forms

Whenever a physical restraint is used the incident must be recorded on the School's Behaviour Management system. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24-48 hours. The details recorded are kept confidentially on electronic files.

Confidential

Staff should:

- Read through the school recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly and truthfully.
- Complete all names in full.
- Sign and date all forms.
- Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered. They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future.

Care and accuracy

All students must be asked for comments surrounding the incident and recorded accurately on their PHP. This is to ensure the student voice is recorded.

Serious Incident Reports should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed. A record is kept on Behaviour Watch.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Deputy Principal will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required.

Follow Up

Following an incident, consideration may be given to conducting a further risk assessment, reviewing the Students Positive Handling Plan or Promoting Positive Behaviour policy. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual student, will follow the appropriate procedures.

Persons with particular responsibilities

Deputy Principal, Team Teach Trainer, HR, Principal, SMT, Health & Safety Committee and Trustees

Other Participants & Stakeholders

Team Teach Trainer

Monitoring & Evaluation

Deputy Principal, Team Teach Trainer, Health & Safety Committee

APPENDIX 1

POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN

Picture of Student



Name of Student:

Student Year Group:

Statement of SEN/EHCP: Yes

Student Key Worker:

Student Tutor:

Student LSA:

Original PHP Date:

School Incident: Y/N Boarding Incident: Y/N

Date Amended School:

Rationale: 1 – Harm to Self or Staff

Rationale: 2 - Damage to Property

Rationale: 3 – Maintaining Good Behaviour

Date Amended Boarding:

Rationale: 1 – Harm to Self or Staff

Rationale: 2 - Damage to Property

Rationale: 3 – Not Applicable

Additional Information from Student Profile:

Any known medical conditions / Diagnosis

Details of any Medication:

Administered daily: Yes

Details: Administered at Home or School

Student Trigger information:

-

Student Behaviour stages:

Stage 1:

Response & Supportive Strategies:

Stage 2:

Response & Supportive Strategies:

Stage 3:

Response & Supportive Strategies:

Areas - Places/times which are known to lead to Physical Intervention being required.

- **Classroom :** All
- **Between Lessons:** Yes **Location:** All
- **Break-time:** Yes **Location:** All
- **Lunch Time:** Yes **Location:** All
- **School transport:** No • **Other :** social times

Physical Intervention Holds to be adopted for this student:				
Interventions	Number of staff	Standing/Sitting	Try	Avoid
Caring Cs	1	standing	Y	N
Single Elbow Hold	2	both	Y	N
Double Elbow Hold	1	both	N	Y
Double Elbow Hold	2	both	Y	N
The Shield	1	both	N	Y
Front Ground Recovery	4	floor	N	Y

Additional Physical Intervention comments:

Recording
 All Positive Handling incidents are recorded on Behaviour Watch and kept on SIMS

De-brief Meeting Details:

Names & Signatures

Tutor Signed Date

Learning Directors Signed Date

Parent/Carer received PHP via E-mail Yes / No Date:

Parent/Carer PHP consent provided Yes / No Date:

Social Worker (if applicable) Signed Date

Student Signed Date

Important Information:

Does the parent/carers wish to be informed on each occasion that a Physical Intervention has occurred

Yes/No