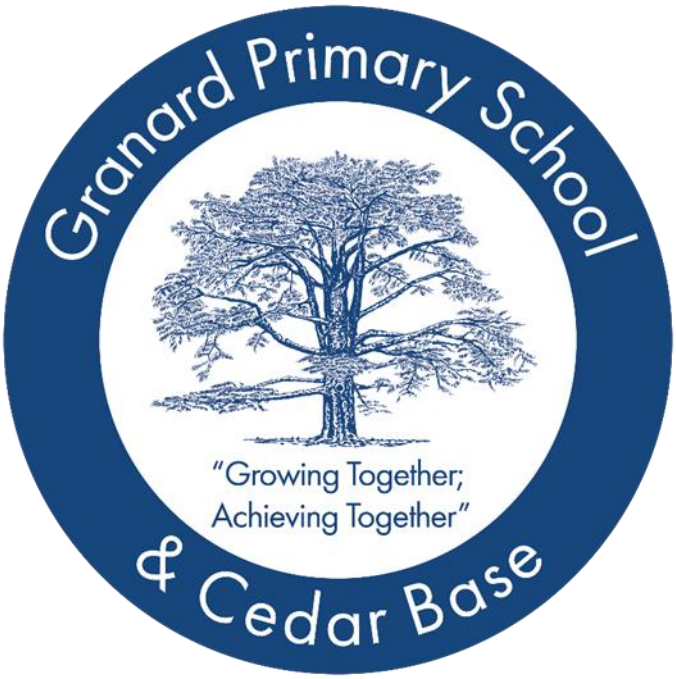
Granard Primary School



Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy

May 2025

Review Due: May 2028

Introduction

At Granard Primary School we strive to have a safe, caring and friendly environment for all the pupils and staff.

It is acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required. Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed. In the vast majority of incidents, no force is required to prevent children harming themselves, or others, or school property. We do not support the routine use of physical interventions. We only use physical interventions when the risks involved of doing so are outweighed by the risks of not doing so. All staff understand that school cannot use force as a punishment. 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.

School staff are experienced in de-escalation strategies. However, if 'reasonable force' is needed this document sets out what reasonable force is and is not, who can use reasonable force, when reasonable force can be considered and record keeping of such incidents. Wherever possible, staff should look to use other methods, such as distraction, giving clear directions and any other method, which does not require the use of any physical force.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary. In principle, as few people as possible should know of any specific incident and staff should maintain confidentiality to the greatest possible extent. This is to enable Governors and staff involved in any consequence or complaint to do so without having acquired hearsay knowledge.

Definition of term

For the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in Granard Primary School, the clarification provided in the DfE guidance document 'Use of Reasonable Force', 2013 is used.

What is reasonable force?

Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements in order to prevent or stop:

a) a fight, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate
b) a pupil from committing any offence,
c) a pupil causing personal injury to any person including the pupil themselves,
d) damage to property, or
e) disruption to education and good order at the school.

Reasonable force can also include physical restraint. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is necessary; for example, standing between pupils, blocking a pupil's path or guiding a pupil to safety by the arm.

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury. It is acknowledged that in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injury as an accidental consequence of the intervention.

Different types of physical contact with pupils: (Appendices 1 and 2)

1. Physical Contact

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary, such as:

- holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when together around the school;
- when comforting a distressed pupil;
- when a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- to demonstrate exercise or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
- to give First Aid.

2. Physical Intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force, where the pupil is compliant.

3. Physical Control/Restraint

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property or if good order is being seriously prejudiced. It is important to note that the use of "reasonable force" should be seen as a last resort. All such incidents must be recorded and be stored in an accessible way. If at all possible, more than one member of staff should be present if physical restraint is necessitated. The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint. The following restraint techniques present an unacceptable risk when used on children, and should not be employed:

- The 'seated double embrace' - two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing
- The 'double basket-hold' - holding a person's arms across their chest
- The 'nose distraction technique' - a sharp upward jab under the nose

Who can use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force. It can also be used by anyone who has been put in charge of pupils temporarily by the Headteacher, such as:

- Unpaid volunteers
- Parents accompanying students on a school trip

When reasonable force can be used?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following:

- Hurting themselves
- Causing injury to another person
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder
- Committing an offence

It can never be used as a form of punishment. It is up to staff's professional judgement to decide whether to physically intervene. This decision should always depend on the individual circumstances and if staff are unsure, they should call a member of SLT for support.

This applies where a member of staff is on the school premises or elsewhere at a time when, as a member of school staff, that adult has lawful control of the children concerned, for example, on a school trip.

Examples of when it is acceptable

You may use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so

- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip/visit
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where, allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or stop a fight in the playground
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

Types of incidents
Incidents described above fall into 3 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 a 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 causing, or at risk of causing injury, damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of materials or objects
- A pupil is running in the corridor or in a way he or she might cause an accident likely to injure themselves
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave the school

Examples of behaviour which fall into the third category are:
- A pupil persistently refusing to do as requested
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

Any such measures will be most effective in the context of overall ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

Whenever positive handling is used, staff will keep talking to the pupil.

Pupils with SEND
Reasonable force can be used on these pupils, but when deciding whether this is appropriate, staff should know and understand the needs of the pupil concerned.

Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour and Escalating Situations
Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order, in line with our Behaviour Policy and Relational Policy. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively.

All staff work in partnership with those who know the child to help those concerned:
- Find out why this child behaves as he or she does
- Understand the factors that influence this child's behaviour
- Identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing

This approach helps to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It reduces the incidence of extreme behaviours and makes sure that the use of physical intervention is rare.

Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches will be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:
- Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain; this includes negotiation, care and concern

- Further verbal reprimand stating:
  - 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 potential need to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible, get assistance
- Physical intervention. Reasonable physical intervention using the minimum degree of contact to prevent a child harming themselves, others or property.

Staff should be able to justify that strategies other than force have been attempted and proved ineffective or would have been impractical. Furthermore, staff should recognise that restraint is only a small part of a wider spectrum of positive framework that may include use of space, safe environments, diversions, calm stances and postures, non-threatening facial expressions, low tone, volume and pace in communication, careful use of words, and physical reassurance and prompts.

Consideration of these strategies should be maintained during and after the need for physical contact. As soon as it is safe, any hold or restraint should be gradually relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control. The pupil should be informed about what will happen next and be offered reassurance and encouragement to remain calm. In this way the pupil will be more likely to see the restraint as an act of care.

The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the adult concerned. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result.

Individual members of staff cannot be required to use physical restraint. However, as teaching and non-teaching staff work in 'loco parentis' and should always operate with an appropriate 'Duty of Care', it might be argued that failing to take action (including a failure to use reasonable force) may in some circumstances breach that duty.

Authorised Staff

These include:

- teachers
- family liaison officers
- teaching assistants
- learning support assistants
- learning mentors
- lunchtime supervisors
- representatives from outside agencies
- other adults who may be working with children either on school premises or accompanying them on out of school activities, e.g. during field trips or on school journeys.

Wherever possible Physical Restraint should only be used by those with appropriate training. However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible and physical restraint may be used as an emergency measure by someone without appropriate training to ensure the safety of children in their care. Any physical intervention should be conducted making reasonable adjustment for children with SEN or disabilities. In this instance, someone with appropriate training should be called for immediately.

Training

Designated staff in the main school and all Cedar Base staff will have Positive Handling training. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

Reporting incidents/Informing parents

All incidents of force used must be reported via our CPOMS system to the SLT and DSL. The record should be completed by the end of the working day on which the incident took place. The adult involved may seek guidance from a senior colleague and/or their trade union representative before filling in their report. Incidents that are more serious would require the staff members involved to complete a Serious Incident Report. This record would then be scanned and also added to the CPOMS record.

A member of SLT will discuss the incident with any children or staff who were present and, where appropriate, collect a written account from them. In line with our commitment to working with parents, parents/carers will be informed of the intervention on the day of the incident and we aim to maintain an open discussion during any relevant procedure which may follow an incident.

Parents should also be notified of any incidents of force used, explaining what happened and why it was necessary to use force. This conversation will likely involve SLT and these conversations should also be noted as part of the child's CPOMS record. When deciding whether something is a 'serious incident', staff should use their professional judgement and consider the:

- Pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- Degree of force used
- Effect on the pupil or member of staff
- The child's age

Risk Assessment/Positive Handling Plan (Appendices 3 and 4)

When it is likely that a child's behaviour may necessitate the use of physical intervention and/or restraint as one of the reactive strategies, a risk assessment must be carried out using the format in Appendix 3.

When the Individual Education Plan and risk assessment indicate the likely need for school staff to hold or restrain a child to prevent an injury, the school should record this in a Positive Handling Plan. The information in the risk assessments will help to inform this plan which will outline:

- who has been consulted about the plan;
- the type of physical intervention to be used;
- which adults are authorised to use this intervention;
- parental consent for the plan;
- Headteacher authorisation for the plan.

The recommended format for a Positive Handling Plan is included in Appendix 4.

Monitoring Incidents Where Physical Restraint Is Used

The 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 staff are following the correct procedures in line with this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the school.

Monitoring of incidents will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using positive handling.

The Headteacher will monitor records of any incidents in order to:

- identify any patterns of behaviour resulting in the use of physical intervention;
- review the levels of staff awareness of and compliance with the school policy;
- inform staff training needs;
- explore the relationship between the use of physical intervention and behaviour in school.

Post Incident Support and Review

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

- Allegations against Staff Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Local Authority Exclusion Procedure

In case of any action concerning a member of staff, they will be advised to seek further advice from their trade union.

Incidents that require use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and could result in injuries to the child or staff. After incidents have subsided, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries. Immediate action should, of course, be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require other than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures. The school should take action to report any serious injuries to staff or pupils in accordance with LA guidelines (see First Aid and Administration of Medication Policy).

We need to consider thoughts, feeling, emotions and emotional 'first aid'.

- Stage 1 – Immediate 'Are you ok?' This should occur before people leave to go home.
- Stage 2 – De-briefing checking people have adjusted to an emotionally difficult event. This should occur within 48 hours.
- Stage 3 – Counselling: formal support. Support may be available when requested by a member of staff, however it is not imposed. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

We need to focus on actions and behaviours:

- Who did what, when, why, how?
- What was the outcome?
- What does it tell us about what we already know about the young person?
- What have we learnt and what or how does this inform our practice?

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. Complaints following a dispute about the use of physical intervention by an adult should be pursued in accordance with the Complaints Policy.

Links to other policies:

Accessibility Plan
Allegations of Abuse Against Staff
Anti-Bullying Policy
Behaviour Policy
Child Protection Policy
Complaints Policy
Data Protection Policy
Equality Objectives and Equality Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Relational Policy
RSE Policy
Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy and Local Offer
Staff Code of Conduct Policy
Whistleblowing Policy

Reviewed: May 2025

Review Due: May 2028

Approved by: Headteacher: ……

Name: …….. Date: ……

APPENDIX 1

Advice for Staff

At Granard 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 individual.

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 another pupil or the pupil themself
- 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 themself, 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, speak 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.

Help Script

- Connect by using pupil's name
- Recognise the feelings
- Tell the pupil you are 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

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

APPENDIX 2

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 a peaceful end no matter what happens	appear to expect an attack (or you will have one)
talk with the pupil	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 them	turn your back or leave; invade the pupil's personal space
be patient; if a pupil's agitation increases to the verge of attack: • acknowledge their 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 them, 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

APPENDIX 3

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:		
Is the risk:	Potential Yes / No	Occurring Yes / No
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:**

APPENDIX 4
Positive Handling Plan

Insert picture here	**Name of child:**	**Date of Birth:**
	Triggers:	**Medical Information:** (that need taking into account before physically intervening)

Stage of Crisis:	**Topography of behaviour** (Describe what the behaviour looks/sounds like)	**Preferred supportive/intervention** (Describe strategies that should be attempted at each stage, including critical friends)
Describe common behaviour/situation which are known to have led to positive handling being required		
Anxiety		
Defensive/Escalation		
Crisis		
Recovery		
Follow up		

Additional Information/Preferred handling: (Describe preferred holds, standing, sitting, stating numbers and names of preferred staff and useful 'get outs' that can be used when holding)

Plan agreed by:

Name (child) _____ Signed: _____ (if appropriate)

Name (parent/carer) _____ Signed: _____

Name (Granard staff) _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____