

FOX WOOD SCHOOL



POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

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(Incorporating Restrictive Physical Intervention, Positive Behavioural Support, and Statutory Guidance)

Introduction and Purpose

This policy has been updated to reflect the most current advice and legal requirements, drawing on the Department for Education's (DfE) "Behaviour in Schools – Advice for headteachers and school staff (February 2024)" and the statutory guidance "Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention (June 2019)".

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are essential for maintaining good order and a calm, safe, and supportive environment in school. While the school promotes a range of strategies to develop appropriate behaviour, we acknowledge that some behaviours may require the use of reasonable force to ensure physical well-being.

The overarching aim of this policy is to promote a proactive, preventative approach to support pupils whose behaviour challenges, focusing on improving their quality of life, and to ensure that restrictive intervention is used only when absolutely necessary, and is reasonable and proportionate to the risks involved.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other key policy documents, including the Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy.

1. Core Values and Principles

Every individual working or learning at Fox Wood School has the right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to learn and work in a safe environment.

1.1 Guiding Principles

When planning and responding to behaviour, the school adheres to the following principles:

1. **Best Interests of the Child:** At any particular time, the key question for everyone involved should be: **“What is in the best interests of the child and/or those around them in view of the risks presented?”**. The potentially serious impact of restraint on developing children requires weighty justification.
2. **Proactive and Preventative Approach:** We adopt a proactive approach to support pupils whose behaviour challenges, recognizing that behaviour is a means of communication and has a cause and a purpose. The approach must focus on reducing the likelihood of behaviours that challenge.
3. **Dignity and Respect:** Restraint must **never be used to punish or with the intention of inflicting pain, suffering, or humiliation**.
4. **Legal Compliance and SEND:** The policy complies with all relevant legal duties, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the **Equality Act 2010**. The school must make **reasonable adjustments** to procedures and practices to avoid discriminating against disabled pupils.

5. **Proportionality and Minimum Force:** Restrictive interventions must be **reasonable, proportionate, and necessary**. They should be applied with the **minimum force necessary, for no longer than necessary**, by appropriately trained staff.

2. Definitions of Positive Handling and Intervention

Positive Handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies, including policy, management of the environment, personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion, and de-escalation.

1. **Physical Contact:** Appropriate physical contact used in the care of pupils or to support their access to the curriculum, carried out sensitively and appropriately.
2. **Physical Intervention (Non-Restrictive):** Used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, such as gently guiding or leading a pupil by the arm where the pupil is compliant.
3. **Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) / Restraint:** Defined as **planned or reactive acts that restrict an individual's movement, liberty and/or freedom to act independently**. Team Teach defines RPI as the **positive application of force** by staff to overcome rigorous resistance, completely directing, deciding, and controlling a person's free movement.
4. **Reasonable Force (Legal Power):** The term covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. It is lawful if used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:
 - **Self-injuring.**
 - **Causing injury to others.**
 - **Committing a criminal offence.**
 - **Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils** (including authorised out-of-school activities).
 - The use of force is "reasonable" if it is **no more force than is needed**.

3. Minimising the Need to Use Force: Proactive and Preventative Strategies

Fox Wood School adopts the **Positive Behavioural Support (PBS)** framework to reduce challenging behaviour. This approach emphasizes building skills and enhancing the quality of life to proactively support pupils. The school utilizes the structured, non-violent techniques of **Team-Teach**, which focuses on **95% de-escalation and 5% physical intervention**.

3.1 Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP) and Handling Plans

For pupils presenting with challenging behaviour, **Individual Behaviour Plans (IBP)** and Positive Handling Plans are essential tools.

- **Safe Systems of Work:** Pupils' Individual Behaviour Plans constitute **Safe Systems of Work** under Health and Safety Regulations and must be strictly adhered to by all staff.

- **Assessment of Needs:** Plans are informed by **skilled assessment** to understand underlying causes and triggers, such as sensory overload, previous trauma/neglect, unmet medical need, or confusion.
- **Preventative Measures:** The plans identify positive prevention strategies and details how a pupil may need support in a crisis. Staff must anticipate likely triggers of misbehaviour and put in place support to prevent these.

3.2 Behaviour Expectations and SEND

The school must ensure its approach to behaviour adheres to statutory duties for pupils with SEND.

- **Reasonable Adjustments:** For pupils with SEND whose condition may affect their behaviour, the school must make reasonable adjustments proactively. Examples include:
 - Short, planned **movement breaks** for pupils who find it difficult to sit still.
 - Adjusting seating plans (e.g., for visual/hearing impairment).
 - Adjusting **uniform requirements** for sensory issues or eczema.
- **Graduated Approach:** Schools should employ the **graduated approach** to identify, assess, and meet the needs of pupils with SEN (Assess, Plan, Do, Review).
- **EHC Plans:** If a pupil has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, the provisions set out in that plan **must be secured**. If behavioural issues arise for a pupil with an EHC plan, early contact with the local authority may be appropriate, and an emergency review of the plan might be needed.

4. Planned and Emergency Physical Interventions

4.1 Risk Assessment and Use of Force

Staff maintain a duty of care and must employ **Dynamic Risk Assessment** (continual assessment of risks) when responding to unforeseen events.

- **Planned Intervention:** Based on a careful risk assessment and agreed approaches set out in the IBP/Handling Plan.
- **Emergency Intervention:** May be necessary for unforeseen situations. Any response must still be proportionate and use the **minimum force necessary**. An unplanned intervention for a child with a support plan should prompt discussion about whether the plan needs to be changed.

Before using RPI, staff must confirm that the intervention is justified in order to prevent:

- Harm or injury to the pupil themselves (self-injuring).
- Harm or injury to others (staff or pupils).
- Serious damage to property.

4.2 Prohibited Practices and Safety Limitations

When restraining a pupil, staff should avoid acting in a way that might cause injury.

- Staff must **not intentionally cause pain** to a child.
- Staff must avoid restraining a child in a way that affects their **airway, breathing, or circulation**.
- The risks of employing an intervention **must be judged to be lower than the risks of not doing so**.

5. Specific Strategies: Seclusion, Withdrawal, and Removal from Class

5.1 Time Out and Withdrawal (Non-Disciplinary Separation)

The school uses 'Time Out' and 'Withdrawal' as strategies for diffusion and de-escalation, often integrated into a pupil's IBP.

- **Time Out:** Restricting access to positive reinforcements as part of a behavioural program.
- **Withdrawal (Non-Disciplinary):** Removing the pupil from a distressing situation to a safe place where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume activities. This is used, for example, where a pupil is taken out of the classroom to regulate emotions because of identified sensory overload as part of a planned response. This practice is sometimes referred to as 'autonomous withdrawal' if the pupil chooses to move to a quiet space to self-regulate.

5.2 Removal from Classrooms (Disciplinary Sanction)

Removal from the classroom is a serious sanction used only when necessary.

- **Reasons for Disciplinary Removal:** To maintain the safety of all pupils, restore stability, enable disruptive pupils to continue education in a managed environment, or allow the pupil to regain calm in a safe space.
- **Location and Supervision:** The removal location must be appropriate, stocked with resources, and **supervised by trained members of staff**.
- **Notification:** Parents should be informed on the same day if their child has been removed from the classroom as a disciplinary measure.
- **Reintegration:** Clear processes must be designed for the reintegration of any pupil following removal.

5.3 Use of a Seclusion Room

The use of the Quiet Room (sensory-controlled calming area) is used to help children calm down and use self-regulation skills.

- **Safety Mandate:** Under **no circumstances** will any young person be **locked in a room by themselves**.
- **Supervision:** Staff will be with the pupil at all times, and the door must remain unlocked at all times.
- **Recording:** Where a pupil uses the Quiet Room and the door is closed, this must be recorded on a Withdrawal Support form, and the pupil's behaviour/response must be documented every 5 minutes until the door is opened.

6. Staff Training and Authorisation

Staff training is crucial for promoting positive behaviour and achieving restraint reduction.

- **Team Teach Mandate:** Fox Wood School uses Team Teach, a training provider accredited through the **Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)**.
- **Level of Training:** Most staff receive the **12-hour Intermediate Course** in Team Teach, appropriate for a medium-risk setting, and receive **annual 6-hour refresher courses**.
- **Competence and Use:** Staff must **only use restraint techniques for which they have received training and can demonstrate competence**.
- **Training Content:** Training must cover:
 - Identifying the causes and triggers for challenging behaviour.
 - Building positive relationships and using alternatives to restraint (de-escalation techniques).
 - Assessment and management of risks (including dynamic risk assessment).
 - Safe implementation of restraint, including how to minimise associated risks, particularly regarding the **growth and development of children and young people**.
- **Staff Health:** Staff who have, or acquire, any medical condition that may impact their ability to carry out a pupil's IBP/Handling Plan have a **duty to report this to the Headteacher immediately**.
- **Authorisation:** All staff authorised to have charge of pupils automatically have the statutory power to use 'reasonable force'. The Headteacher, Miss Lucinda Duffy, is responsible for clearly defining who is authorised to use force and in what circumstances. Unauthorised individuals (e.g., volunteers) will be told the steps to take in the case of an incident. Team Teach Trainers are responsible for the training and monitoring of the use of Team Teach physical interventions within Fox Wood.

7. Visits Out of School

Staff powers to use reasonable force and enforce discipline extend to authorized out-of-school activities.

- **Risk Assessment:** Staff must carry out **risk assessments for each pupil prior to each visit** into the community to ensure all pupils are included where possible and safety is maintained.
- **Pre-Visit Consideration:** Due consideration must be given to:
 - Whether the pupil can cope with the demands of the visit.
 - Whether there are sufficient, suitably trained staff for incidents.
 - How staff will contact school for extra help if necessary.
- **Public Liaison:** Staff carry a laminated card during off-site activities that can be passed to members of the public if they are concerned about an incident they may have witnessed, informing them who to contact.

8. Recording, Reporting, Monitoring, and Review

8.1 Recording and Reporting Incidents

Where Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) has been used, a record must be made promptly using 'Behaviour Watch'.

- **Notification to Parents:** Parents must be informed when RPI has been used by **letter** (Appendix 1 template) and also a **telephone call** from a staff member involved on the day of the incident.
- **Injury Recording:** If anyone is injured as a result of using RPI, an injury form should be completed using 'Injury Form' from 'Behaviour Watch'. Serious injuries are entered onto an HSA2 form and reported to the local authority.

8.2 Post-Incident Support and Debriefing

Following any incident, staff and pupils should receive support and the school must ensure lessons are learned. See appendix 2.

- **Pupil Learning:** Learning opportunities must be created for pupils to reflect and take responsibility for their behaviour, appropriate to their stage of development.
- **Reflection:** Staff and pupils involved should have **separate opportunities to reflect** on what happened (de-briefing).

- **Staff Support:** Procedures are in place to ensure appropriate support and counseling is provided for staff, and that following an incident, pupil/staff relationships are rebuilt and repaired to maintain a positive learning environment.

8.3 Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and analysis of incident data are essential for continuous improvement and governance.

Data Analysis: The Pupil Support Manager and Senior Leadership Team regularly monitor and analyse incident data to identify patterns and underlying factors and follow statutory reporting processes including reporting to Governors half termly and Team Teach all Advanced Team Teach restraints.

- **Equality Act Duty:** Data must be analysed by **protected characteristic** to ensure the removal and restraint policies are **not having a disproportionate effect on pupils sharing particular protected characteristics** (as required by the Equality Act 2010).
- **Policy Review:** Where consistent use of restraint occurs, the individual support plan and staff training/development must be reviewed.

Appendix 1 – letter sent home to parents after incident

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Today _____ behaviour became extremely challenging and as such posed a health and safety risk to themselves, other children and/or staff. Staff supported _____ by following their agreed Individual Behaviour Plan to reduce the risk and help him/her to calm down and regain control of themselves.

As part of their Individual Behaviour Plan/ Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Plan It was necessary to use Team Teach Interventions to **(hold them safely) or (Guide safely)**

_____ has been checked by school staff with a First Aid qualification.

Should you wish to discuss the incident or how it was managed please contact school on 01925 811534 and myself, Lianne Buchanan (Deputy Headteacher) Louise Messham (Assistant Head and Team Teach Tutor) or Jade Ashton (Pupil Support Manager and Team Teach Tutor) will be happy to talk to you about it.

Please sign and return the slip below to school as soon as possible. Thank you.

Please be assured that your son/daughter's health and safety is our highest priority and we will do all we can to safeguard their welfare whilst managing to the best of our ability such challenging behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Lucinda Duffy
Headteacher

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BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AND TEAM TEACH

I confirm that I have received a letter about my son/daughter being **held/guided** during an incident on _____.

Please tick the following boxes as appropriate:-

- ☐ I wish to come into school to discuss this further
- ☐ I would like someone from school to ring me to discuss this further

☐ I am happy about the way in which my son's/daughter's behaviour is managed at school.

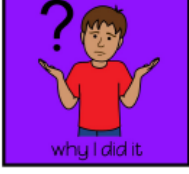
Signed _____

Parent/Carer of _____

Date _____

Appendix 2 – pupil debrief examples

Pupil Debrief	
Reason for debrief:	Date: Staff:
 I felt	
 what I did	
 next time I will	

Pupil Debrief	
 I felt	
 what I did	
 why I did it	
 next time I will	

