Bushfield Road Infant School

Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy

Approved by: Governing body
Date approved: November 2026
Review date: November 2027

1. Purpose and principles

Bushfield Road Infant School is committed to keeping pupils and adults safe while treating every pupil with dignity and respect. Our values of **Kindness, Teamwork and Curiosity** guide how we prevent, respond to and learn from incidents involving physical intervention.

Physical intervention is not a punishment. It must never be used to secure compliance, as a threat, or because a pupil is being inconvenient. Staff should use the least restrictive response that is reasonable and proportionate to the immediate risk, and only for as long as necessary.

We recognise that behaviour may communicate distress, unmet need, confusion or difficulty with self-regulation. Our first response is to understand what is happening and support the pupil to regain safety and calm.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all school staff and adults working on the school's behalf, including supply staff, volunteers and students.

It should be read alongside the school's:

- Behaviour policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- SEND and inclusion arrangements

- Health and safety procedures
- Complaints procedure

3. Prevention and de-escalation

Staff should take practical steps to reduce the likelihood of incidents, including:

- establishing predictable routines and giving clear, manageable instructions;
- using calm, respectful language and allowing pupils time to respond;
- noticing signs of distress early and offering help, space or a change of activity;
- considering whether the environment, task, communication or unmet need may be contributing;
- using agreed pupil-specific strategies where a plan is in place;
- seeking support from a colleague or senior leader where this is likely to help.

Where a pupil's needs or previous incidents indicate a foreseeable risk, the school will consider an individual support or risk-reduction plan with the pupil, family and relevant staff. The plan should explain helpful preventative approaches, early signs of distress, de-escalation strategies, any relevant health information, and how staff should respond.

4. When physical intervention may be used

Staff may use reasonable force only where it is necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- causing injury to themselves or another person;
- committing an offence;
- causing serious damage to property; or
- seriously disrupting good order and discipline, where the circumstances justify intervention.

Any intervention must be **necessary, reasonable and proportionate** in the circumstances. Staff should use the least restrictive option available and stop as soon as the immediate risk has passed.

Staff must not use physical intervention:

- as a punishment or to cause pain, humiliation or distress;
- to force a pupil to comply with an instruction when there is no immediate safety or serious disruption justification;
- in a way that compromises breathing, or places pressure on the neck, chest or abdomen;
- using a technique for which they have not been trained, except where immediate action is needed to prevent harm and no safer alternative is available.

Only staff with current, relevant **Team Teach training** should use Team Teach physical techniques, wherever practicable. In an emergency, staff must still take reasonable steps to keep pupils safe and summon trained support. Team Teach training does not replace staff judgement or the requirement to act lawfully, proportionately and in line with this policy. The school will maintain a record of staff training and arrange refresher training in line with the training provider's requirements.

5. What staff must do during an incident

Where it is safe to do so, staff should:

1. Use de-escalation and seek assistance before physical intervention.
2. Explain calmly what they are doing and why, using age-appropriate language.
3. Use the minimum intervention necessary and maintain the pupil's dignity and safety.
4. Ask another adult to summon the senior leader on duty and, where possible, witness the incident.
5. End the intervention as soon as it is safe to do so.

Staff must not leave a pupil in a restrictive intervention or situation without appropriate supervision. If there is any concern about injury, breathing, pain or the pupil's wellbeing, staff must seek immediate medical assistance and inform the headteacher or most senior leader present.

6. Recording every incident of physical handling

A handling form must be completed whenever an adult physically handles a pupil as part of managing behaviour or keeping the pupil or another person safe. This applies whether the handling is brief or sustained, and whether one or more adults were involved.

Each adult involved must provide their own account, or contribute clearly to the record, so that the form accurately reflects who did what. A handling form must be completed even if no injury occurred and the pupil appeared calm afterwards.

The form must be completed as soon as practicable after the incident, normally before the end of the school day. It should record:

- the pupil's name, date, time and location;
- the names of all adults involved and witnesses;
- what happened immediately before the incident, including relevant context;
- the safety concern and why physical intervention was considered necessary;

- the de-escalation and other strategies tried, where applicable;
- a factual account of the physical handling, including its duration and when it ended;
- the pupil's and adults' presentation afterwards, including any injury, pain or distress;
- any first aid or medical attention provided;
- who was informed, including the family and senior leader, and when;
- the pupil's views, where they can be gathered appropriately;
- follow-up actions and any proposed changes to support or risk-reduction plans.

Records must be factual, respectful and completed without blame or speculation. Forms must be stored securely in accordance with the school's safeguarding and information-management procedures. The headteacher or designated senior leader will review each form promptly, check that required actions have been taken and decide whether further safeguarding, health and safety or staff-support action is needed.

7. Informing parents and pupils

The headteacher or delegated senior leader will inform the pupil's parent or carer as soon as practicable after an incident involving physical handling, normally on the same school day. The school will explain what happened, why intervention was used, how the pupil is, and what follow-up is planned. The discussion and its outcome will be recorded.

Where current law or statutory guidance requires a written record to be shared with a parent, the school will follow that requirement. Information must not be shared with a parent where doing so would be likely to place the pupil at risk of significant harm; the school will follow safeguarding procedures and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If a pupil makes an allegation or disclosure about an adult's actions, staff must report it immediately to the headteacher or DSL and follow the school's safeguarding procedures. If the concern is about the headteacher, it must be reported through the school's arrangements for concerns about the headteacher.

8. Support and review after an incident

Once everyone is safe and calm, the school will offer the pupil an appropriate opportunity to talk about what happened, listen to their perspective and help them return to learning. Staff involved will be offered a debrief and support.

A senior leader will review the incident to consider:

- whether the intervention was necessary, proportionate and consistent with this policy;
- whether the record is complete and parents have been informed;

- whether the pupil needs additional support or a revised plan;
- whether changes to routines, environment, staffing or communication could reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Repeated incidents, patterns involving particular pupils or situations, injuries, or concerns about practice will be escalated to the headteacher and reviewed with the DSL and relevant staff. The school will use its records to identify patterns and consider how to reduce the need for physical intervention.

9. Roles and responsibilities

All staff must understand this policy, use preventative and de-escalation approaches, seek help when needed, report every incident of physical handling and complete the required record.

The headteacher or delegated senior leader is responsible for ensuring records are reviewed, parents are informed, staff are supported, and appropriate follow-up takes place.

The DSL must be involved where an incident raises a safeguarding concern or an allegation is made.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school has appropriate procedures and that this policy is reviewed.

10. Monitoring and review

The headteacher will review handling forms regularly to check that records are thorough, actions are completed and practice is helping to keep pupils safe. The governing body will receive appropriately anonymised information about incidents and patterns, while protecting pupils' and staff members' confidentiality.

This policy will be reviewed annually and following any relevant change in legislation, statutory guidance or school practice.

Sources

- Department for Education, *Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools* (guidance effective from 1 April 2026). (gov.uk)
- Department for Education, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*. (gov.uk)
- *The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025*. (legislation.gov.uk)
- Team Teach, guidance on reporting, recording and reviewing incidents. (teamteach.com)