



Coombe Wood School

Positive Handling and Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) Procedure

Coombe Wood School is part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust.

The Greenshaw Learning Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, company number 7633694, registered at Greenshaw Learning Trust, ORU Sutton, Throwley Way, Sutton, SM1 4AF.

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Positive Handling and Restrictive Physical Intervention Procedure

This procedure describes **Coombe Wood School School's** procedures for Positive Handling and Restrictive Physical Intervention This procedure applies to Coombe Wood School and all governors and staff of the school must abide by this procedure, which has been adopted in accordance with and pursuant to the student Welfare Statement of the Greenshaw Learning Trust.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher of the school to ensure that their school and its staff adhere to this procedure. In implementing this procedure school staff must take account of any advice given to them by the GLT CEO and/or Board of Trustees.

This procedure is subject to the GLT Student Welfare Statement and the Scheme of Delegation approved for the school. If there is any ambiguity or conflict then the Scheme of Delegation and any specific Scheme or alteration or restriction to the Scheme approved by the Board of Trustees takes precedence. If there is any question or doubt about the interpretation of this procedure, the GLT CEO should be consulted.

Approval and review

- Maintenance of the Procedure is the responsibility of the GLT Directors of Education (model) and the Headteacher (school version)
- The model procedure was approved by the GLT Board of Trustees on **20 December 2024**.
- This school procedure was approved by the School Governing Body on: **4th February 2025**
- The Model Procedure may be updated where necessary by the Education Directors in line with statutory guidance.

Associated policies and procedures

This Positive Handling and Restrictive Physical Intervention Procedure is a constituent part of the:

- GLT Student Welfare Statement.

The following Trust and School policies and procedures are directly related to and complement this Procedure:

- School Behaviour Policy
- School Safeguarding Policy

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Introduction

Good professional relationships between staff and students are vital to ensure good order in school. The majority of students in school respond positively to positive and/or proactive behaviour management strategies embedded in the school ethos. This ensures the well-being and safety of all Students and staff. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of positive handling and/or restrictive physical intervention(s) (RPI) may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff at this school:

- i. clearly understand this procedure and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where positive handling is necessary
- ii. are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur.

The application of any form of restrictive physical intervention can place students and staff in a vulnerable position. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this procedure. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the procedure and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible.

Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used as an appropriate last resort and when there is no other alternative.

Physical Contact Guidance

The aim of this procedure is to provide clear guidance to school staff on the use of physical contact so that staff can meet the needs of children with confidence, whilst safeguarding themselves and those in their care. Physical contact is necessary and justifiable when it meets the needs of students.

Physical contact can take many forms. A handshake is an accepted form of contact in many cultures, some people also touch the elbow or pat the back as part of a greeting. Staff are in a position of trust. They therefore need to maintain a professional distance and take greater care in their physical interactions. This applies equally on the school premises and elsewhere.

Equally, we recognise that appropriate physical contact is often an integral part of working with young people. For example:

- i. To demonstrate exercises of sports/PE techniques.
- ii. To demonstrate how to use a piece of equipment e.g. IT or teaching a student how to hold and play a musical instrument.
- iii. To administer first aid or support with intimate care.
- iv. To provide regulation support for Students with complex sensory profiles.
- v. To prompt or help young children.
- vi. To comfort a Student who is in distress

Definitions

Physical Contact

In situations in which proper physical contact with Students takes place, professional judgement must apply, taking into account knowledge of the individual child. Staff should act reasonably and in Students' best interests at all times.

Physical Intervention

This may be used to divert a Student from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a Student by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force. All physical interventions are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. Staff will look for early warning signs, taking steps to divert behaviours. Staff will look for alternatives to physical intervention and use well-chosen words to try and de-escalate a situation.

Restraint (Restrictive Physical Intervention – RPI)

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to students, staff or property or if good order is being seriously prejudiced. All such incidents will be recorded.

Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working at this school has the right to:

- i. a recognition of their unique identity
- ii. be treated with respect and dignity
- iii. learn and work in a safe environment
- iv. be protected from harm

All staff have a duty of care to all students so where a child is putting themselves or others in direct danger, all staff must act appropriately in the child's best interests within the context of the situation. Staff are not expected to put themselves in danger, and removing students and themselves from a source of danger is appropriate. Staff are not required to go beyond what is reasonable. In particular, it is acceptable for any member of staff to decide that they will not use physical intervention for personal reasons.

students attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- i. individual consideration of students' needs by staff that have responsibility for their care and protection
- ii. expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies and procedures
- iii. be informed about school rules, relevant policies and procedures and the expected conduct of all students and staff working in the school and be informed about the school's complaint procedure

The school will ensure that all students understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits which govern behaviour in the school. Where necessary, appropriate support will be given and reasonable adjustments made.

As part of the whole school community, parents commit themselves to working in partnership with the school to support their child to meet the requirements of the school behaviour policy.

Training

- Training needs are assessed in relation to foreseeable risk.
- Positive Handling training is made available to designated staff where appropriate
- Designated staff include - Senior Leaders, Heads of Year and Behaviour Support Team
- Names of designated staff are displayed in the Coombe Wood School Handbook, the main staffroom and staff work rooms.

Escalating Situations

The 1996 Education Act (Section 550A) stipulates that reasonable physical intervention may be legally defensible to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do any of the following;

- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its students; whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom, during a teaching session or elsewhere (this includes authorised out-of-school activities)
- self-injuring or placing himself or herself at risk
- injuring others
- causing damage to property, including that of the student himself or herself
- committing a criminal offence (even if the student is below the age of criminal responsibility)

Examples of situations which fall within the above are:

- a student is physically aggressive towards a member of staff or another student
- students are fighting
- a student is causing, or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of materials or objects
- a student is behaving in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others
- a student absconds from a class or tries to leave the school and puts him/herself or others in danger by doing so

Acceptable measures of Restrictive Physical Intervention

Restrictive Physical Intervention can only be deemed reasonable if:

- it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident
- it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent
- the age, understanding and the gender of the student are taken into account
- it is likely to reduce risk

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervention

The form of physical intervention may involve staff doing the following:

- escorting a student
- shepherding a student away
- Using positive handling techniques to support the child to transition to a place (physical or emotional) of safety

Recording

Where a Restrictive Physical Intervention(RPI) has been used, a record of the incident will be kept in the Bound Book. All staff must be made aware of the location of the Bound Book and must be given access to it whenever appropriate. All recordings will be completed as soon as possible after the event.

Any incident of RPI will be reported as soon as possible to the Headteacher. The record of the RPI will be reviewed by the Headteacher and any necessary actions or investigations will be carried out accordingly. Parents will be informed of any use of RPI(s) as soon as possible.

Records are kept in line with the GLT Data Retention Policy.

Action after an Incident

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a student, this will be pursued through the appropriate Policy or Procedure. Members of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.

In addition to the above, staff and students involved in the incident will be given an opportunity to debrief and repair the relationship in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and stage of development. It is acknowledged that any incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention can be very upsetting for all involved.

Positive Handling Plans

It is recognised that for some children additional support is needed, for example, where a child has a sensory need and might become over-stimulated and distressed. As part of the child's support, a positive handling plan might be put in place, written together with the parents/carers. The main purpose of the positive handling plan is to ensure consistent understanding of possible triggers for the child as well as effective de-escalation strategies to prevent the need for restrictive physical intervention. As part of this discussion, parents/carers and school will also transparently discuss behaviours which would result in the need for restrictive physical intervention to reduce risk, what this would look like and how it will be shared with the parent. If restrictive physical intervention is used for a child who does not have a positive handling plan in place, parents/carers will be invited in to write one together with the school following the first incident. Every positive handling plan is individualised to each child so as to personalise de-escalation strategies using the form in **Appendix 1** as a template. Any positive handling plan will be shared with all relevant staff.

For some students who experience more complex needs, positive handling provision might be included in their highly individualised behaviour plans. This might also include access to appropriate sensory break-out spaces to support regulation when distressed in order to reduce the requirements for Restrictive Physical Intervention. Where this is the case, this will be detailed and agreed with parents, including how this will be communicated with parents and how use of any sensory spaces will be recorded and monitored. This would also be planned for and reviewed in partnership with other relevant specialist agencies.

Monitoring of Incidents

Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any student(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using positive handling and for whom a reviewed approach is required. This process will address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.

Complaints

Parents have the right to complain about actions taken by school staff. If a specific allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, then the guidance for dealing with allegations against staff will be followed, as outlined in our Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

Other complaints will be dealt with under the school's Complaints Policy, which can be found on the school website.

Appendix 1 - Template Positive Handling Plan

Child's Name:	DoB:
School:	Year Group/Class:

Summary of child's needs (including any background information or existing Special Educational Need) e.g. physical difficulties, medical conditions etc
Effective strategies for de-escalation of unwanted behaviour(s)
Behaviours that might necessitate use of restrictive physical interventions (RPIs) (only to be used as a last resort if behaviours are putting themselves or others in danger)
Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPIs) that might be used (only to be used as a last resort if behaviours are putting themselves or others in danger)
Named parent to be contacted: <i>Any incident where restraint is used will be recorded. This is shared and signed by the named person responsible for handling RPIs and the designated safeguarding lead. Steps will be taken to ensure reconciliation following the incident.</i>
Agreed review date:

I acknowledge receipt of the Positive Handling Plan, which I understand has been created to support my child's needs. I will inform the school if the child's situation changes.

Signed (Parent/Carer): _____ **Date:** _____

Signed (member of staff completing form): _____ **Date:** _____

Signed (named person responsible for RPI): _____ **Date:** _____