

# Greenshaw Learning Trust

## **Positive Handling and Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy**

## **GLT Positive Handling and Restrictive Intervention Policy**

This policy is written in accordance with the Department for Education statutory guidance [\*Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools April 2026\*](#).

This Greenshaw Learning Trust (GLT) Policy applies to GLT as a whole and to all the schools and service units in the Trust.

The Greenshaw Learning Trust, including all the schools and services within the Trust, their Trustees, governors and staff, must abide by this GLT Policy.

In implementing this Policy the Governing Body, Headteacher and school staff, and Trust shared service staff, must take account of any advice or instruction given to them by the GLT Assistant Director for SEND & Special Provision, the GLT CEO or Board of Trustees. If there is any question about the interpretation or implementation of this Policy, the GLT Assistant Director for SEND & Special Provision or GLT CEO should be consulted.

This GLT Policy is subject to the GLT Scheme of Delegation. If there is any ambiguity or conflict then the Scheme of Delegation and any alteration or restriction to the Scheme approved by the Board of Trustees takes precedence.

### **Approval and review**

- This Policy is the responsibility of the GLT Assistant Director of SEND & Special Provision.
- This Policy was agreed by the Board of Trustees on: 27 March 2026
- This Policy is due for review by the Board of Trustees by: 31 December 2028

## **GLT Positive Handling and Restrictive Intervention Policy**

### **Introduction**

A positive and proactive culture for behaviour in school supports the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff. All staff must prioritise positive and proactive strategies to promote safe behaviours and de-escalation. It is acknowledged that, dependent on a pupil's age and stage of development, physical intervention (positive handling) might be required to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, and, in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of restrictive intervention(s) (RI) may be required. By setting out clear definitions and guidance, this GLT Policy seeks to minimise the use of restrictive interventions with a focus on proactive support, prevention and de-escalation.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff:

- i. clearly understand when the use of reasonable force is necessary and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures
- ii. are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur and, where appropriate to the setting, know who the designated staff members are and who has accessed enhanced training.

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

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

### **Physical Contact Guidance**

The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance to school staff on the use of physical contact so that staff can meet the needs of pupils with confidence, whilst safeguarding themselves and those in their care. It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, is proper and necessary.

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. Holding the hand of a pupil at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
- ii. When a pupil is being congratulated or praised

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

## **Definitions**

### **Physical Contact**

In situations in which passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom, takes place, professional judgement must apply. This should take into account knowledge of the individual pupil. Staff should act reasonably and in pupil's best interests at all times.

### **Physical Intervention (Positive Handling)**

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. 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.

### **Reasonable Force**

A term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. See 'escalating situations' below for further details.

Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time in the circumstances.

### **'Reasonable in the circumstances'**

This means using no more force than is needed.

**Restraint:** a term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

### **Restrictive Intervention (RI)**

A means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This policy uses 'restrictive interventions' as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways. These might be

physical or non-physical actions. A physical action may involve restraint where a pupil is held back physically, for example to bring a pupil under control when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention or to prevent a pupil putting themselves or others in danger. A non-physical action is an action that limits a pupil's movements, such as removing a pupil's walking aids. Restrictive intervention may include the use of equipment, medication, or seclusion, and may or may not involve the use of reasonable force. The use of equipment, medication or seclusion is never ordinarily allowed in GLT schools.

It is illegal to use force and RI for the purpose of punishment.

### **Seclusion**

Seclusion is a non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstructions, or blocking. This should only be used as a safety measure to protect others from harm when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation.

This is distinct from disciplinary removal. Removal is a situation where a pupil is required to spend a limited time out of the classroom for disciplinary reasons in a setting where they can continue their education.

### **Significant Incident**

A significant incident is defined as:

- any incident where the use of reasonable force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff including when physical force is used to implement a non-restrictive intervention and the use of seclusion.
- Any significant incident is reported to parents/carers. In deciding what is a serious incident, teachers will 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; and
  - the pupil's age.

### **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 pupils so where a pupil is putting themselves or others in direct danger, all staff must act appropriately in the pupil's best interests within the context of the situation. Staff are not expected to put themselves in danger, and removing pupils and

themselves from a source of danger is appropriate. Staff are not required to go beyond what is reasonable.

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

- i. individual consideration of pupil's 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 pupils and staff working in the school and be informed about the school's complaint procedure.

The school will ensure that all pupils 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 in line with duties set out in the Equality Act (2010).

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

### **Training**

- All staff will receive training to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the safe and lawful use of reasonable force and physical interventions with a focus on preventative and de-escalation strategies.
- Staff who are likely to need to use positive handling and/or reasonable force will have access to training that reflects the principles set out in this procedure, for example Team Teach training. The level to which staff are trained will be assessed in relation to foreseeable risk and will be informed by appropriate risk assessments for staff safety for members of staff who work regularly with pupils where the use of reasonable force may be required.
- All staff will be made aware of which staff have received enhanced training, their names and roles will be displayed in an appropriate location within the school (e.g. staff room) for reference.

### **Escalating Situations**

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93) reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil 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 pupils; whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom, during a teaching session or elsewhere
- self-injuring or placing himself or herself at risk
- injuring others
- causing damage to property, including that of the pupil himself or herself

- committing a criminal offence (even if the pupil is below the age of criminal responsibility).

As detailed in the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance, a headteacher or other authorised person can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only.

Use of reasonable force in the above situations in relation to a pupil can be exercised only where:

- a member of staff and the pupil are on school premises; or
- they are elsewhere and the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned.

Schools within GLT may use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive pupils 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 or 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 to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

### **Appropriate use of Restrictive Intervention**

The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make the assessment, staff will consider if it is necessary, proportionate, and will balance the impact on the pupil's overall welfare against any actions taken. They will consider the following factors:

- it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident
- it is a last resort and there is no other alternative
- 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 pupil are taken into account
- the pupil's additional needs are taken into account
- it is delivered with the principle of least amount of intervention for the shortest period of time possible
- it is likely to reduce risk
- it does not place the pupil at increased risk through the use of unacceptable approaches. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervention. Staff should seek to maintain a pupil's dignity at all times.

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

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

### **Recording and Reporting on the use of force**

Where a significant incident (including RIs and seclusion) has taken place, a record of the incident will be made in the Bound Book (in an administrative or safeguarding context, a "bound book" is a specific, formal document used to record serious incidents). In addition to the record in the Bound Book, an incident will be raised on CPOMs. The record on CPOMs will include reference to the page number of the record in the Bound Book and a record of the conversation with parents informing them of the incident.

The record of the incident will include the following information:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, and (where relevant) what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of any physical injuries sustained
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

All significant incidents will be reported to parents by the end of the school day or at the earliest reasonable opportunity no later than the same day. Best practice would include inviting parents to have a follow-up discussion about the incident where appropriate. Parents will receive a written record that will include:

- time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- brief account of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that instance
- brief account of what type of force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

The requirement to report applies even if the use of restrictive interventions in certain circumstances is agreed with parents as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan.

Exceptions to the requirement to report are where:

- the pupil is aged 20 or over; or
- it appears to the staff member that doing so would be likely to result in serious harm to the pupil. In this instance, the staff member must report the incident to any parent(s) who it can be reported to without resulting in significant harm or, if there are none, to the local authority within whose area the pupil is ordinarily resident.

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 and certainly by the end of the day.

Any significant incident—will be reported as soon as possible to the Headteacher or appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team designated by the Headteacher. The record of the significant incident will be reviewed by the Headteacher or appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team. Where necessary, appropriate actions or investigations will be undertaken.

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

### **Action after an Incident**

The Headteacher or appropriate designated member of the Senior Leadership Team will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required.

If required, the pupil and staff member involved should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. Any injuries will be reported in line with the school's usual procedures.

If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, 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 pupils involved in the incident will be given an opportunity to debrief and repair the relationship in a way that is appropriate to the pupil's age and stage of development. If not already captured, this is an important opportunity to capture the pupil's voice in relation to the incident. Wherever possible, this debrief will be facilitated by a member of staff who was not impacted by the incident. It is acknowledged that any incident of RPI can be very upsetting for all involved.

### **Positive Handling/Support Plans**

It is recognised that for some pupils additional support is needed, for example, where a pupil has complex sensory needs and might become over-stimulated and distressed. Where this is the case, schools will give due consideration to the joint Department of Health and Department for Education guidance Reducing the Risk for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention. As part of the pupil's support, a positive handling plan might be put in place or this might be captured in an appropriate document such as a risk assessment or behaviour support plan, written together with the pupil, where appropriate, and parents/carers. The main purpose of the positive handling plan (or equivalent risk assessment or behaviour support plan) is to ensure consistent understanding of possible triggers for the pupil and the

consistent implementation of effective proactive support and de-escalation strategies to prevent the need for RPI. As part of this discussion, where appropriate in exceptional circumstances, parents/carers and school will also transparently discuss behaviours which would result in the need for restrictive intervention to reduce risk, what this would look like and how it will be shared with the parent.

If restrictive intervention is used for a pupil who does not have a positive handling plan or equivalent (e.g. appropriate behaviour support plan or risk assessment) in place, parents/carers will be invited in to write one together with the school following the first incident. Every plan is individualised to each pupil so as to personalise de-escalation strategies. Any plan will be shared with all relevant staff and where appropriate training provided to support consistent implementation of the proactive support and de-escalation strategies.

Any plan will be reviewed regularly and, where appropriate, following a significant incident to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

### **Monitoring of Incidents**

Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team to the escalating needs of any pupil for whom reviewed provision may be required. Data on reasonable force and RIs, including the use of restrictive interventions in relation to pupils who have a protected characteristic, have SEN or other types of vulnerability, will be analysed termly by Headteachers and Education Directors to identify patterns, address any disproportionate use and implement improvements to further minimise use of RIs.

### **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 Policy.

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