



Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy

Version: 4.0

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Physical Intervention

Introduction

The Governing Body and management of the school recognise the serious implications for all concerned when the use of physical intervention becomes necessary. In particular, they acknowledge the stress and very real anxiety that such actions can and do generate in children and young people, parents and staff. The production of this policy and guidance will ensure everyone at Elms School has a positive and safe way to respond to the use of physical intervention and that pupils' rights and dignity are maintained. In line with best practice, the school is **consistently proactive** - rather than reactive - in planning to support children so that the need for physical intervention is minimised wherever possible and, where it is unavoidable, that it is carried out as safely and effectively as possible with minimum force and duration.

All staff are trained to use appropriate methods of holding and positive handling and will be expected to apply them to the best of their ability. Staff will be expected to undertake such training as provided by the school and to keep themselves up to date with the methods prescribed by that training. Any member of staff may exercise their duty of care and use physical intervention in an emergency if it is in **Best Interests** of the service-user (pupil) and that the chosen response is **necessary, reasonable and proportionate** to the assessed level of risk at that time.

This policy has been formulated to ensure that children and young people, parents, staff, the Local Authority and other agencies are fully aware of the context for the school's response to behaviour that requires physical intervention. Further it is designed to provide detailed guidance for all concerned regarding the use of holding, escorting and positive handling, including when it is appropriate to physically intervene and the preferred strategies when doing so.

The policy has been constructed through a consultative process involving the staff group. The process for policy development has included an audit of the use of holding and positive handling and the use of Rewards and Sanctions within the school, the exploration of bona fide systems for physical intervention, and the adoption of a commercially available on-line system – SIMS - for recording behaviour incidents including those where physical intervention has been necessary in conjunction with the Bound and Numbered book.

Training and Development of Staff

Elms school recognises that training and development play a crucial role in promoting positive behaviour and supporting those whose behaviour challenges.

All staff who work closely with pupils are regularly trained in behaviour management techniques, including the use of physical interventions. The programme used in this school is **Team-Teach** which has a proven track record, is nationally accredited by The Institute for Conflict Management (ICM), and locally recognised by KSENT (Kent Special Educational Needs Trust). Elms School has three qualified trainers in-house – one Advanced, two Intermediate - who deliver the programme to Elms staff and staff in other schools in the area via the Outreach Service. In addition to de-escalation techniques and the focus on a positive approach to behaviour management, the programmes also outlines the context for physical intervention and practical guidance on the application of a range of strategies and techniques to keep everyone safe during the physical management of behaviour.

As a Special School for pupils with significant SEMH needs, Elms School is categorised as an 'elevated risk' setting. Consequently, staff receive enhanced initial training with full refresher training every two

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years to comply with Team-Teach requirements; in addition, regular 'top-ups' are provided throughout the year and staff, individually or in groups, can access support at any time as necessary.

Working Realities

In accordance with current Team-Teach guidance, the following statement from the Director, George Matthews, is included in this policy with regard to working realities:

Team-Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the service user remains safe.

Key Aspects

- Clear and unequivocal emphasis on the rights of children to be kept safe at all times
- All staff understand that the use of restrictive physical intervention is a **'last resort strategy'** where - as part of an ongoing dynamic risk assessment - it has been decided that there is no alternative strategy or response that can be used to maintain safety¹
- Staff need to keep themselves safe at all times
- Staff also need to consider the suitability of their clothes & jewellery (see staff Code of Conduct).
- Staff numbers: minimum of 2 involved (unless immediate risk overrides)
- Seeking help is seen as a professional expectation and strength → "Help protocol & Help Script"
- Understanding of the value of enhanced communication skills and team work through the role of "critical friends" & involvement of key individuals and services
- Emphasis on caring, protecting and enhancing positive relationships through the use of Restorative Approaches
- All significant incidents should be followed up by a positive listening and learning process (recorded in the Bound and Numbered book and on SIMS)
- All significant incidents are reporting to and discussed with parents/parents as soon as possible
- Past experiences of children will affect the way they respond to physical interventions. Those with a history of physical or sexual abuse will often have painful and disturbing memories triggered by such interventions
- Children with the above experiences could also experience adverse reactions to witnessing physical interventions
- All actions must be conducted in the context of the school's policy
- Staff have a right to be trained in the use of physical interventions
- Clear and accurate records of the antecedents, behaviour and consequences must be maintained. All physical interventions are recorded in the Bound and Numbered book, which is reviewed weekly at the Behaviour Team meeting.

Context

¹ **Last Resort** - The use of force is described as a 'last resort'. This does not mean that all other possible alternatives must be tried and seen to fail before force may be used. It means staff should consider alternatives and balance the risks of using force against alternative, realistic options. (Allen, B. Physical Contact 2015 p23)

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Elms School is a lively and thriving community dedicated to the provision of high quality teaching and pastoral care for pupils with a range of learning and social, emotional and mental health needs. It is in this light that pupils and their parents will be appropriately involved in formulating any plans that are made to meet their individual needs. Where appropriate, these plans will detail how specific behaviours will be managed and the use of holding and positive handling will be detailed as an integral element of the plan.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools stated aims and objectives, and the school's Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy as well as KSENT's 'General Statement of Principles' relating to the Positive Handling of Pupils.

The policy has been constructed in the context of the DfEE amendment to section 550A of the Education Act 1996/Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 (contained for reference purposes on the back page of the Positive Handling Plan pro forma - ANNEX 1) and the LA Policy. The policy is also written in the context of the most recent DfE guidance documents: 'Use of reasonable force – Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies' (July 13) and 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention' (June 19).

Principles

It is recognised that good behaviour must be acknowledged and celebrated as a matter of course and that, this in itself, is a primary tool in managing behaviour. This positive approach and associated strategies form the basis of our Positive Relationship (Behaviour) Policy and, indeed, the very ethos of Elms School. Additionally, the management of behaviour at Elms School is based on the belief that children and young people have the right to learn from their experiences of life. This will at times involve them testing the clearly defined boundaries established by the behaviour management system used in the school.

All staff must take a positive approach to improving pupils' behaviour and self-esteem, taking every opportunity to find out why a pupil behaves as they do, explore factors that influence a pupil's behaviour and to identify early warning signs to prevent escalation.

A fundamental issue to be considered in the use of any form of physical contact with a child or young person is their absolute right to be both "touched" and "not touched". Non-verbal interventions are a very powerful part of the behavioural dialogue. A hand on the shoulder, a pat on the back, a smile, can convey to a child that you recognise him/her as an individual and that you care about him/her. A brief non-verbal message offered fairly frequently when a child is behaving well can keep a child on task and give a very positive signal.

For some young people who may have had experiences of abuse in the past the issue of being touched in any way must be managed sensitively. Similarly, for some young people their need for emotional support and comfort may at times extend to being physically comforted and this too must be managed appropriately. In the light of these examples the judgements that all adults must make before touching any young person are as follows:

- Is the physical contact truly in the best interests of the child?
- How do I feel about this level of contact? How will this intervention affect my relationship with the child?
- Is this age appropriate given my knowledge of the young person?
- What would be the consequence of not making physical contact?

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Wherever possible strategies for physical contact / intervention should be detailed within a plan formulated with the young person and shared with parents/carers and other interested parties (Positive Handling Plan – ANNEX 1). The actions might then be properly reviewed.

It is the responsibility of everyone at Elms School to ensure that the environment is calm and safe for all. Children and young people have the responsibility to recognise when their behaviour is likely to compromise this situation and to have due regard for the comfort, safety and well-being of all within the school community. Parents/carers must be encouraged to support the school in the provision of a safe calm and happy community by discussing with their son/daughter the need to be sensitive to the needs of others in the school. Our Home-School Contract is one way that this is achieved especially as it sets clear expectations for both parents/carers and the school from the point of admission. In addition, our Code of Conduct and class behaviour norms make our community values explicit. Staff consistently refer to our Code of Conduct when discussing incidents, expectations and consequences with parents/carers.

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be implemented and maintained in the following way:

- the recruitment and selection of staff which will be governed by the principles enshrined in the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 and the school's Recruitment Policy.
- as a minimum, the selection process will ensure that references are sought and obtained from the most recent employer; the Children's Barred List has been checked and enhanced DBS clearance has been received. As relevant, interview techniques go beyond the standard formal interview and include opportunities for candidates to engage in focused debates designed to provide insights to their individual values and beliefs; in addition, Student Council and appropriate interview tests form part of the recruitment process.
- the provision to every member of staff and Governor a copy of the policy document; the policy to be signed off when read
- induction of all new staff will ensure that there is an opportunity for detailed study and discussion of the policy with senior staff and ongoing discussion within the staff group
- managers have in place systems to identify individual and group training needs; ensure a consistent interpretation of policy and practice; support the formulation of personal development plans
- regular training activities including Team-Teach.

The implementation of this policy is monitored daily by the Senior Leadership Team and reported regularly to governors. The efficacy of the policy is evaluated in relation to its impact on individual needs, health and safety, and the good order of the school at least termly by the Head Teacher, via the Governors' Health and Safety Committee who see all Physical Intervention reports.

Definitions

For the purposes of this document the terms guiding, escorting, holding and physical restraint will be defined by the outcome which is intended when the physical intervention is applied.

- **Prompts** – the use of touch (minimal physical contact) to gain attention and encourage a child to make a better decision in a situation and/or to follow the lead of an adult
- **Guiding/Escorting** – the intention is to move a child away from a particular area; the degree of force will determine when this becomes a physical restraint - i.e. when the child has no choice but to move under the directions of staff

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- **Holding** – the intention is to keep the child in a particular place: see above for when this becomes positive handling
- **Physical restraint/restrictive (physical) intervention** – the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body of the child
- **Positive Handling** – refers to the full range of proactive and reactive strategies and interventions - both non-physical and physical – used by staff to support a child; in daily practice, this is the preferred term used by staff when discussing the use of significant physical force with colleagues, children and their parents/carers

Escorting and Holding

These interventions are to be used to discourage and redirect from unwanted behaviours which are likely to lead to further escalation and possible loss of control by the young person resulting in severe disruption to the orderly environment, damage to property, damage to self and/or others.

Staff should use their judgement in using this method as to whether it is likely to lead to a full-scale physical restraint. Factors for consideration will be the likely reaction of the young person based on the most recent and accurate information available and the content of any plan; the environment - i.e. the impact of onlookers, events immediately preceding the incident and whether the young person has been misusing alcohol or drugs.

It is important that at all times the young person is made aware of what is expected of them and that as soon as there is a genuine attempt to comply with such expectations the hold be ceased. **The amount of force that is used should always be the minimum necessary to achieve the desired outcome as defined above.** In this connection, it should be noted that Team-Teach physical responses are designed in such a way that the degree of force and control can be safely and smoothly increased or decreased as an unfolding situation requires.

Physical restraint

Physical restraint should only be used when other less restrictive options have been considered and judged to be less likely to succeed. In the first instance, staff should routinely attempt to diffuse the situation through positive behaviour support responses/strategies²:

- appropriate use of language
- appropriate use of voice in terms of pace volume and tone
- adjustment of personal space and body position to ensure minimum threat to the young person and maximum safety for staff generally a sideways stance
- use of facial expression and eye contact which is positive and calming
- appropriate use of humour
- making clear the expectations of all concerned in the incident and the likely consequences if behaviour deteriorates further
- seeking help from other staff to diffuse the situation
- When restrictive physical intervention is used, it should always be **USED WITH CARE**

² See Footnote 1 re 'last resort'.

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U R G E N T L Y	required to prevent immediate possibility of harm or damage to self, others or property
S A F E	using only the minimum of force necessary
E F F E C T I V E	not if it will make the situation worse
D E C E N T	great care must always be taken to avoid sensitive areas of the body, the risk of cultural offence or the risk of sexual arousal
W I T N E S S E D	every effort must be made to ensure the presence of another member of staff as a witness and assistant (q.v. critical friend)
I N D E P E N D E N T	of size the method of positive handling used must depend for its efficacy on the technique and not the relative sizes of staff member and young person
T I M E D	the positive handling should only continue for the minimum time for it to be effective
H A R M L E S S	it must always be an act of care and control never punishment
C A L M I N G	the intention is to help the young person regain their self-control, there should always be a calming dialogue to that end
A P P R O P R I A T E	to the circumstances, only when all else has failed, only for as long as necessary
R E C O R D E D	all incidents of positive handling must be recorded as soon as possible in the Bound and Numbered book. Parents are informed on the same day. Each incident is also recorded electronically by the staff involved on SIMS.
E X P L A I N E D	reasons for the positive handling (restrictive physical intervention) and resolution of the incident should be conducted with the young person as soon after the incident as will be effective, ideally involving the member(s) of staff concerned, except under extraordinary circumstances. Outcomes should be incorporated in Provision Plan and behaviour management plans. All physical restraints should be discussed at the earliest opportunity by the staff concerned and a senior member of staff.

Ground Hold Recovery

For some pupils, it may be necessary to undertake a ground hold recovery. A select group of staff, including all members of the Pupil Support Team, have received further training in these advanced techniques. The HT and DHT have received training and act as 'guardians' in the event of a ground hold. Ground holds are always a last resort and used to prevent serious damage to people or property if all other measures are not working. Staff have been trained in both front and back ground hold recoveries and meet regularly to practise the techniques on each other. The LA Area Safeguarding Advisor is invited to attend training.

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Following a ground hold, the incident is recorded both in the Bound and Numbered Book and on the Team-Teach recording sheet which is then sent to Team-Teach on a termly basis. As standard practice, the pupil is debriefed immediately and checked for any injury. A formal debrief always follows for all staff involved as well. Parents are informed that their child has been in a ground hold.

Support for Staff

All staff will be trained in the methods of holding and positive handling as per **Team-Teach**. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of Elms School community at all times. This responsibility must extend to themselves in the first instance.

As part of this, it is essential that staff always make a judgement quickly about the safety of using a restrictive physical intervention based on the facts of the situation confronting them (q.v. dynamic risk assessment). They should only proceed if they have determined that all else has reasonably been tried and failed, that there is likely to be serious harm to persons or property if nothing is done or that the good order of the environment will be severely and adversely disrupted and, finally, that they can apply the hold or restraint safely for the young person and themselves, considering environmental factors, risk, health, size, dress, jewellery and the safety of others. Above all, they need to be sure in their own mind that the action they take is in the Best Interests of the service-user and that the action is necessary, reasonable and proportionate.

In circumstances where staff judge that they are unable to use force such that it satisfies the conditions above, they should quickly send for another member of staff and, in the meantime, do what they can to safely contain the situation. It should be remembered that the children and young people at Elms School are active members of the community and as such should be encouraged to go for help when the circumstance dictates it to be necessary.

If an incident takes place outside the school premises staff should encourage members of the public to contact the school offering them the school's contact details in the form of the business card provided.

Staff that have had to use a significant physical intervention will be offered the opportunity to discuss their feelings about the incident as soon as they are ready. It is an expectation that all staff acknowledge the importance of using a senior member of staff to discuss the issues raised for them personally by using a restrictive physical intervention. Supervision over a longer period will be offered where necessary.

The Governors and Leadership Team will support the actions of staff in the use of physical intervention provided that it has been conducted in the context of this policy and in accordance with the values, principles, strategies and techniques promoted by Team-Teach.

The school recognises that the use of physical intervention could potentially lead to a complaint. Each use of a restrictive physical intervention will, as a matter of course, lead to the completion of the Bound and Numbered book and a telephone call to parents/carers. If after these measures have been taken a parent/carers or pupil wishes to complain, the school will investigate the complaint in accordance with DfES circular 1/95 with advice from the Area Safe Guarding Advisor or, where necessary, co-operate fully with any externally-led investigation.

Support for Pupils

Physical intervention can be very upsetting for pupils. Pupils should be offered emotional support throughout an incident and for as long after as needed to help them get back to their emotional status

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quo. Staff are expected to begin rebuilding bridges and repairing relationships as soon as possible and, likewise, to work restoratively to facilitate post-incident learning. First Aid may also be needed and this is built into the post-incident check-list. As part of the follow-up, staff will – individually and as a team - take every opportunity to develop their understanding of the child, the triggers and causes of the behaviour in question and, likewise, to explore alternative strategies, etc. for the future.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the risk attached to physical intervention is central to this policy. All physical intervention incorporates a dynamic risk assessment throughout the incident. We support the child, intervene early and plan the management of behaviour. We carry out a formal risk assessment based on the HSE guidance 'Five steps to risk assessment' (Positive Handling Plan – Annex 2).

Reporting and Recording

- Pupils likely to require physical intervention must be risk assessed by form tutors in conjunction with the Head of Pupil Personal Development and Behaviour.
- From this risk assessment, a Positive Handling Plan must be written and agreed with the pupil, parents/carers and social worker, if appropriate.
- All positive behaviour plans which involve physical intervention must be reviewed on a termly basis. Each positive handling should be followed by a de-briefing including the pupil involved, members of staff and a member of the Senior Leadership Team. At the de-briefing meeting a positive handling and intervention report should be completed. At this point the efficacy of the intervention should be evaluated, and any necessary adjustments to the positive behaviour plan should be made.
- Any changes made to the positive handling plan must be agreed with pupils, parents/carers and social workers.
- All incidents involving physical intervention must be recorded using the Bound and Numbered book and SIMS within 24 hours when possible.
- The Senior Leadership Team will ensure an up to date log of positive handlings in the Bound and Numbered Book.
- The Headteacher will only sign off once an entry is fully completed.

Emergencies

All members of staff have a **Duty of Care** and are permitted in the case of an emergency to intervene physically using reasonable force. They must then follow all the reporting and recording procedures detailed in this policy.

<u>Allowed</u>	<u>Not Allowed</u>
'Emergency' response – any member of staff – as long as:	
It is in the Best Interests of the child	Attempts to inflict physical punishment/pain
Reasonable and proportionate force is used	Use of unnecessary or disproportionate force
This is to defuse dangerous situations, e.g. running into the road	Locking a pupil in a room alone and unsupervised
This is to prevent a pupil committing a serious offence	Unauthorised holds (e.g. double basket hold)
This is to prevent serious injury – self or others	
We are also allowed to:	
Change our environment, e.g. double and high door handles – preventing small children from exiting.	

Dates of Training:	Kept by Head Teacher / Office Manager electronically
Dates of follow ups:	Kept by Head Teacher / Office Manager electronically
Registers of Attendance at Training:	Kept –electronically & in Staff Rooms & Offices.
Positive Handling Plans	Kept - Head of PPD and B office, form tutor's classrooms
Revision of this policy:	Every 2 years

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UPDATE SCHEDULE

Version	Date	Reason for Update
1.00	01/01/03	First Version of Policy
2.00	25/06/2007	General typing, grammatical errors and some layout changes. Addition of Annex 1,2,3,4
2.00	22/06/2011	review minor changes
3.00	8.5.17	Overdue update
4.0	12.7.19	Review and update. Remove Annex 2 & 3. Addition of Annex re purpose and use of the Bound and Numbered Book.

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