



PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

REFERENCE:	V01 – 09/2025
OWNERSHIP:	AP Lead
AUTHORISED BY:	Emma Draper (Director)
REVIEW:	Annually – September 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to make clear the position of Churchwood Forest School AP with regards to necessary physical interventions and to safeguard the well-being of students and staff when a situation or incident requires the use of physical intervention.

It is the objective of Churchwood Forest School AP to maintain consistent and safe practices in the use of handling, reasonable force & restraint.

SCOPE

This policy applies to Churchwood Forest School AP this includes all employees who work within The Churchwood Forest School AP as well as contractors, volunteers and visitors.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

As an organisation that prioritises the safeguarding of children and all vulnerable people, The Churchwood Forest School AP is committed to providing a safe environment across all we do by actively adopting strategies that embed a culture of zero tolerance for abuse of any kind.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff working within Churchwood Forest School AP are responsible for upholding the principles of this Physical Intervention Policy, prioritising the safety and well-being of pupils and colleagues. This includes actively engaging in ongoing training on de-escalation techniques and the safe, proportionate, and reasonable use of physical intervention as a last resort. Staff must adhere strictly to established protocols for recording and reporting all incidents of physical intervention, ensuring transparency and contributing to continuous review and improvement of our preventative strategies.

The Provision Lead and Education Leadership Team/Directors are responsible for ensuring adequate training oversight, and a supportive culture that minimises the need for physical



interventions, always seeking to understand and address the root causes of challenging behaviours.

DEFINITIONS

Handling – refers to any physical intervention applied by a member of staff where it necessary to make physical contact with a student in order to manage their conduct or ensure their own or others safety. Handling strategies may be restrictive or non-restrictive and include shepherding, guiding, supporting, blocking, confining, holding and, in the most extreme cases, restraining.

Use of reasonable force — using no more force than is needed, applied reasonably, proportionately and only where necessary to prevent injury, serious damage to property or the commission of a crime, with constant regard to the child’s welfare and any SEND/medical vulnerabilities.

Restraint - a higher-level intervention only as a last resort to prevent imminent harm to the child or others or serious damage to property, and never as a punishment. Prone restraints, neck holds, techniques that restrict breathing, and pain-compliance are prohibited. Consider SEND/medical risks and stop immediately if distress or breathing concerns arise.

Significant Injury would include: actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self- poisoning.

It must be shown that on any occasion where physical restraint is used there were strong indicators that if immediate action had not been taken, significant injury would have followed

POLICY

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Physical Intervention and the Law

Staff may use reasonable, necessary and proportionate force under **common law** to:

- Prevent the commission of a crime or immediate risk thereof
- Prevent injury to the child or others, or serious damage to property
- Prevent an **immediate and significant risk** where de-escalation has failed (not as a behaviour management sanction)

Staff must act **only** where necessary to prevent harm, using **the minimum force for the shortest time**, and should be able to justify their actions with reference to risk, alternatives tried, and the



child's needs (including SEND).

Implementation of Physical Intervention

Only staff trained and currently assessed as competent in an accredited programme (e.g., MAPA/CPI or equivalent) may use restraining holds. All staff may use low-level guiding to prevent immediate harm. A training/competency log is maintained and refreshed at agreed intervals.

No member of staff is required to employ any physical intervention strategy if they are not comfortable or confident to do so effectively.

No member of staff should intervene physically if they have reason to believe that to do so would worsen the situation/incident that is taking place.

In all circumstances where physical intervention is or may become required, members of staff should ensure that adult assistance is requested before intervention, although it is understood that circumstances may lead to the need for intervention prior to the assistance arriving.

Staff considering handling, use of reasonable force or restraint must provide opportunity for the student to alter their behaviour/actions before employing a physical intervention strategy and should continue to make instructions to the student and details of their intended interventions clear.

The method of physical intervention employed must use the minimum reasonable force for the minimum length of time.

Positive Behaviour Support plans and reasonable adjustments (Equality Act 2010) must be considered and implemented to reduce the need for force, particularly for pupils with SEND/medical conditions.

Recording Physical Intervention

All uses of force (including guiding where the child objects/distress is evident) **must be recorded** on the Physical Intervention Record **as soon as possible and within 24 hours**, with **same-day** alert to the DSL and Provision Lead. **Do record** any physical contact used to control or restrain, **any** contact the child perceives negatively, and **all** incidents involving injury, medical treatment or police attendance.

The circumstances and nature of the physical intervention will be held on the record of the student involved.

The DSL will inform any necessary agencies/authorities of the physical intervention in accordance



with DFE and LA guidance. Parents/carers and the commissioning school/LA are notified the same day. The child is offered first-aid/medical check and a post-incident debrief; staff involved receive debrief/supervision. RIDDOR is considered where injuries meet reporting thresholds; all actions are logged. The Provision Lead will ensure that parents/carers are appropriately informed.

For the safeguarding of both staff and student, any subsequent investigation of the situation/incident should be undertaken by a member of staff other than the one applying the physical intervention.

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Appendix A: *Guidance for Staff re: Handling, Use of Reasonable Force & Restraint*

1. Purpose of this document

- To provide for the safety and security of pupils in need of physical intervention.
- To clarify for staff the steps they are allowed to take if a situation requiring physical intervention arises
- To enable staff to distinguish between what intervention is and is not acceptable.
- To ensure that staff have read the documentation from DfE.
- To help ensure that any physical intervention is minimal, infrequent, recorded and that relevant authorities and parents are appropriately informed.

2. The decision to employ a Physical Intervention Strategy

You should be aware that all staff who have responsibility for a student or group of students are authorised to employ physical intervention strategies in the event they are necessary and that the law allows you to intervene in this manner.

You should however be aware that you have a choice whether or not to intervene physically in any given situation and that you should not do so if you are uncomfortable with the situation or not confident to deal with it effectively.

You should be aware that in the event that you employ a physical intervention strategy, the parents of the child will be informed of your actions, the record of the intervention will be kept on the student's file and where necessary relevant authorities will be notified of the incident for your own future protection.

3. In what way can you Physically Intervene?

Any application of physical intervention must only use the minimum force for the minimum amount of time.

There are a number of ways in which you can physically intervene and you must choose the strategy appropriate to the situation and presenting least risk to yourself, the student and other persons.

Appropriate actions include:

- **Shepherding or Guiding;** using body positioning and positive gestures to move a student away from harm. This may include the placing of a hand on the back (between the shoulder blades) and using reasonable force to actively move them from one place to another.
- **Blocking or Interposing;** placing yourself between the student and their objective (e.g exit, another student) thereby preventing the potential injury damage or prejudice to good order.
- **Holding and Leading;** leading the student (with open hand e.g by the upper arm) to

prevent them from injury, damage, etc. In cases of resistance from a student, it may be necessary to employ holding to effectively achieve shepherding and, hence you are actively leading them away.

- **Restraint;** is exceptional and brief, using no more force than needed. Prone/face-down holds, neck holds, techniques that restrict breathing, and pain-compliance are prohibited. Where more than one adult is needed, a trained lead coordinates roles and continuous dynamic risk assessment.

4. In what ways must you NOT Physically Intervene?

The purpose of physical intervention is essentially to maintain good order and ensure the safety of all individuals, therefore it is never appropriate to employ a physical intervention strategy if you are not in control of your own emotions. Physical interventions must never be employed in anger or frustration. If you find yourself angry or frustrated by the situation at hand you must step back and allow someone else to manage the issue.

It is never appropriate to use physical intervention strategies as a punishment.

Just as there are a number of acceptable intervention strategies, there are also a number of actions it is completely inappropriate to take.

Inappropriate actions include:

- **Hitting or Striking;** while it is entirely possible that in the course of an intervention (eg. breaking up a fight) you may be hit yourself, you must not strike a student.
- **Deliberately inflicting pain;** it is not okay to twist limbs or put pressure on joints (eg. arm up a student's back), pull or hold hair, pinch or hold a student in a pain inducing way (eg. by the ear).
- **Making contact with sexually sensitive areas of the body;** where at all possible contact should be restricted to arms, shoulders and the back as previously described.
- **Restricting breathing;** by holding round the throat or for a prolonged period around the chest. It is also never appropriate to sit on/straddle a student or hold them face down to the floor.
- Do not use prone/face-down or seated restraints that risk positional asphyxia; do not apply pain-compliance techniques; do not use holds that place pressure on the neck, chest or back.

5. Guidance for managing your intervention

- Always give a student an opportunity to resolve the situation without use of physical

intervention first.

- Always send for assistance from colleagues or another authorised adult; other students should never be involved in physical intervention. You may have to intervene before help arrives, but not managing this entirely on your own is safer for all concerned.
- Be aware of your emotions. Are you comfortable and confident to deal with this scenario without anger? If not – don't intervene.
- Continue to communicate with the student (and witnesses) throughout the incident even if the student doesn't respond. Be clear about what you are doing and inform the student that the intervention will cease when it is no longer necessary
- Wherever possible, ensure two adults are present (one leads, one witnesses); maintain a running commentary of actions; cease immediately once the risk reduces; and document de-escalation attempts and the child's voice in the record
- Apply only appropriate strategies and the minimum required force to achieve the required outcome (prevention of injury/harm, student/staff safety, restoration of good order). Release the student once this has been achieved.
- Manage the situation calmly – even if the student responds negatively.
- Complete a 'Physical Intervention Record Form' as soon as possible after the event.

6. Minimising the need for Physical Intervention

In most circumstances Physical Intervention really should be a last resort or an emergency action.

Therefore, all staff should:

- endeavour to create a calm environment which will minimise the risk of incidents where the use of physical intervention may be required;
- endeavour to teach pupils how to manage strong emotions and conflict through opportunities for SMSC and wider aspects of the provision curriculum;
- quickly seek to de-escalate incidents if they do arise;
- only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force;
- be aware of risk assessments and positive handling plans for specific individual pupils.



POLICY CONTEXT

AP context (AP): Churchwood Forest School AP operates as a Alternative Provision (AP).

Commissioning schools/LAs retain statutory responsibilities for admissions, attendance and sanctions; Churchwood Forest School AP provides same-day safeguarding information to enable those duties.

Reasonable force benchmark: Churchwood Forest School AP staff rely on common law to prevent injury or crime and apply the reasonable, necessary, proportionate, in the best interests test (see KCSIE 2025 on reasonable force) as good-practice benchmarks.

This policy relates to the following legislative requirements, standards and internal documents:

Legislation & Standards	- Common law powers to prevent injury or crime (reasonable force test); KCSIE 2025 ('The use of 'reasonable force' in schools and colleges' — used here as benchmark guidance for AP) - Use of reasonable force in schools (DfE) — adopted as good-practice indicators; Churchwood Forest School AP staff rely on common law rather than school-only statutory powers - Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention (DfE Guidance) - Behaviour in Schools: Guidance for Headteachers and School Staff (GOV. - Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE - GOV.) - Working Together to Safeguard Children (GOV.) - Human Rights Act 1998 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
Related Forms & Documents	- Behaviour Policy - Safeguarding Policy - Drugs and Alcohol Policy

VERSION CONTROL

We will review our documentation regularly and we reserve the right to amend our policies and procedures at any time.

Version	Date	Change	Author/	Approved by:
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1	29/9/25	Initial Version	Mark Wrangles	
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