



Positive Handling Policy

Withycombe Raleigh C of E Primary School: 2025

Vision and Values

Our whole school vision is:

‘Growing Happy, Caring Hearts and Minds’.

The foundation of this can be found in the Bible, John 15 v 12;
‘My command is this: love each other as I have loved you’.

The Christian faith is centred around the love of God and we have developed our school values that are based on the GRACE of God. The values are Generosity, Respect, Agape, Courage and Empathy. These form and shape the ethos of our school culture and are a core component of our Collective Worship.

At Withycombe Raleigh we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children.

Definition:

The term positive handling includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing children in everyday circumstances and when they are displaying challenging behaviours. The term ‘physical intervention’ is applied when reasonable force is used to protect the child from harming themselves, others or seriously damaging property.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy, Whole School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and the Intimate Care Policy.

Purpose of this policy

This policy aims to give all members of the school community clear guidance so that any physical intervention that they undertake is safe for all concerned. In particular, it aims to describe the circumstances in which restrictive physical intervention is an appropriate response and how staff at the school will fulfill their responsibilities in those circumstances.

At Withycombe Raleigh we aim to help children take responsibility for their own behaviour.

This will be done through a combination of approaches including:

- Positive role modelling
- Providing a stimulating, interesting and challenging learning environment
- Setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations as set out in our Behaviour Policy
- Providing positive feedback

There are two main types of handling.

1. Positive Physical Touch:

The positive use of touch is a normal part of human interaction. At Withycombe Raleigh we will exercise appropriate care when handling children (see Safeguarding Policy). We will use positive handling in appropriate situations for example:

- Giving guidance to children (such as how to hold a paintbrush, or when climbing)
- Providing emotional support (such as placing an arm around a distressed child)
- Physical care (such as first aid or toileting)
- Giving First Aid
- Holding a hand

Staff need to be aware of the sensitivities associated with any form of physical contact with children through their Safeguarding Training and Guidance.

2. Physical Intervention:

However, there are very occasional times when a child's behaviour presents particular challenges that may require physical handling. At Withycombe Raleigh we will only use restrictive physical intervention as a last resort in the circumstances for the purposes of preventing children from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely:

- Committing any offence (or for a child under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older child)
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of any person (including the child himself).
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any child receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Examples of situations in which physical interventions might be permissible are listed as:

- A child attacks a member of staff, or another child;
- Children are fighting;
- A child is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- A child is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- A child is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- A child absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB only if at risk if not kept in the classroom or school);
- A child persistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom and is disrupting the learning of other children in the class.
- A child is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

(DfEE, 1998, Circular 10/98, p.2).

Staff will aim to prevent the use of physical handling by using positive behaviour management strategies, such as de-escalation techniques.

Physical Handling will never be used out of anger or as a punishment.

Methods to be Used:

If there is a child with a known Special Educational Need then a member of staff who knows the child best, typically their key-person or Special Needs Teaching Assistant will be involved in keeping the child safe and managing their behaviour. All other methods of behaviour management will be considered/used before any physical intervention is used, such as de-escalation, deploying humour, distraction, relocation and offering choices.

Members of teaching staff and other adults identified by the Head Teacher, who are trained can be authorised to use reasonable force and they should only employ PIPs approach techniques for Positive Handling.

All staff need to adopt a calm and considered approach, but when circumstances justify, the following are ACCEPTABLE:

- Physically interposing between children
- Blocking a child's path.
- Leading a child by the arm.
- Shepherding a child away by placing a hand in the centre of the child's back.
- In extreme circumstances, more restrictive (PIPs) physical interventions may be used, e.g. Two Person Lapover

If an adult feels, at any time, that they are unable to intervene in a situation because they themselves might be at risk of injury, they should summon assistance from another colleague and attempt to diffuse the situation verbally until help arrives.

Positive Handling Plans

Where an individual child's behaviour means they are likely to require physical handling we will discuss this with the parents and set out a Positive Handling Plan (PHP). This plan would specify the staff member(s) most appropriate and other methods to be used to support the child and maintain their physical and emotional health. The plan must include appropriate de-escalation strategies as well as specific details of positive handling techniques that will be used when required.

Other professionals appropriate to the child may be consulted in the making of the plan.

These plans will be reviewed regularly and if there are major changes in the child's behaviours and successful behaviour management strategies.

Recording and Reporting

The main priority throughout must be safety - the safety of the children and the staff.

Any members of staff involved in a restraint situation should record their involvement within 24 hours, to comply with school guidelines. This needs to go on CPOMs under the category 'Physical Intervention'. Staff need to ensure they record the following areas:

- Date, Time and Place where the intervention occurred
- Potential triggers to behaviour
- Full record of incident, including behaviours that required intervention
- All staff involved (witnesses and those who needed to physically intervene)
- Positive handling strategies deployed and the length of time used
- Debrief and when parents were informed (and any feedback they would like to provide)

Parents of these children will be informed as soon as possible (by telephone or in person) on the day the incident occurs.

It is distressing to be involved in an intervention that involves physical handling, whether as the adult doing the holding, the child being held or observers. Following a restraint there should be both a support and reflective structure in place for both staff and children. Support will be given to the child so they understand why there was physical intervention. This conversation will happen when all are calm enough to talk productively and the child can understand. It may also be necessary to have similar conversations with children who observed the incident.

Support will be given to the staff involved both, directly or as observers. The staff will have an opportunity to share what happened with other staff members.

We aim that the after-incident support will repair any potential strain to the relationship between the child and adult. Staff will review the Positive Handling Plan aiming to reduce the use of physical intervention.

Advice from a professional association might also have to be sought especially where the incident is serious.

Complaints

Where a complaint is made by a child or a parent about force used in an incident, the school will follow the recognised complaints procedures.

Reviewed: September 2025

Ratified by Governors: September 2025