



Grafton Primary School

Positive Handling Policy



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September 2025

This policy covers many of the articles from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some key ones are listed below.

Article 19 – Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or mistreated by anyone.

Article 36 – Every child must be protected against any form of bad treatment.

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Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles that this policy links to: 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 24, 27, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 36, 39



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Date written: September 2025

Date for review: September 2026

Introduction

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils who may need to be positively handled. This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils, specifically the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Complaints Procedure, Intimate Care Policy, SEND policy, Whistleblowing Policy.

Purpose of the policy

Good professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in school respond positively to the discipline practised by the staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of positive handling may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in Grafton Primary School:

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

The application of any form of positive handling places staff in a vulnerable situation. 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** in order to prevent the need for positive handling.

Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff, or property, are at risk.

Definitions

(a) Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact takes place between staff and pupils, e.g. in sports/PE or to comfort pupils.

(b) Physical Intervention

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.

(c) Positive Handling

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



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Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working at Grafton Primary School has the right to:

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

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

- individual consideration of their needs by staff that have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in the school;
- 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. Parents should have committed themselves to ensure the good behaviour of their child and that the child understands and follows the School's Behaviour Policy.

Training

Positive Handling training will be made available to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the Head teacher. No member of staff will be expected to undertake positive handling without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken.

Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour

Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches will be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- a) Verbal acknowledgment of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain; this includes negotiation, care and concern.
- b) Further verbal reprimand stating: this is the second request for compliance an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
- c) Warning of potential need to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. At this point it may be necessary to summon assistance from trained staff, staff who are more familiar with the child's needs, or a member of the SLT.



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d) Physical intervention. Reasonable physical intervention using the minimum degree of contact to prevent a child harming him or herself, others, or property.

Children with SEN or Disabilities

Any physical intervention should be conducted making reasonable adjustment for students with SEN or disabilities. Positive touch will often be necessary with children who have additional needs, for example, hand over hand support, help to physically access equipment, support with physically moving body parts (sensory circuits, physiotherapy sessions) and when children initiate hugs or cuddles to help them to emotionally regulate themselves. Physical touch is important in these situations and staff are able to provide this level of support. All classrooms and working spaces have vision panels within the doors or windows to ensure visibility to help safeguard staff when they need to provide support in a physical manner. Verbal de-escalation strategies may not be as effective with children with additional needs and staff should call for support from trained staff when required if more physical interventions are required.

Escalating Situations

- The 1996 Education Act (Section 550A) stipulates that reasonable physical intervention 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 (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 pupil himself or herself;
- committing a criminal offence (even if the pupil is below the age of criminal responsibility).

Types of Incidents Incidents described above fall into 3 broad categories:

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property;
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations which fall within one of the first two categories are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil; pupils are fighting;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing injury, damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of materials or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor or in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself;
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave the school.

Examples of behaviour which fall into the third category are:

- a pupil persistently refusing to do as requested;
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.



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Acceptable measures of Physical Intervention.

- Positive handling 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;
- it is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result;
- the age, understanding and the gender of the pupil are taken into account;
- it is likely to achieve the desired result.

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

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

- physically interposing themselves between pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path; escorting a pupil; shepherding a pupil away.

Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

Whenever positive handling is used, staff will keep talking to the pupil.

Recording

Where positive handling has been used a record of the incident always needs to be kept. All recording needs to be completed as soon as possible following the incident and needs to include the following:

- name of pupil
- date, time, location of incident and approximate length of time
- a brief account of what type of reasonable force was used and the degree of force
- a brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in this instance
- details of any injuries sustained if applicable
- attempts made to calm the situation
- names of people who witnessed the situation
- any damage/harm to persons or property name of person informing parents
- after investigation a summary of action taken

All incidents of positive handling must be recorded in the red bound book which is kept in the main office and reported to the parents. The school will regularly review the number and type of incidents in which physical intervention and/or restraint has been necessary. This will be used to ensure that there is adherence to this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the school.



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Action after an Incident

The Head teacher 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 pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Child Protection Procedure
 - Staff Facing Allegations of Abuse Procedure
 - Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedure
 - School Behaviour Policy
 - Exclusions Procedure
- Members of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.

In case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy regarding Positive Handling and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's Complaints about Staff Procedure Policy. The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints but other governors will not be involved as a complaint may require further action on their part.

Monitoring of Incidents

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use positive handling, this will always be recorded and documented. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Head teacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using positive handling. This process will address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.



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Appendix 1

Advice for staff

1. At Grafton Primary School, we believe that physical intervention and/or restraint should be the last resort. In the majority of cases de-escalation and diffusion are the appropriate methods of dealing with situations that might result in a threat to the health and safety of any individuals. On extremely rare occasions it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically with or between pupils. These include:

- Injury, or risk of injury, to another pupil
- Injury, or risk of injury, to a member of staff
- Serious damage to property that would result in harm to a person.

2. Any intervention should be a last resort and be **proportionate, reasonable** and **appropriate**, and be done with the aim to **reduce** not **provoke**.

3. All staff owe a **duty of care** to pupils. To take no action, where the outcome is that a pupil injures him/herself, or another, including staff, could be seen as negligence.

4. Members of staff facing confrontational situations with pupils are reminded that the following behaviours can either reduce or inflame incidents, and that a brief moment of risk assessment may allow the time to decide on the appropriate action necessary.

5. Staff are strongly advised not to physically stop pupils from leaving their room if the member of staff considered that there would be a risk of physical harm to themselves.

6. **Remaining calm** – the ability to try and remain calm and appear relaxed is less likely to provoke. A relaxed posture and a non-threatening (CALM) stance, i.e. not toe-to-toe, are recommended.

7. **Awareness of Space** – try to be aware of the space around you and avoid stepping into another individual's personal/intimate space. Try to take a step back outside the circle of danger.

8. **Pacing and Chasing** – angry people often pace around in tense situations and staff should try to avoid the temptation to follow as they attempt to help them calm down. This can be counter-productive as it may trigger an animal chase response and drive the other person away. Where possible it is preferable for the staff member to stand still, speaking calmly, clearly and confidently – or even sit down.

9. **Intonation** - when people are anxious or angry they tend to talk faster, higher and more loudly. In a potential crisis situation staff need to deliberately speak slower, lower and more quietly



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10. Help Script

1. Connect by using pupil's name
2. Recognise the feelings
3. Tell the pupil you're there to help
4. You talk and I will listen
5. Give direction

11. Diffusing body language responses

- Social distance
- Sideways stance, step back
- Intermittent eye contact
- Relaxed body posture
- Palms open

12. Calm Stance

Think of the values of stepping back from a situation, both physically and emotionally:

- Allows a more considered response
- Time to make a 'dynamic' risk assessment and seek assistance
- Allows other person 'take up' time to make their own choices

13. In the event of a serious incident e.g. a fight, staff should:

1. Make their presence felt – "stop fighting, stop fighting"
2. Send for assistance
3. Spell out sanctions
4. Remove the 'fuel' by clearing the 'audience' away
5. Be a witness
6. Intervene physically if confident and having assessed the degree of risk, but should not ignore or walk away.



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Appendix 2

Some non-physical crisis intervention techniques

Do	Don't
Appear calm and relaxed	Appear afraid and unsure of yourself; appear bossy, arrogant;
Keep the pitch and volume of your voice down	Raise your voice
Feel comfortable with the fact that you are in control (if you control yourself, you control the situation); Project a calm assured feeling that you will see the situation through to peaceful end no matter what happens	Appear to expect an attack (or it is likely that you will have one)
Talk with the pupil	Give commands: make demands
Be very matter of fact if the pupil becomes agitated; be sensitive and flexible; be flexible yet consistent; be aware of body language; monitor breathing (chest movements) which can telegraph aggressive responses	Make threats (Especially any that you are not absolutely sure that you can carry through!); Maintain continuous eye contact; gesticulate (this may provoke confrontation)
Stay close to the pupil and attend to him/her	Turn your back or leave; invade the pupil's personal space



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Be patient; if a pupils agitation increases to the verge of attack: Acknowledge his/her feelings; Continue with a matter of fact attitude; Always leave the pupil an avenue of escape	Display emotion; Argue; Corner the pupil physically or psychologically
Where possible, remain seated as long as the pupil does: Avoid overcrowding	Get up and move towards the pupil
Stay near him/her, about one arm's length away; stand to one side; give the pupil more space if appropriate	Give up
Seek to relax your muscles and keep them under control.	Tense your muscles