



Positive Handling (Restrictive Physical Intervention) Policy

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Introduction and Statement of Intent

Children and young people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health issues may often respond with challenging behaviour (verbal and non-verbal) when they are confronted with situations they do not understand, which cause anxiety and fear, and for which they have not been prepared.¹ At Lighthouse School trained staff may use positive handling (also called restrictive physical intervention or Team Teach) to prevent injury to students and staff, damage to property or the breakdown of a safe learning environment. The aim of positive handling is not punishment or control, but to support safe learning for everyone.

This policy has been written to support all staff who come into contact with students, and for all stakeholders to explain the school's arrangements for positive handling. The policy is available to parents on request and on the school website.

At Lighthouse School, everybody in the school community:

- has the right to feel safe, secure and cared for and to learn and work in a safe environment
- to be treated with respect and to be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse
- has the right to access appropriate support to manage their emotions and their behaviour
- should be clear about their roles and responsibilities within the context of positive handling
- should be aware of and follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection, and Behaviour Policies

Lighthouse School recognises that Trustees and school leaders have a duty of care towards students and staff, and therefore, it is appropriate to proactively plan for challenging behaviour to prevent injury or damage. Lighthouse School has put this policy in place in line with government legislation and guidance, and with UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR).

Staff have a responsibility to follow this policy and seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention. Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management / de-escalation strategies have failed, or when students, staff or property are at risk.

¹ Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention: Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Mental Health Difficulties DfE 2017

Policy Summary

- All staff should ensure they have read both this policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Behaviour Policy, and are acting within the parameters of the policy to ensure they are acting within the scope of government advice and the law
- All staff have a duty of care to intervene with reasonable, proportionate actions to ensure that students are safe or to prevent injury, using any Individual Pupil Risk Assessments (IPRAs) in place. This applies even if staff have not had Team Teach training.
- Lighthouse School will endeavour to ensure that as many staff as possible have Team Teach training, and that this is kept up to date
- Any restrictive hold should be with the minimum force necessary and for the shortest time possible
- All incidents should be reported to Executive Leadership team (ELT), recorded in the correct paperwork and logged as an incident on CPOMS, the School's safeguarding software and to parents/carers
- A debriefing meeting to discuss the circumstances that led up to the incident, actions that were taken and learning for staff and the organisation from the incident, should be held within 24 hours and include all relevant members of staff
- Complaints about positive handling undertaken within the school should be dealt with under the Complaints Policy

Legislation and Government Advice

The Legal Framework

The use of all forms of physical intervention and contact are governed by criminal and civil law. The unwarranted or inappropriate use of force may constitute assault. In addition, it may infringe on the human right of a student. Lighthouse School has written this policy following the legal principles below:

The Best Interest Principle

The Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child shall be the paramount consideration. In this context, the welfare of the child should be the first thing staff members think about, and should take precedence over every other consideration.

Duty of Care

The term 'Duty of Care' is a legal term. Staff should be aware that they have a duty of care towards the students in school, and therefore, should take reasonable action to ensure all students' safety and well-being. Failure to positively handle a student who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances lead to an accusation of negligence and investigation under the school's Disciplinary Policy. At the same time, staff are not expected to put themselves into situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

Lighthouse School has a duty of care towards staff, and will therefore provide time and resources for the appropriate level of training for their role.

Reasonable and Proportionate

What is proportionate as a response depends upon the nature and context of the incident, and, therefore, Lighthouse School would expect different responses in different situations and with different students. The degree of force used should be the minimum to achieve the desired result. Good use of de-escalation training should be used.

Absolutely Necessary

For a member of staff to take any action which could be seen as restricting a student's human rights, it must be 'absolutely necessary' to be considered legal. In a situation where a member of staff with duty of care fails to act and as a result damage or injury occurs, that member of staff may be negligent. When a member of staff is acting in good faith, in the best interest of students for whom they have a duty of care, the school will support them.

Guidance from the Department for Education

Definitions

'Force' can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm, through to more extreme circumstances where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

'Control' means either passive physical contact (such as standing between a student and the door), or active contact such as leading a student out of the classroom.

‘Restraint’ means to physically hold back or bring a student under control.² Restraint is the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering the student. Practically, this means any measure or technique designed to completely restrict a student’s mobility or prevent a student from leaving, for example:

- Any technique which involves a student being held on the floor or on a chair
- Any technique involving the student being held by 2 or more people
- Any technique involving a student being held by one person if the balance of power is so great that the student is effectively overpowered
- Restraint also includes restricting the student’s liberty of movement. This can include changes to the physical environment or locking of a door in order to contain or prevent a student from leaving. These should all be recorded as restraint.

‘Holding’ includes any measure or technique which involves the student being held firmly by one person, so long as the student retains a degree of mobility and can leave if determined enough

‘Touching’ includes minimum contact in order to lead, guide, usher or block a student, applied in a manner which permits the students quite a lot of freedom and mobility.

Seclusion

As included in the DfE 2010 guidance, seclusion should only be considered in exceptional circumstances and it is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order. Therefore, at no time should the door be locked as to do so is unlawful

Training

All student-facing staff will be trained in Team Teach. This will be updated as necessary as long as members of staff are in employment. Employees must access de-escalation training and information that is offered, however, they may opt out of physical restraint training due to physical or medical issues.

Unless an unplanned emergency, positive handling should only be carried out by Team Teach trained staff using appropriate procedures and relating to the students’ Individual Risk Assessments (IPRAs).

In the case of an unplanned emergency restrictive physical intervention, the student may not have an IPRA in place, and trained staff may not be on hand. The duty of care skill remains for staff to undertake reasonable, proportionate action if necessary. Staff should use the minimum amount of force for the shortest possible time to prevent injury, and maintain safety. This should be consistent with the circumstances of the incident and staff should bear in mind any training they have received.

² Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE, July 2013)

The Use of Positive Handling within the Behaviour Policy at Lighthouse School

Staff should work within the framework of the Behaviour Policy and implement strategies for promoting excellent behaviour, including rewarding effort and encouraging students to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour.

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting students' actions, or by removing a physical object, which could be used to cause harm. It is only likely to be needed if the student appears to be unable to exercise self-control.

It is not possible to list every circumstance in which positive handling should or should not be used, and staff should use their judgement in situations that arise.

Use of Reasonable Force

Staff can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school visit
- prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student
- restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts
- stop a student behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson, causing distress to the students and/or a breakdown of order

Undertaking a Physical Restraint

Staff at Lighthouse School are trained in Team Teach, and this advice and guidance should be used in all situations. At Lighthouse School, all positive handling situations should be undertaken by at least two members of staff, unless in an emergency situation. If a member of staff is lone working with a student, and needs to implement positive handling, they should radio for support as soon as safe to do so. During the incident period, staff should follow school guidance procedures when attending / engaging in positive handling.

Staff should use defined Team Teach holds, such as 'single elbow' and 'double elbow', 'single person' and 'double person'. T-wrap should not be attempted unless the student is very slight and the member of staff is confident that they will not be restricting the student's breathing. 'Caring-Cs' can be used to prevent spitting, by holding hands in front of the face, with the member of staff being careful not to cover the student's ears.

Do:

- Tell the student what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Follow Team Teach training
- Involve another member of staff (if possible)

- Tell the student what they must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need repetition or non-verbal communication)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to student's compliance

DO NOT

- Act in temper (involve another member of staff if you fear loss of control – “help is needed”, “help is available”)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged exchange with the student (use a ‘change of face’)
- Attempt to reason with the student when they are in a heightened state
- Involve other students in the restraint
- Touch or hold the student in sexual areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold a student in a way which would restrict blood flow or breathing (e.g. around the torso or neck)
- Slap, kick, pinch or trip the student

Individual Pupil Risk Assessments

Key Stage Coordinators, the Wellbeing Team and the SENDCo should undertake risk assessments of students upon transition into school to ensure individual pupil risk assessments (IPRAs) are in place upon arrival to school.

Routine monitoring of all behaviour incidents by the Wellbeing Team should include the implementation and updating of IPRAs as appropriate across the school year.

The school format for IPRAs should be used, and should include a Positive Behaviour Intervention Plan (Positive Handling Plan) detailing the trigger points for the student and a graded system of actions that staff should take in response to the student's behaviour. The plan should set out the techniques that should and should not be used, and how they should be used appropriately. The plan should be agreed with parents where possible, and must be shared with all relevant staff through a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting. They may also be shared with the student themselves and other relevant external agencies. This plan may, in exceptional circumstances, be implemented without parental consent, as long as it conforms to the legal circumstances described above.

Conducting a Search on a Student

Under the school Behaviour Policy and Home School Agreement, the following items are strictly prohibited in school:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs (or prescription medication that is being used for incorrect purposes)
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images

- articles that have been, or could be, used to commit a criminal offence or harm

Should a student be suspected of bringing these into school, Lighthouse School staff may undertake a search, including holding or touching the student, to check the contents of pockets/search for dangerous items.

Use of Floor Holds

Lighthouse School does not sanction prone (front ground) intervention being used as part of physical intervention techniques. Staff at Lighthouse School are not routinely trained to undertake floor holds, and if a student becomes unintentionally restrained on the floor, an approved hold should be instigated as soon as safely possible or, if it is safe to do so, the student released and the hold re-attempted. If use of a floor hold was to occur, including prone restraint, details should be reported to ELT immediately, along with the reason that this hold was employed and the reasons another hold would not have been appropriate. A notification will be made by ELT to the Local Authority Designated Officers' (LADO) Team if a student has been held in a prone hold.

Involvement of External Agencies

Leeds Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team

Lighthouse School has a service level agreement with the Leeds Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team, who will provide support and advice on putting in place IPRAs and Positive Handling Plans for students.

Children's Social Work Service(s)

Notification of positive handling incidents should be made to the student's social worker, if they are designated Looked After, and the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will be notified of any floor holds that have been undertaken.

The student's social worker will be informed if the student is part of a family that is open to Children and Families Services, if this has been agreed.

Local Authority Designated Officers' (LADO) Team

Lighthouse ELT will inform the LADO, following the safeguarding policy, if they feel that an incident has been conducted in a way which is either unsafe, or there may be further implications for staff later. This may be undertaken as a preventative measure to support the staff and school.

Reporting and Follow-up Actions

Immediate Actions

The area should be made safe and any injuries to staff or students should be dealt with. Arrangements should be made to deal with any immediate emotional support that is needed by staff and students (such as cover for lessons or a quiet safe space to reflect)

Immediate Reporting

Any incident should be recorded as soon as practicable and within 24 hours. This is to ensure that policy guidelines have been followed, to prevent the misunderstanding of an incident and provide a record for any future enquiry.

All incidents should be recorded in the Physical Intervention Recording Book. Any first aid undertaken as part of the incident should be recorded in the Accident, Violent Incidents and Near Misses Recording Book. These are both held in reception. A further record should be made on CPOMS.

Parents/carers should be informed as soon as possible. ELT should be made aware of the incident, and any associated actions that have been taken.

All Lighthouse staff should be aware of the Whistle-blowing Policy, and how to use this to escalate concerns regarding the misuse of restraint as necessary.

Debriefing

Following a significant incident, staff will be offered support through a debriefing session. It is important to note that an injury is not evidence of malpractice, and Lighthouse School recognises that even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong.

The time following a serious incident should be used to consider learning from the situation, and to put in place alternative actions for the future. All staff should be given an opportunity to express their feelings and to appreciate the perspective of others.

An opportunity to rebuild relationships with the student, and for them to express their own feelings should be built into their plan. This needs to be discussed with parents/carers. Staff should make putting in place measures to restore their relationship with the student a priority, and work to undertake this will be supported by the Wellbeing Team.

A debriefing meeting will be held in which the following will be undertaken:

- Discussion of the actions leading to the incident
- Learning that can be taken from the incident to be including in school policy and/or procedures
- Review of the student's IPRA and Positive Handling Plan
- Completion of any relevant reporting documentation
- Agreement on actions to be taken, and lead members of staff and timeframe for feedback to wider staff
- Restorative measures to be employed

Further Actions

Emotional support should be made available for both staff and students if needed, including mentoring, short term timetable changes or access to counselling if necessary.

Complaints

All complaints about the use of force by students will be handled by the Wellbeing Coordinator.

Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the school's Complaints Policy. If necessary the complaint will be dealt with by the Staff Disciplinary Policing and/or Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.