



## GREENFIELD SCHOOL

# Restraint & Positive Touch Policy 2025-2026

**This policy is implemented in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct**

**Please note:**

*The EYFS is fully included in this policy and all aspects of the following are relevant to the EYFS and children of this age (under 5's) in Wrap Around Care.*

**Introduction**

Any misconception that physical contact between responsible staff and a child is in some way unlawful should be dispelled. It is not the case that all physical contact should be avoided and in some cases it is entirely necessary. For example, for some children, close contact is important when tending to care needs, or for other children, a gentle hand on shoulder can be comforting when distressed. Nevertheless, it is important that adults only touch children in ways that are appropriate to their professional role and with due regard to what is acceptable to the individual child.

Staff should respond to young people in a way that gives expression to an appropriate level of care whilst also protecting against the physical contact being misinterpreted by the young person. When considering whether physical contact is appropriate in any given situation, the following points may be helpful:

- Staff should be respectful of any individual or cultural sensitivities to touch
- If at any time a child demonstrates verbally or otherwise that he, or she, is not comfortable with physical contact, staff should seek to respect this and respond accordingly
- Physical contact should never be secretive, or conducted in any way that may be considered indecent, or represent a misuse of authority
- A high proportion of children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties may have experienced sexual and/or physical abuse. Staff need to ensure that any physical contact is not open to misinterpretation
- Age and maturity should be considered in deciding appropriate physical contact
- Children and young people should be given advice and guidance with regard to socially appropriate/inappropriate situations to seek physical comfort
- Where a member of staff feels that it would be inappropriate to respond to a child or young person who is seeking physical comfort, the reasons should be explained to the child. This avoids unintended feelings of rejection. The child should then be supported in the appropriate way.
- A duty of care to children and young people may require the use of restrictive physical intervention as a last resort to prevent harm to themselves or others. This needs to be used in such a way that is not punitive, is the least restrictive option, is safe, and does not cause pain

This guidance is intended to assist all staff working with children and young people in Surrey to have the confidence to use physical contact where appropriate, so that they can provide the best care to children and young people, while maintaining their own well-being, preventing harm to the child and protecting all concerned from being placed in an unnecessarily vulnerable situation.

## Definitions

### Restraint

Physical restraint is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others, or seriously damaging property. The proper use of physical restraint requires skill and judgement, as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining.

### Positive Touch

Refers to any physical contact that conveys warmth, care, support, or affection in a respectful and appropriate manner.

### Why use restraint

Physical restraint should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him/herself or others. Physical restraint skilfully applied may be eased by degrees as the child calms down in response to the physical contact. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

### Why use Positive Touch?

It fosters emotional connection, trust, and well-being between a teacher and child. Examples include:

- A reassuring pat on the back
- A gentle hug
- Holding hands
- A high-five
- A comforting hand on the shoulder

### General aims

The staff of Greenfield recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.

Greenfield's policy on the use of reasonable force is part of its Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct, and closely related to the other policies on managing pupil behaviour in the Behaviour, Sanction and Exclusion Policy.

### The specific aims

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect pupils from any form of physical intervention that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and how to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.
- To give full support to staff who have been assaulted or have suffered verbal abuse from pupils or others.

### Individual Risk Assessment

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, it is our intention to plan how to respond if the situation arises. Some children may require a specific risk assessment to ensure risks are mitigated against and allow them to be fully included in the learning activity. Such planning needs to address:

- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary);

- Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take;
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance);
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate.

We will attempt to reduce risk by managing:

- The way we talk
- The way we act
- Body language
- The environment

### **Procedures**

In the event of physical restraint having been used, it is important to consider the strategies, which are deemed acceptable, and the recording procedures that should be in place.

#### **Action Steps:**

- Use positive touch strategies to reduce escalation;
- Always use restraint as a last resort;
- Tell the pupil to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
- If possible summon another adult;
- Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident;
- Make it clear that restraint will be removed as soon as it ceases to be necessary;
- Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:
  - a. Providing medical support;
  - b. Providing respite for those involved.

A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem.

### **Recording**

Staff should record details as soon as possible on the daybook on Engage as a pastoral notice with a written description of the incident. The Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead should be notified right away. In their absence the Deputy Head or Deputy DSL.

Details should include:

- Name of pupil(s)
- Staff member(s) involved
- Factors necessitating physical intervention
- The strategies, which were employed prior to using physical intervention
- How physical intervention was effected
- Outcome of restraint
- Any other action taken in the management of the incident

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This meeting/discussion should also be recorded.

Staff will inform the Nursery Manager or Head of Pre-Prep of all incidents involving a pupil in the EYFS. The Nursery Manager or Head of Pre-Prep will record these incidents on the Physical Intervention Log.

### **Complaints**

We all have a duty of care to the children in our school and cannot escape our legal responsibilities by avoiding taking appropriate and necessary action. Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, together with a clear policy adhered to by the staff, should help to avoid complaints from parents.

It will not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and Social Services department under child protection procedures.

Staff, subjected to physical violence or assault, have the right to be supported in making a formal complaint to the police and, if necessary, taking private action against an assailant.

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

Remember that adhering to the principles and procedures referred to in this policy statement is part of effective practice and should minimise risk to children in our care and enhance our own self-protection.

### **Appendix 1**

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil.
- pupils fighting.
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects.
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others.
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).
- a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom in order to be supervised elsewhere.
- a pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

### **Appendix 2**

All teachers need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps, which they can take to defuse and calm a situation.

- Move calmly and confidently.
- Make simple, clear statements.
- Intervene early.
- Try to maintain eye contact.
- If necessary summon help before the problem escalates.
- Remove audience from the immediate location.

There are situations where staff should not intervene without help:

Assistance should be sought when dealing with:

- more than one pupil, or
- when the teacher believes that s/he may be at risk of injury.

In those circumstances where the member of staff has decided that it is not appropriate to restrain the pupil without help they should:

- remove other pupils who might be at risk,
- summon assistance from colleagues,
- inform the pupil(s) that help will be arriving,
- until assistance arrives, the member of staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



Chair of the Board of Governors

**Reviewed:** September 2025

**To be reviewed:** September 2026