Positive Handling Policy (including EYFS)

Last revised: October 2026 **Next Review:** October 2027

Policy Owner: DSL

This policy outlines our approach towards physical contact between adults and children at Lyndhurst School and should be read alongside the Safeguarding & Child protection, SEND, Promotion of Positive Behaviour Policy and Health & Safety policies.

At Lyndhurst School, we are a caring community where the emotional and physical wellbeing of the children is paramount. Teachers and staff are in loco parentis during the school day and therefore in some circumstances, appropriate physical contact is a perfectly normal part of the relationship between a member of staff and a pupil, e.g. to offer comfort or reassurance if a child is unwell or upset, or to support a child in their learning (perhaps in PE or writing).

At Lyndhurst School, we are committed to a positive behaviour policy which encourages children to make positive behaviour choices. On extremely rare occasions, circumstances may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff. Our policy for physical intervention is based upon the following principles:

- Physical intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required.
- Physical intervention must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents must be recorded and reported to a member of the Leadership Team as soon as possible.
- Parents will be informed of each incident.

1. The Legal Framework

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 states:
Power of members of staff to use force

(1) A person to whom this section applies may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing a pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely—
(a) Committing any offence,
(b) Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself), or
(c) Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Additionally, all persons have powers to use force under **Common Law and Section 3(1)(a) Criminal Law Act 1967.** This would include if a child was in danger of hurting someone else or themselves or intent on damaging property.

Key Points of the **DfE Behaviour in schools: guidance for headteachers and school staff, February 2024** state:

- Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaviour that occurs in school and, in some circumstances, outside of school.
- The power to discipline also applies to all paid staff (unless the headteacher says otherwise) with responsibility for pupils, such as teaching assistants.
- Headteachers, proprietors and governing bodies must ensure they have a strong behaviour policy in place to support staff in managing behaviour, including the appropriate use of rewards and sanctions.

Key points of the **DfE Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools guidance for schools, April 2026** state:

- School staff members have a power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.
- Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
- Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power.
- School staff should record in detail any incidents where seclusion, interventions or reasonable force have been used.

2. Our Approach

At Lyndhurst School, we aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in a minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our Promotion of Positive Behaviour Policy. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical intervention would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise. Staff should always act within the school's policies on behaviour and physical intervention, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in *loco parentis* and have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They must, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure all pupils' safety and wellbeing. Staff members are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

3. Use of physical intervention

Physical intervention should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention or re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allows the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as punishment. Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this. What constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. Staff should use de-escalation strategies wherever possible and, where they are trained, apply the techniques practised in their positive handling training. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to

stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. In all circumstances, alternative methods should be used as appropriate with physical intervention or restraint, a last resort.

The school provides training for members of staff, bearing in mind the needs of the children they are likely to come into contact with. Ideally, intervention will be carried out by a permanent member of staff who has received the training. A list of trained staff is kept at the end of this policy. However, anybody has the lawful power to use force under Common Law and Section 3(1)(a) Criminal Law Act 1967.

The Department for Education guidance advises that certain restraint techniques present an unacceptable risk when used on children and young people. The techniques in question are:

- the 'seated double embrace' which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing;
- the 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest; and
- the 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose.
- Use of prone position (face down on the floor) or T Supine position (on their back) should not be performed

Staff will not perform these techniques because the school has a positive duty to the preservation of life and complies with Article 2, Human Rights Act.

DfE Restrictive Interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools guidance for schools, April 2026:

What is reasonable force?

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm, through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
6. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so

- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

4. When physical intervention becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use reasonable force
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what they must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in a way that could be viewed as sexually inappropriate conduct
- Use physical restraint or intervention as a punishment

5. Actions after an incident

Physical intervention often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. The head teacher or senior member of staff should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural support plan, a personal risk assessment or other strategies agreed by the Leadership Team.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided. All incidents should be recorded immediately on 'My Concern' using a concern form so that any patterns of behaviour can be identified and

addressed. This incident should then be replicated on HUB so that parents have visibility of the details. In the event of any future complaint or allegation these records will provide essential and accurate information.

A member of senior staff will contact parents directly as soon as possible after an incident of physical restraint or seclusion, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it. They should offer the parents an opportunity to reflect on the incident and how to better support the individual.

6. Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Strategies to be used prior to intervention
- Ways of avoiding 'triggers' if these are known
- Involvement of parents/carers to ensure that they are clear about the specific action 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)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- The school's duty of care to all pupils and staff

7. Complaints and Allegations

A clear policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation.

It is our intention to inform all stakeholders about this policy and these procedures.

The positive ethos, good behaviour and excellent relationships in this school mean that restrictive physical intervention will be rarely needed. This policy will ensure that in those rare circumstances the care and well being of all pupils will be paramount.

The following staff member has received Positive Touch training, in line with Surrey Education Services training: Emma Morgan (DSL). Training for the Deputy DSLs, Katie Price and Charlotte Goswell, is booked for 25 January 2027, and this list will be updated once it is complete.

Process for Staff – Key Points

1. We aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in a minority of situations where a child may put themselves or others in danger.
2. Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint or seclusions although there is no absolute definition of what constitutes reasonable, an assessment of the situation and the likely danger should be taken into consideration.
3. If physical restraint is needed, **DO**

    - Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
    - Use reasonable force
    - Involve another member of staff, SLT if possible
    - Tell the pupil what they must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
    - Use simple and clear language
    - Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

4. The headmistress or a member of SLT must be informed immediately.
5. A 'My Concern' form and HUB form must be completed with the support of the SLT member.
6. Staff trained in Positive Touch (Surrey Education Services): Emma Morgan (DSL). Training for the Deputy DSLs, Katie Price and Charlotte Goswell, is booked for 25 January 2027.