



Overview

The term 'positive handling' includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour. A clear and consistent positive handling policy supports all students with an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.

Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, damaging property, or in order to maintain good order. Furthermore, the school takes seriously its duty of care to students, employees and visitors to the school.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.

We pride ourselves at Woodlands Academy on providing a safe learning environment for our students. In order to achieve this, there may be times when students need additional support to regulate their behaviour – including the use of a positive physical intervention to promote the safety of the child and the school environment.

Team Teach

At Woodlands Academy, the vast majority of staff are trained in Team Teach. The Team Teach approach is 95% de-escalation and 5% positive physical intervention. Team Teach is an approach to positive handling; which is accredited nationally by BILD (The British Institute of Learning Disabilities) in conjunction with ICM (Institute for Conflict Management). Staff are trained by qualified instructors over a 2-day (12 hour) course.

Physical Intervention

The use of physical intervention is clearly sanctioned in certain circumstances by Section 550A of the Education Act 1996: The use of force to Control and Restrain Students. Circular 10/98 also provides guidance. All parents/carers of prospective students will be made aware of this policy before their children are admitted to the school and are required to sign the Home-School agreement which includes a reference to the use of positive handling.

Physical intervention should only be used when there is no realistic alternative and for the shortest amount of time possible. Staff are to think creatively about alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the interest of the child and that it reduces rather than increases risk. Any response to challenging behaviour should be **reasonable, proportionate and necessary**. Physical intervention must only be in accordance with the following:

- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing the child is in immediate danger of harming themselves or another person, in danger of seriously damaging property or not maintaining good order or discipline.

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- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure a minimum of two Team Teach trained members of staff present before applying the intervention. Other staff can act as assistants or witnesses.
- Once safe, the intervention should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control.
- Intervention should be an act of care and control, NOT punishment.
- Physical intervention should not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger to people and property.
- After the event, the intervention should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity

The following situations or the prevention of the following situations occurring are the only occasions when a positive physical intervention is permitted.

- Immediate danger to self
- Disruption to the environment
- Fighting
- Assault/Attempted Assault
- Disruption to class
- Potential damage to property
- Threat of absconding

- Immediate danger to peers/staff
- Threats verbal/physical

Members of staff must always carry out their own personal dynamic risk assessment before embarking on a physical intervention and should always seek the assistance of another Team Teach trained member of staff to support/assist them where possible.

Recording/Reporting

Every incident of positive handling will be recorded by the staff involved using the designated handling form on SchoolPod as soon as possible after the incident.

All staff involved, including those who did not positively handle the child, but may have witnessed the positive handling, must read and sign the report before leaving the school premises on that day. If staff leave school without signing the form, they will be expected to return to school to read and sign. Failure to complete a form/sign a form will be managed in line with our Disciplinary Policy.

Parents/carers must be notified on the same day, as soon as practicably possible. A record of this conversation is to be recorded on the form and signed by the staff member. Where a child has an allocated social worker, they are to be informed.

Post Incident

After any incident, a full debrief should take place so that learning can inform practice.

Following an incident, it is the policy of the school to offer support to all involved. This is an opportunity for learning, and time needs to be given for following up incidents so that students

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and staff have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate another person's perspective.

Monitoring

The Behaviour and Pastoral Lead will report weekly data and analysis to the SLT and the SLT will review incidents and implement further actions where appropriate. Handling data will also be shared with the Local School Board via the Headteacher and the Trust Board via the Director of Education.

Use of Reasonable Force

The DfE's non-statutory guidance document 'Use of Reasonable Force' (July 2013) includes advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf

At Woodlands Academy, every effort will be made to use the Team Teach approach towards Physical Management.

In the event that Team Teach strategies are not effective at promoting and ensuring safety, reasonable and proportionate approaches may be taken in line with the above DfE guidance.

At Woodlands Academy, staff must:

- Be 'reasonable in the circumstances' – this means using no more force than is needed.
- Never use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force, Headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable to the given circumstances to conduct a search for the following 'prohibited items':

- Knives and weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and vaping products
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property