

Copthorne C.E. Junior School

Positive Handling Policy

**Approved September 2025
To be reviewed September 2027**

USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN PUPILS

We are a Rights Respecting School and therefore we uphold the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 28 Children have the right to a good quality education.

Article 29 Education should help children to use and develop their talents and abilities. It should also help them to learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Article 31 Children have the right to play and rest.

Our Aims:

We will cultivate an environment where children are happy and secure and enjoy learning, by:

- ensuring that everyone is treated with respect as an individual whose opinions and beliefs are valued;
- creating exciting, high quality learning environments indoors, outdoors, and in the wider community;
- involving parents/carers and children in decisions about the child's learning.

Provide a broad, balanced and rich curriculum, by:

- continuously striving for high standards of achievement through engaging, child-centred teaching;
- ensuring a wealth of meaningful learning experiences that meet the needs of each child.

Inspire and challenge each child to achieve their full potential and in so doing lay the foundations for life-long learning, by:

- developing our children's confidence and self-esteem;
- ensuring that our children are active, independent learners;
- encouraging our children to begin to take responsibility for themselves, their learning and their behaviour, therefore preparing them for life in a changing world.

The Department for Education use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools guidance (February 2025) states that:

The use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions can have a significant impact on the pupils, staff members and parents involved, as well as the wider classroom. However, there are times when the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions will be lawful; for example, to keep individuals and the wider school community safe.

Legislation

Everyone has the right to defend him or herself against an attack, providing they do not use disproportionate force, or to act in an emergency to prevent injury to a pupil or by a pupil to someone else (Para.13). Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 indicates that teachers and authorised staff may also intervene in less extreme situations.

Section 550a of the Education Act 1996 clarifies the powers of teachers, and other staff who have lawful control or charge of pupils, to use reasonable force to prevent pupils causing personal injury or damage to property, committing a crime or causing serious disruption. (Para.9)

Section 550A does not in any way authorise the use of corporal punishment with pupils in maintained schools. The law forbids a teacher to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a pupil or which is primarily intended to cause pain, injury or humiliation. That ban applies in all circumstances and has done so since 1987. (Para.2)

Who can use reasonable force?

Whilst all staff have a legal entitlement and responsibility to use reasonable force (where reasonable, proportionate and necessary) in accordance with Government Guidance within our duty of care, Copthorne CE Junior School has invested in specific Positive Handling and De-escalation training through "Staffsafetytraining.co.uk" to create a core team of de-escalation and restraint professionals.

A register of qualified staff is held in the safeguarding file. This register details qualified staff and the renewal date of their training.

When is it appropriate to physically intervene?

Wherever force is used, it **must be in the best interests of the child upon whom the control was exerted**. Physical intervention may be viewed as a broad spectrum, which ranges from holding a pupils hand to guide them, through to restraining a child who is unsafe.

Staff should conduct a dynamic risk assessment and make sure they are acting in the best interests of the child at that moment. (Allen, 2011. Page 11)

Wherever force is used it must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary for the minimum time required.

Copthorne CE Junior School has incorporated the *DFE use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools guidance* into this policy. As such, only in exceptional circumstances should force be used to control or restrain pupils. The circumstances where force may be used are expanded upon below (including these situations, but not limited to):

- Where the immediate safety of the child or other persons are in danger
- Where a judgment is made that to diffuse a situation reasonable force needs to be used.
- Ideally the skill of the teacher or teaching support assistants would be to anticipate the incident occurring and to redirect the child's behaviour.
- Where the child's behaviour may cause damage to property.
- Where the child is engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during teaching sessions or elsewhere.

When attending to crisis situations where behaviour has escalated to an unsafe level despite proactive interventions, Restraint Professionals will always ensure they are accompanied by at least one other member of staff to observe and record the situation as it progresses. The observer does not become involved in the situation. A third member of staff will be called for to attend, who will assist with physical intervention if and when it is necessary. The decision to physically intervene should be made in consultation with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Wherever physical interventions have been used, a number of records are completed. Firstly, the behaviour log stored on the school intranet where appropriate, adults involved may complete CPOMs; lastly the lead professional of the situation will complete the Bound and Numbered book which is stored in the Safeguarding cupboard. Where and when appropriate, the staff who have used a physical intervention will speak to the child involved about the incident and will explain why they used a physical intervention. The pupil will be encouraged to talk about their experience, enabling staff to understand the pupil and their needs more thoroughly.

Should physical restraint be considered a necessary and suitable precaution to ensure the safety of a particular child, this will be detailed on the child's individual risk assessment (Appendix 1). This document records any additional support or provision which is in place for the pupil, whilst also providing a step-by-step description of the child's escalation behaviours.

Where physical intervention is used with a child for the first time, the incident will be reviewed by the Headteacher, Class Teacher, Inclusion Manager and any other staff involved in the incident to explore the circumstances and to determine the risk of the behaviours occurring again in the future. A consultation de-brief will then take place with parents /guardians to explore their views of the situation, and, where necessary, to collaboratively construct an action plan for the child. From this meeting, an individual risk assessment will be written as a precaution for any further incidents.

As working documents, individual risk assessments are reviewed each time an incident takes place. Both successful and un-successful strategies tried should be recorded in detail on this document, to aid successful handling of future incidents.

Other than in an **absolute** emergency the adult must not intervene if they feel there is a risk of injury to themselves. The Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team should be sent for.

The Physical Intervention Spectrum

Physical intervention can take several forms. The physical intervention should be as a final resort after all de-escalation strategies have taken place. Physical intervention could include:

- Physically interposing between two pupils.
- Blocking a pupil's path.
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm.
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand on the centre of their back.
- Escorting a pupil

A comprehensive range of holds are detailed in the Positive Handling training powerpoint.

Consideration for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions.

At Copthorne, we seek understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that we can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies on pupils with SEND and make reasonable adjustments.

Equal opportunities:

We will aim to ensure that all children will have an equal opportunity to explore their potential regardless of gender, ability, cultural or religious background with reference to our school's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Glossary

Reasonable Force – The spectrum of physical interventions, which may be used to support behaviour in our setting, which must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary to the situation it is applied to.

Risk Assessment – A formal evaluation of the risks involved in a particular situation, completed prior to the situation.

Dynamic Risk Assessment – An informal evaluation of the risks involved in a particular situation, undertaken by the individual as the situation progresses.

Individual risk assessment – Formal documents completed for any pupil who requires additional provision to be implemented to support social, emotional or behavioural needs.

Appendix A

Individual Risk Assessment

Name of child	
Date of birth	
Date of plan	
Review date	
Diversions, distractions & praise points	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
Common triggers:	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
Any medical conditions/disabilities to be taken into account before using physical intervention?	

What does this behaviour look like? (see Appendix B for strategies)	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
Stages of behaviour	
Stage 1 Anxiety behaviours	
De-escalation skills with notes	
Stage 2 Defensive behaviours	
De-escalation skills with notes	
Stage 3 Crisis behaviours	
De-escalation skills with notes	

Preferred method of intervention if any?

Intermediate techniques	Try	Avoid	Notes
Friendly escort			
Single elbow			
Figure of four			
Double elbow			
Single elbow in seats			
T Wrap			
T Wrap to seats			
Seats to T Wrap			
T Wrap to ground			
Cradle			

Are there any factors to consider when debriefing? Eg communication, staff environment etc	
Hear	
Explain	
Link	
Plan	
How should we record incidents and who should we inform?	
Behaviour log / reflection card	
If physical intervention used, Bound & Numbered book to be completed	
Parents / carers informed	
Social Services (if applicable)	

Appendix B

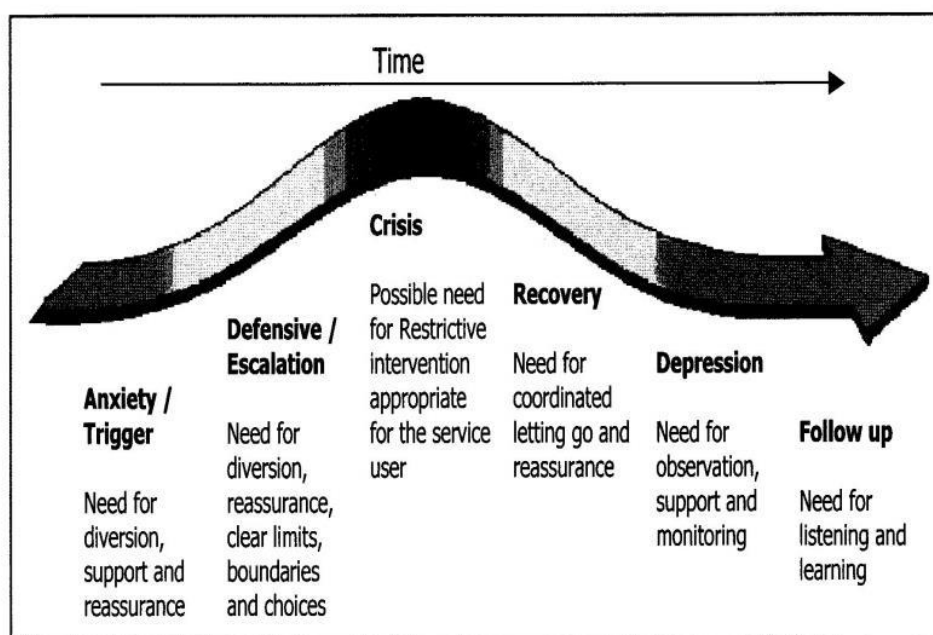
A menu of suggested supportive strategies

Please copy and paste the appropriate columns on page 1 with notes for adults to follow as a help script.

- Verbal advice and support
- Giving space
- Reassurance
- Help scripts
- Negotiation
- Choices
- Humour
- Consequences
- Planned ignoring
- Take up time
- Time-out
- Supportive touch
- Transfer adult
- Success reminded
- Listening
- Acknowledgement
- Apologising
- Agreeing
- Removing audience
- Use of another room
- Others –please name

This list is not exhaustive and staff may add to this as necessary.
Physical intervention strategies may only be used by trained staff.

Stages of a Crisis



Section 550A of the Education Act 1996

Power of members of staff to restrain pupils

- 1) A member of the staff of a school may use, in relation to any pupil at the school, such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the 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) engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise.
- 2) Subsection (1) applies where a member of staff of a school is –
 - a) on the premises of the school, or
 - b) elsewhere at a time when, as a member of its staff, he has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned;

but it does not authorise anything to be done in relation to a pupil which constitutes the giving of corporal punishment within the meaning of section 548.

- 3) Subsection (1) shall not be taken to prevent any person from relying on any defence available to him otherwise than by virtue of this section.
- 4) In this section –

“member of the staff”, in relation to a school, means any teacher who works at the school and any other person who, with the authority of the Headteacher, has lawful control or charge or pupils at the school;

“offence” includes anything that would be an offence but for the operation of any presumption that a person under a particular age is incapable of committing an offence.