

ALP Sittingbourne

Managing Physical Interventions Policy

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**MANAGING PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS
POLICY**

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Links:

Reasonable Force and Government Guidance, July 2013
[Use of reasonable force](#)

1. GENERAL GUIDELINES

As a general rule, physical contact should be avoided when working with our client group.

Some schools adopt a “no touching” rule.

However, in the course of our daily work, there are many occasions when physical contact might be necessary and appropriate. It is important for every member of staff to understand where you can and where you can't have physical contact with a student.

Types of Acceptable Contact

- Instructional support: Guiding a student physically in sports, art, music.
- Health and safety: Assisting a student who has fallen or is injured.
- Comfort in distress: Brief, non-intrusive gestures like a pat on the shoulder may be acceptable if culturally appropriate and consistent with school policy.
- Routine interactions: High-fives, handshakes, or fist bumps.

Types of contact to avoid

- Touch that Could Be Misinterpreted
- Physical Punishment
- Unnecessary or Excessive Contact
- Disrespecting Personal Boundaries

However, it is very easy to make a mistake when working with students. If this happens during the course of your employment you might be given Personal Supervision with your line manager. This means that an issue has been raised and at this meeting the situation will be discussed and the appropriate method of dealing with the situation agreed for the future.

2. ETHOS

Work with learners is done within an unpressured atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect.

Boundaries and behaviour expectations are clear and appropriate for each individual.

Pupils and their carers and staff should be aware of the system of rewards and sanctions and encourage positive behaviour.

The needs of the individual will be acknowledged and respected taking into account the diversity of experience, race, culture, disability, language, community, sex and gender.

At ALP Sittingbourne we have two Team-Teach instructors who ensure all of our staff are professionally trained to manage challenging behaviours. Together we promote the use of de-escalation strategies which help to bring about the reduction of risk and restraint. This, in turn, helps to support teaching, learning and caring, by increasing staff confidence and competence in responding to behaviours that challenge whilst promoting and protecting positive relationships. Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) approaches are entirely compatible with Team-Teach.

3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Physical Restraint should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 all school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force to maintain good order and discipline amongst learners.

It enables teachers and other members of staff in the Company, authorised by the Director, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent learners from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the School/Company or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.
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4. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PHYSICALLY RESTRAIN A STUDENT?

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, on de-escalation techniques as well as knowledge of non-harmful methods of restraining.

4.1 WHY USE PHYSICAL RESTRAINT?

Physical restraint should avoid danger or harm 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 over emotions and behaviour or other methods of managing the behaviour have proved unsuccessful.

4.2 GENERAL AIMS

Members of staff 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 positive behaviour.

4.3 REMOVAL: A SERIOUS SANCTION

When can we remove or seclude a pupil?

Removal is a serious sanction and should only be used when necessary, and in line with your behaviour policy.

Teachers can remove a pupil to a separate location to:

- Restore order to the classroom following a high level of disruption (where the pupil is acting with intent)
- Help a disruptive pupil receive their education in a managed environment
- Allow the pupil to regain calm in a safe space

Before deciding to remove a pupil, staff should try other behaviour strategies, such as asking pupils to write an account of what they've done, giving detention and removing other classroom privileges.

Staff should not remove a pupil because of a behavioural issue linked to SEND. You should consider whether a pupil's SEND has contributed to the behaviour and whether a sanction is appropriate (see the DfE's [Equality Act 2010 guidance](#)).

This is set out in the DfE's [behaviour in schools guidance](#) (pages 18, 22 and 23).

Seclusion: a safety measure

Seclusion should only be used in specific, non-disciplinary circumstances.

You can only seclude a pupil:

- As a safety measure: to protect the pupil and/or others from harm, when a pupil is experiencing high levels of emotional or behavioural dysregulation
- If staff have made an assessment and decided it is:
- Necessary: seclusion should be used when it's the least restrictive way to manage the situation and if it's likely to reduce the risk of harm without escalating the situation further
- Proportionate: it should be used for the shortest amount of time required to reduce the immediate risk

You can't seclude a pupil:

- As punishment or threat. It's a non-disciplinary intervention; it must not be used as a response to deliberate or wilful misbehaviour
- To prevent disruption. While 'reasonable force' can be used to prevent disorder, seclusion is specifically for preventing harm

This is set out on page 8 of the DfE's [restrictive interventions](#) guidance.

Do we need permission from parents/carers?

You don't need permission before removing or secluding a pupil, but you should tell a pupil's parents/carers about it on the day it takes place.

For seclusion, you must do this from 1 April 2026, as explained in the section below.

Recording and reporting requirements

From 1 April 2026, your school has a legal duty to record and report all incidents of seclusion. You should record and report removal from the classroom, too, although this isn't a legal requirement.

You must make a record of seclusion incidents as soon as possible

Ideally, you should record the incident on the same day.

Members of staff should record the following details, as a minimum:

- Names of the pupil(s) and staff directly involved
- Any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including if the pupil has SEND and their SEN code
- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the seclusion
- Any support provided after the incident

If the staff member(s) didn't use reasonable force, include:

- A brief account of why the staff member(s) assessed that it was necessary to use the intervention

If they did use reasonable force, include:

- A brief account of the incident, including what led up to it, any known triggers that were or may have been involved, and any preventative or de-escalation strategies used
- The type of reasonable force and the degree of force that was used, and details of any physical injuries sustained
- A brief account of why the staff member(s) assessed that it was necessary to use force

You may also wish to record additional details to support your evaluation of incidents, to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

If reasonable force is used in an incident of seclusion, you don't need to record it as a separate report. You should cover everything in the same report.

Find out more about reasonable force in our article on [how to record and report restrictive interventions](#).

See pages 14 to 18 of the guidance (linked above) for more on your recording requirements.

Tell parents/carers about seclusion as soon as possible, and ideally meet with them

You must give a report of seclusion to the pupil's parents/carers, as soon as possible, even if the use of seclusion has been agreed as part of a pupil's behaviour support plan, unless:

- The pupil is 20 years old or older
- Telling the parents/carers would likely cause significant harm to the pupil (including any form of abuse or neglect). In these cases, you must report it instead to the local authority (LA) where the pupil lives

The report should be in writing, and given to the parents/carers on the same day. You should include at least:

- Time, date, location and approximate duration of the seclusion
- Why the intervention was assessed as necessary
- Details of any 'reasonable force' that was used, and the degree of force
- Details of any physical injuries sustained (if applicable)

Do not include identifying details of any other pupil, as this is likely to be a breach of data protection law.

Following an incident of seclusion, it's best practice to meet with the parents/carers to discuss it. This could include a discussion about any behavioural triggers for the pupil, what de-escalation techniques were used, and what could be done differently in the future.

Record and report classroom removals, too

You should record incidents of removal from the classroom in the same way, and inform parents/carers on the same day.

How should we remove or seclude a pupil?

You should remove or seclude pupils to a space that is safe, secure and supervised. This could be a dedicated isolation room, empty classroom or the office of a member of staff.

When removing a pupil to a separate location, a teacher (and when appropriate, the headteacher or the relevant member of the SLT) should:

- Make sure they follow relevant legislation (such as the Equality Act 2010, mentioned above) and that pupils aren't being isolated because of, for example, protected characteristics, or for disruption caused by SEND
- Consider whether the school should assess the underlying factors for the pupil's disruptive behaviour (especially if it's repeated behaviour, or 'out of character')

- For example, if the pupil is showing sudden bursts of disruptive behaviour and hasn't previously shown signs of problems, the teacher could flag it as a concern to your designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- Work with the pupil to make sure they understand why they were removed and how they can improve their behaviour to avoid removal in the future
- For pupils with a social worker, notify the social worker on the same day as the removal took place
- For pupils with a looked-after plan, review and amend their personal education plan and notify their virtual school head (VSH)

Make sure pupils are supervised

Pupils who are removed or secluded should be supervised at all times. If secluded, the environment should be safe and not feel intimidating or threatening.

Your policies should set out the responsibilities of the staff supervising a removed/secluded pupil (see the section on policies, below). Responsibilities will be different for removal and seclusion.

Removal:

- The supervising staff should help the pupil continue their education
- They don't have to follow the mainstream curriculum, but the education provided should still be meaningful for the pupil
- Where practical, supervising staff should have access to lesson plans and other materials used by the teacher whose classroom the pupil came from

It's important that staff do not lock the pupil inside the removal location.

Seclusion:

- Staff are supervising the pupil for a limited amount of time to keep them, and others, safe
- There's no expectation for pupils to continue their education: the focus is on de-escalation, rather than education
- The pupil must be allowed to leave as soon as the immediate risk of harm to others has reduced, to continue their education

Tell the SLT when a pupil is removed or secluded

You may be able to set up your management information system (MIS) to alert the SLT when pupils are marked as removed from the classroom. This can let teachers know about any potential disruption in future lessons, and help them understand better how the pupil's time in school is going. If you use Arbor, this help page explains [how to set up alerts](#).

Even if you can't set up alerts, letting the SLT know about any removals can help to prepare teachers and mitigate any further disruption.

Staff responsibilities in the removal process

All staff have a duty to promote a calm and safe environment for pupils to learn in. Staff should be consistent, transparent and clear when responding to behaviour incidents, to prevent them from escalating to a point where removal from the classroom is needed. This is outlined on page 12 of the DfE's [behaviour in schools guidance](#).

Specific responsibilities of individual staff members are outlined below.

5. THE AIMS

- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of unnecessary physical intervention, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are aware as to what constitutes appropriate management of physical intervention and 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.
- To provide efficient and effective means of recording and reporting incidents in order to protect both students and staff.

6. RISK ASSESSMENTS

Although most young people in our care will never require any form of physical intervention, staff may have to deal with some young people who exhibit challenging behaviour, and they will need to have an up to date risk assessment.

Risk assessments are about the prevention and anticipation of unpredictable behaviour to try and make adequate provision in order to minimise the frequency and impact of such behaviour.

Risk assessments can be produced in a written format and updated as and when necessary. However, staff must keep the safety of the group in mind at all times, be constantly thinking ahead and allow for any other actions to be made to reduce or minimise the potential for incidents.

The Toolbox

We will attempt to reduce the risk by managing:

- The environment
- Body language
- The way we talk
- Our verbal and written communication
- The way we act and behave

- Mix of students in the group
- Seating position in the vehicle or classroom
- Distraction
- Visual Aids

6.1 **ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Complete a risk assessment for specific places or activities i.e. bowling or shopping, to minimise the risks at identified locations. This will take the form of an offsite activity form which will assess the number of staff/student ratio and the nature of the activity which will be signed by a senior member of staff before leaving the building.

6.2 **INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENTS and Personal Handling Plans**

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of a managed physical intervention, then an individual risk assessment is produced, along with a Personal Handling Plan. Adequate resources should be allocated to minimise the risk.

Such planning needs to address:

- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, physical restraints to be used if necessary);
- Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the Company might need to take;
- Briefing and training 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.
- More detailed examples of risk assessment and preventative steps can be found in Appendix 2.

7. PROCEDURES

In the event of a 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. See below.

8. ACTION STEPS (Strategies)

- Any strategy used with knowledge of the likely reaction of the student.
- Use minimum language appropriate to the students communication levels only
- Tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and state possible consequences of failure to do so;
- If possible summon another adult to support and/or be available if needed
- Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident. Through minimal use of words, gestures or symbols.
- Explain the situation and discuss with the student where appropriate
- 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:
- Providing medical support
- 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.

Staff should consider the communication abilities of the student throughout and ensure they are communicating in the most effective way.

9. RECORDING PROCEDURES

Staff should record all incidents of restraint in accordance with Company Policy and report these to the SMT. Incident recording forms may include first aid, restraint, incident recording, body maps.

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
- Pupil witnesses
- Circumstances leading up to the incident
- Outcome of restraint (details of any injury sustained)

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded in the Bound Book and signed off by a senior member of staff. You must report to parents in **writing**.

As a minimum you should include:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- A short description of the type and degree of force that was used
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

You don't need to include:

- The name(s) of the staff member(s) involved
- What led up to the incident, any known triggers and preventative or de-escalation strategies used

However, you can choose to include these details if you wish.

10. COMPLAINTS

We all have a duty of care to the young people in our Company 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.

We will review this policy on a yearly basis.

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

11. STATEMENT FOR PARENTS

This policy is available to all parents through the centre manager on request and it is the Companies aim to demonstrate the following:

ALP Sittingbourne aim to highlight to all parents and caregivers:

- Our emphasis on care and protection for everyone within our community
- Our belief that restraint will be needed on very rare occasions.
- Our endeavour to handle situations with care and responsibility.
- Our intent to apply follow-up and repair strategies.

ALP Sittingbourne intend to outline to all parents and caregivers:

- When staff are authorised to use reasonable physical intervention.

- What steps will be taken after an incident has been dealt with.
- The responsibilities of staff, pupils and parents/carers in resolving situations.

Parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible and the incident explained to them. This action should also be recorded in the Bound Book and signed off by a senior member of staff. You must report to parents in **writing**.

As a minimum you should include:

- The time, date, location and approximate duration of the intervention
- A brief explanation of why the intervention was assessed as necessary in that situation
- A short description of the type and degree of force that was used
- Details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable

You don't need to include:

- The name(s) of the staff member(s) involved
- What led up to the incident, any known triggers and preventative or de-escalation strategies used

However, you can choose to include these details if you wish.

Appendix 1 – ‘Reasonable Force’

Central to this policy is the understanding that any physical intervention used by staff must be in accord with the idea of “reasonable force” and used only as last resort once all other strategies have been exhausted.

There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The use of force can only be regarded as reasonable if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it and the degree of force employed is proportional to the level of challenging behaviour presented or the consequences it is intended to prevent.

It is essential that any discussion of physical intervention is set in the wider context of education and behaviour management. It should only be used as an intervention when other methods have proved unsuccessful.

ALP Sittingbourne will not accept the use of isolation or seclusion for any student under any circumstances. Any staff members who have concerns for student and staff wellbeing as a result of behaviours demonstrated by a particular student should speak to their line manager immediately. Below is a link to the current government non-statutory guidelines on ‘Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention’

[Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention - GOV.UK](#)

Appendix 2 – When to use ‘Reasonable Force’

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force? Examples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are:

- 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 Company (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at Company)

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom.
- a pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Appendix 3 Strategies for Dealing with 'Reasonable Force'

All employees 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 in the right circumstances and according to the student involved.
- If necessary, summon help before the problem escalates.
- Remove the audience from the immediate location.
- Minimum use of language, or use of visual communication methods where appropriate.

There are situations where staff should not intervene without help:

Assistance should be sought when dealing with:

- an older pupil,
- a physically large pupil,
- more than one pupil, or
- when the teacher believes that s/he may be at risk of injury.
- Male members of staff should call for a female member of staff where a female student is involved.

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,

- where necessary, telephone the police,
- inform the pupil(s) that help will be arriving,
- until assistance arrives, the member of staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation using the communication method appropriate to the student, and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Appendix 4 - Training Provider

Team - Teach is the only training company, providing physical intervention techniques as part of its course delivery, to have received the highest level of award in the U.K - a National Training Award - This government supported award is presented to entries who have demonstrated exceptional achievement through training and development. Judges were impressed by the support infrastructure and the robust quality control and assurance processes. They observed that it was a clearly needed service and its innovative approaches have delivered significant benefits to schools/services and local authorities/employers. See National Training Award document: "Helping Teachers Manage Challenging Behaviour" within the Case Study/Research area of the web site.

Positive Handling Strategies are constantly being evaluated, with safety being paramount. The number of serious incidents / restraints should decrease following training.

Training will help employers and employees meet their obligations under Health and Safety legislation thus reducing potential liability claims.

Learning outcomes and behaviour should improve through the provision of safe learning and caring.

The training has a fun element. It will reduce stress, enhancing team-work, co-operation and staff morale.

Courses are quality controlled and assured with all training summary evaluation reports being produced as evidence of best value. These summary reports are sent to the Director of Team Teach for acknowledgement and comment.

The Positive Handling Strategies have sufficient range and flexibility to be appropriate across the age and development range, for both the intentional and non-intentionally "challenging" individual.

Training enables staff to feel more confident and competent in their management of disruptive and "challenging" behaviour , reducing stress by increasing safety and security for all involved.

Where possible, the expectation is that course members will exhaust all behavioural management strategies before they physically intervene. Where and when there is time, the physical interventions should be viewed as a "last resort option" for staff.

Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) approaches are entirely compatible with Team-Teach. PBS describes well how 95% of Team-Teach is being applied in good practice settings for people with intellectual disabilities. It is a framework encompassing a range of recognised good practices, rather than one exclusive, prescriptive, therapeutic approach.

All physical techniques should be endorsed in policy and supported by management and those in "authority".

Where a service user requires repeated physical management, the strategies and techniques should be planned for and agreed in advance. They should be written out and included in individual care/health/education / behaviour management plans.

The training emphasises positive handling as but one part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management. Physical techniques should not be taught in isolation. In Team-Teach training, they account for only two out eight modules.

ALP Sittingbourne has two in-house trainers for Team Teach.