

# Newbridge Learning Community

## Physical Intervention



Community



Courage



Compassion



Competence

Date policy last reviewed: 15.09.25

The next scheduled review date for this policy is June 2026



# Physical Intervention 2025 - 2026



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### **Vision Statement**

At our school, we believe that every pupil is better than they know. We hold a deep conviction that each young person has untapped potential, strength, and worth—regardless of their circumstances or past experiences. Our role is to help them discover it. We believe that with the right support, all pupils can thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

### **1. Policy Statement**



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At Newbridge Learning Community, we are committed to providing a safe, supportive environment where all pupils can learn and thrive. Positive handling is sometimes necessary to keep everyone safe and to help young people in our care regain control when they are in crisis.

This policy outlines how we use positive handling in a way that reflects our values of community, compassion, courage, and competence.

## 2. Our Values

### Community

We build a strong, trusting community where everyone has a role in promoting a safe environment. Positive handling is always used as part of a wider commitment to positive relationships and collective care.



### Compassion

We approach every pupil with understanding and empathy. We recognise that challenging behaviour often communicates distress or unmet need.



### Courage

We have the courage to intervene when necessary to protect pupils and staff. We also have the courage to reflect honestly on our practice and learn from each incident.



### Competence

We ensure all staff are trained, confident, and skilled in de-escalation and positive handling. We act professionally, proportionately, and legally at all times.



## 3. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:



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- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010

This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force in schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- HM Government (2019) 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention'

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, staff may use "reasonable force":

- To prevent injury to a pupil or another person
- To prevent serious damage to property
- To prevent a pupil from engaging in behaviour that seriously disrupts school discipline.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Evaluating, on an annual basis, instances of physical intervention to analyse how and when reasonable force is used and identify any trends.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.



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- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

### **The headteacher is responsible for:**

- Deciding whether members of staff require additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities, considering the needs of pupils.
- Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling.
- Handling any allegations of abuse in line with the Keeping children safe in education 2024.
- Maintaining the records of the use of reasonable force and evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used.
- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes the correct reporting method.
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy sets out the circumstances in which force might be used.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the governing board, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

### **The Team Teach tutors are responsible for:**

- Providing staff with annual Team Teach refresher training.
- Providing staff with Team Teach workshops where the headteacher deems necessary.
- Ensuring all members of staff use reasonable force in accordance with this policy.

Reviewing this policy in liaison with the headteacher and governing board.

### **5. Aims**

- To maintain the safety of pupils and staff.
- To prevent serious harm or damage to property.



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- To support pupils to develop self-regulation and emotional resilience.
- To minimise the need for physical intervention through proactive strategies.

## 6. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, '**physical intervention**' is used to refer to any situation in which physical contact with a pupil is necessary - this includes reasonable force, e.g. to defuse a situation in which a pupil is at risk of harming themselves or others, and safe touch, e.g. comforting a pupil in emotional distress.

For the purposes of this policy, '**positive handling**' is defined as the overall, graduated approach of responding to pupils' behaviour and emotions with the intention of protecting pupils and staff, and limiting damage to others and property. Positive handling adapts the least intrusive intervention techniques in response to situations, before using gentle physical intervention and reasonable force as a last resort.

For the purposes of this policy, '**reasonable force**' is considered to refer to a broad range of actions that may be used to control or restrain a pupil to prevent that pupil from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. Reasonable force covers force that is necessary and proportionate to the circumstances.

There are two key types of reasonable force:

'**Control**' - actions used in an attempt to direct a pupil's movements; this includes passive physical contact, e.g. standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact, e.g. leading a pupil out of a classroom by their arm.

'**Restraint**' - actions used in an attempt to physically bring a pupil under control. This type of force is typically used in more extreme circumstances, e.g. where two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate, causing staff to intervene to hold them back from one another physically.

For the purposes of this policy, '**safe touch**' is defined as physical contact which, if avoided, would be inhumane, unkind or cause distress to a pupil, e.g. where a pupil is significantly distressed and in need of physical comfort.



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## 7. Prevention and De-escalation

We strive to reduce the need for physical intervention by:

### De-escalation Strategies for SEMH Pupils

COMMUNITY: "You are not alone."



**Objective** : Maintain connection and prevent isolation during distress.

#### **Strategies:**

- **Stay present, stay near** - Use calm proximity without crowding. Let them know: "I'm here with you."
- **Use familiar significant adults** - Involve staff who have an existing close relationship with the pupil when possible.
- **Relational consistency** - Maintain the same calm, respectful tone—even in crisis—to avoid power struggles.
- **Avoid public confrontation** - Redirect privately. Protect dignity: "Let's have a chat out here."



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- **Group safety, not group punishment** - Remove triggers or relocate others rather than singling out the pupil.

**COMPASSION: "Your feelings make sense."**

**Goal:** Validate emotion without validating unsafe behaviour.



### Strategies:

- **Emotion labelling** - "It looks like you're really angry. That's okay. We'll sort it out."
- **Low-arousal communication** - Speak slowly, softly, with pauses. Give processing time—don't fill silence. Pupils may need total silence initially.
- **Offer fidget tools** - Allow access to fidget items, sensory spaces, movement breaks or breathing visuals.
- **Acknowledge the cause, not just the behaviour** - "It felt unfair when that happened. Let's talk when it's calmer."
- **No shame, no threats** - Use gentle, firm reminders - not warnings, labels or ultimatums.

### De-escalation Strategies for SEMH Pupils

**COURAGE: "You are safe enough to step back."**

**Goal:** Help pupils feel emotionally and physically safe to begin de-escalation.

### Strategies:

- **Offer regulated choices** - "Would you like 5 minutes in the sensory room or the garden bench?"
- **Create a way out without losing face** - "I know you don't want to talk now. That's okay. I'll check back soon."
- **Name the reset opportunity** - "Let's have a minute. You're not in trouble—we just need space, a bit of quiet or maybe something to eat."
- **Praise the pause** - Recognise first steps away from escalation: "Thanks for calming down. Just have a minute."
- **Reframe mistakes as courage** - Help pupils feel brave for coming back or calming down, not ashamed.

**COMPETENCE: "You can get through this—and learn from it."**

**Goal:** Support self-regulation and build emotional literacy for next time.

### Strategies:





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- **Teach regulation before it's needed** - Use emotion scales, role-play and "What I can do when I feel..." charts.
- **Post-de-escalation reflection** -When calm, guide pupils to reflect on triggers, choices and repair plans.
- **Use repair language, not sanctions** - "How can we make this right?" instead of "This is your punishment."
- **Involve pupils in the plan** - Co-create strategies: "What helps you when you're getting worked up?"
- **Track progress, not just incidents** - Celebrate smaller escalations avoided and quicker recovery times.

These strategies are most powerful when used consistently, modelled by all adults, and embedded in the culture of the school—not just in crisis moments. The aim is always to preserve connection and build emotional literacy over time.

### 8. Safe touch

The school understands that the following examples are instances of safe touch which may occur between staff and pupils:

- Comforting an upset or distressed pupil
- Congratulating or praising a pupil
- Giving first aid to a pupil
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons
- Administering medicine
- Using musical instruments

Types of physical contact between staff and pupils that are **NOT** appropriate :

- Cuddling
- Lap-sitting
- Holding hands

Should a pupil try to engage in any inappropriate physical contact, the member of staff will explain to the pupil why it is unacceptable and encourage them to engage in the school hug or school-hand-hold instead.

Staff employing touch for reward or comfort will use the 'school hug', rather than an embrace. The school hug is a sideways hug whereby the member of staff places their hands on the pupil's shoulders. This type of hug prevents the pupil from turning themselves towards the member of staff and thus engaging in a 'front' embrace.



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which the school deems inappropriate.

## 9. Positive Handling

The principle of positive handling means that the school expects staff to assess whether the incident requiring a response can be resolved without physical intervention.

- Most staff are trained in the Team Teach method of *Care & Control/Positive Handling*
- The training is refreshed on an annual basis
- Staff have the opportunity to access Team Teach workshops throughout the year.
- Staff will be aware of the behavioural patterns, medical conditions and levels of need of pupils in their class through the Pupil Profiles and will ensure that incidents are handled to meet individual need.
- Before physical intervention, staff will question whether:
  - Verbal de-escalation can be attempted.
  - There are actions that can be taken to remove triggers from pupils, e.g. dimming the lights and encouraging quiet where a pupil is in "crisis" in response to sensory overstimulation.
  - The pupil can be removed from the situation without physical intervention, e.g. if they follow a member of the teaching staff out of the classroom.
  - The pupil has a condition or support needs that mean physical intervention would be inherently more dangerous, e.g. asthma.



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- They have the ability, training and adequate support to physically intervene safely without causing unnecessary harm to the pupil or themselves.
- The school understands that, in some cases, action may be required very quickly, e.g. in the event that a pupil attempts to run out into a busy road, or where pupils begin a violent fight with one another and staff are forced to pull the pupils apart.
- Staff will not be penalised for resorting to the use of physical intervention or reasonable force in such situations where it is justified and perceived necessary to prevent harm to others or property in the circumstances.
- Positive handling will be applied ideally in an outside breakout nature space with the intention of re-establishing pupil reregulation and release allowing the pupil to regain self-control.

### 10. When Positive Handling May Be Used

Positive handling may only be used as a last resort when:

- A pupil is at immediate risk of harming themselves or others.
- There is significant risk of serious damage to property.
- A pupil is engaging in behaviour that disrupts learning or compromises safety and cannot be redirected by any other means.

However, positive handling must always:

- Reasonable: proportionate to the situation.
- Be proportionate to the risk.
- Necessary: there is no safer alternative.
- Be used for the shortest time possible and preferably in an outside space or working towards moving to a secure outdoor space.
- Be clearly recorded and reported.

What this approach is not:

- It is not punishment.
- It is not used to gain compliance or assert authority.
- It is not used where risk can be reduced another way.
- It is never routine or used without prior relational and regulatory efforts



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## 11. Approved Techniques

Staff will only use techniques:

- Taught as part of accredited training (e.g., Team Teach or equivalent).
- That prioritise safety, dignity, and the least restriction possible.

Staff must never:

- Use techniques designed to inflict pain or humiliation.
- Restrict breathing or circulation.
- Use mechanical restraints.

### Team Teach Holds

- **Caring C guide** - Application of the Caring Cs is an unobtrusive method where the staff member(s) have 'open palms' placed on either side and above the pupil's elbow with their body sideways onto the pupil.
- **Single Elbow Hold** - This is a more determining/supportive escort aimed at removing a pupil from an area or situation to avoid further escalation or involvement. This is carried out by two members of staff.
- **Double Elbow Hold** - This can involve one or two members of staff (one each on either side) to add greater purpose in removing a pupil from an area or situation. This hold would be applied if it were considered that the Single Elbow Hold would be ineffective or pose a risk to the pupil or others in the vicinity. This hold should **NOT be applied in a seated position**. Staff are taught that they can de-escalate a situation by moving down from a higher-level escort to a lower level prior to releasing a pupil.
- **The Shield** - this is a more robust single person method of intervention



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useful for moving a pupil over a relatively short space. As in any single person intervention, where possible, it is carried out in front of a witness.

- **Front Ground Recovery (advanced only)** - if the above strategies prove ineffective or the situation suggests that a pupil could cause serious harm to themselves, others or is causing/likely to cause significant damage to property, those staff who have been trained to the advanced level of Team Teach can apply this level of restraint:
  - There should be a minimum number of 3 staff holding the pupil with a further member of staff acting as observer who will check and respond to any distress or difficulties with breathing.
  - After the incident, the pupil will be checked by a suitably qualified member of staff, where possible, independent of the incident. Pupils will be observed at 5, 30 and 60 minutes post incident by a qualified first aider if this is not possible then staff will hand safety information over to the appropriate person.
  - After a front ground recovery has taken place, staff will have a debrief at the earliest convenience to discuss the situation in detail.

### 12. Reasonable force

Staff members will use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances. Physical restraint will never be used routinely. Where reasonable force is required, the degree and type of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. their age or SEND.

The following list is not exhaustive, but provides examples of situations where the school may decide to use reasonable force where other methods of defusing a situation have been exhausted or are not appropriate:

- Members of staff need to control pupils risking the safety of themselves or others outside of school premises where the same range of support options are not available, e.g. on school trips.
- Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving an area, e.g. the classroom or school grounds, where doing so would risk their safety or the safety of others.
- A pupil is attacking a member of staff or another pupil



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- A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff must intervene to prevent this.

### 12. Reasonable force

- Disruptive children must be removed from the classroom and are refusing instructions to leave and moving the class is not an option.
- The Headteacher, DSL or authorised staff are conducting a search for items prohibited under the Education Act 1996, e.g. knives and weapons, alcohol, and illegal drugs.
- All members of staff will be permitted to use reasonable force where they believe it to be appropriate in line with their training, as long as all necessary precautions are taken.
- Reasonable force techniques that involve restraint will only be used where the staff member in charge feels it is necessary to prevent serious harm.
- Where staff determine physical intervention is necessary, they will calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it is necessary in a non-threatening manner. In most cases, staff will communicate this to pupils before making physical contact to minimise distress and/or further aggressive behaviour from the pupil; however, the school recognises that this is not possible in some emergency situations.
- Staff **will never** give the impression that they are acting out of anger or are punishing the pupil.
- Staff members will always avoid acting in a way that could cause injury; however, the school understands that accidental injury may occur in emergency situations where there is not sufficient time for a considered response, e.g. bruising on a child's wrist where a staff member has grabbed them to prevent them running onto a busy road.



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### 13. Prohibited items, searching pupils and confiscation

- Headteachers and authorised staff have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item.
- Authorised members of staff are permitted to use reasonable force when conducting a search without consent for the prohibited items listed below, in line with the school's Physical Intervention Policy. The prohibited items where reasonable force may be used are:
  - Knives and weapons.
  - Alcohol.
  - Illegal drugs.
  - Stolen items.
  - Tobacco and cigarette papers.
  - Fireworks.
  - Pornographic images.

Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used:

- To commit an offence; or
- To cause personal injury to any person, including the pupil themselves; or
- To damage the property of any person, including the pupil themselves.

The school also identifies the following as prohibited items which may be searched for by authorised staff without consent if necessary:

- E-cigarettes and vapes
- Lighters
- Aerosols
- Legal highs/psychoactive substances
- Energy drinks
- Mobile phones (if pupil is on a ban)

Unless there is an immediate and significant danger/risk to the pupil or others the right to use reasonable force will not be used. All members of staff can use their power to search without consent for any of the items listed above. Staff will follow the provisions outlined in the school's [Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy](#) when conducting searches and confiscating items.



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### 14. Post-incident support

- Pupils are given time and support to recover and reflect in a safe space. Restorative approaches help rebuild trust.
- Staff are offered debriefing, supervision, and support where needed.

### 15. Reporting incidents

- All staff should record any incident requiring physical restraint on both the Class Charts system and on CPOMS.
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- Any incident involving a front ground recovery hold must be recorded in the designated logbook which is located in the Headteachers office.
- All information should be signed and dated and if more than one member of staff is involved, their individual account should be recorded to give a full picture of the situation.
- Police involvement may be required if there is a particularly violent incident that cannot be contained by the staff; if a pupil or member of staff is assaulted or significant damage is caused to the school as a result of the incident. In these situations, staff/pupils can exercise their right to press charges upon the pupil concerned and the school has a duty of care to support them in their decision. The parents/carers, Social Workers/Guardians, etc must be informed if any pupil is arrested by the Police.
- Where reasonable force or physical restraint has been used, the pupil's parents/carers will be informed as long as this would not place the pupil at greater risk. The headteacher will make the final decision as to whether it is appropriate to inform the pupil's parents of the details of an incident.
- If a member of staff witnesses or suspects the use of unreasonable force, where another member of staff is actively involved in a physical intervention, they will report this to the headteacher or DSL immediately.
- Any allegations against staff will be dealt with as a matter of urgency, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the schools Allegations Procedures.
- All incidents will be recorded within 24 hours.



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- Parents/carers are informed as soon as practical.

### 16. Complaints

- All members of staff will be made fully aware of the consequences and legal retributions that can occur following the incorrect use of physical intervention and force. All complaints regarding the use of physical intervention or force will be investigated in a thorough and speedy manner. The person making the complaint is responsible for providing evidence for their allegations, e.g. testimony of events or evidence of injury - it is not for the member of staff to prove that their actions were made reasonably.
- In extreme circumstances, parents may take civil action or pursue criminal prosecution. In the case where a member of staff has acted within the law, this will provide a defence of any civil or criminal prosecution.
- Members of staff accused of using excessive force will not be automatically suspended in response to the allegations. The DSL will consult with LADO and the following procedures will be adhered to:
  - Careful consideration will be given to whether the case warrants a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved.
  - The governing board will always take into account whether a staff member has acted within the law when considering whether or not to take disciplinary action against a staff member involved in an incident.
  - Where a member of staff is suspended, the school will ensure that the staff member has access to a named contact that can provide support and guidance.
  - The school will provide pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation.

### 17. Monitoring and Evaluation

Senior leaders review every incident to evaluate:

- Triggers
- Effectiveness of de-escalation
- Impact on the pupil's wellbeing
- Any learning for future practice



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The Senior Leadership Team monitors patterns of positive handling and reports termly to governors. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher, Team Teach instructors and governing board, who will consider any necessary changes and communicate the findings of the review to all members of staff.

The next scheduled review for this policy is: June 2026

### 18. Conclusion

We hold steadfast to the belief that every child is better than they know. Through compassion, courage, community, and competence, we create an environment where all pupils can grow into the best versions of themselves- emotionally, socially and academically.

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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