HOWE GREEN HOUSE
BISHOP'S STORTFORD

PHYSICAL CONTACT AND RESTRAINT POLICY

ISI Reference	7a
Issue Number	4
This policy is endorsed by	Governing Board and the Head
This policy is owned by	The Co-Headteachers
Review Body	Education Committee

Most Recent Revision Date	April 2026
Last Reviewed by Governors	March 2025, February 2024
Period of Review	Annual
Next Review Date	April 2027
Previous Reviews	5

To be made available	YES
To be on website	YES
Internal staff only	NO
Internal students only	NO
Internal staff and students	YES

Physical Contact and Restraint Policy

Howe Green House School
This Policy also includes the Early Years Foundation Stage and Before and After School Provision

Objectives
At Howe Green House School, we are committed to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of students and staff. This policy is closely linked with our Building better behaviour policy and is written in accordance with:

- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- DfE *Use of Reasonable Force* (2013)
- DfE *Behaviour in Schools* (2022)
- DfE *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2025)
- British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) Code of Practice
- Relevant local authority guidance
- Local authority policies and behaviour support plans
- Howe Green House School Building better behaviour policy and Practice

School Expectations
We create a calm, safe environment to minimise situations requiring physical intervention. If incidents arise, they are de-escalated wherever possible. Physical intervention is used **only when the risk of not intervening outweighs the risks of doing so**.

Positive Behaviour Management
All staff and volunteers adopt a positive, proactive approach to behaviour, aiming to:
- Reward effort and build self-esteem
- Promote a safe environment for students and staff
- Understand the reasons behind a child's behaviour
- Recognise early warning signs of foreseeable behaviours

This proactive strategy supports early intervention and significantly reduces the likelihood of extreme behaviour and physical intervention.

Definition: Physical Intervention ('Reasonable Force')
The use of force is **only legal when the circumstances warrant it** and must always be **reasonable, minimal, and proportionate**.

Types of Physical Intervention:
- Bodily Contact: Interposing between pupils, guiding or holding, using agreed holds
- Environmental Adjustments: Shutting doors or using keypads to limit access

Permissible Circumstances for Physical Intervention

Physical intervention may be used to:

- Prevent injury to self or others
- Prevent criminal acts
- Stop serious damage or vandalism
- Prevent attacks on others
- Maintain order and discipline

The decision to intervene considers the level of risk, severity and pupil characteristics (age, SEND, physical needs, etc.).

The Last Resort Principle

Positive handling is **only ever used when there is no realistic alternative**.

Staff are expected to:

- Conduct risk assessments
- Use creative and effective alternatives (e.g. de-escalation, distraction techniques, humour, assertiveness)

Examples include:

- Distracting with a noise (e.g. whistle, bell)
- Removing attention/audience
- Using humour or non-confrontational techniques
- Applying school-approved sanctions

When Positive Handling Becomes Necessary

DO:

- Tell the pupil what is happening and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another staff member if possible
- Communicate clearly with the pupil
- Hold limbs above major joints
- Relax the hold as soon as safe

DON'T:

- Lose temper or argue
- Involve other pupils
- Apply force that restricts breathing or blood flow
- Use any form of hitting, kicking, tripping, or twisting

Physical intervention should avoid contact with intimate areas of the body, including the breasts, buttocks, groin and genital areas, except where such contact is unavoidable in order to prevent immediate harm

The school does not permit:

- Prone (face-down) restraint
- Any technique restricting breathing
- Use of pain to gain compliance
- Holding around the neck

- Deprivation of basic needs

Positive Handling Plans (PHPs)

If the school is aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a way that may require physical control or restraint, it will plan how best to respond in the situation.

The school will endeavour to:

- Manage the pupil and situation by diffusing the situation
- Involve the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school may need to take
- Brief staff to ensure that they know exactly what action should be taken and where appropriate provide training or guidance
- Ensure that additional support can be summoned if appropriate.
- Arrange for positive handling courses to be attended by relevant staff in the case of anticipated difficulties with behavior.

Any pupil identified as high-risk should have a PHP outlining:

- Effective strategies for that individual
- Approaches to avoid
- Physical techniques if needed (named and justified)
- Multi-professional collaboration with inclusion in Pastoral or SEND support plans

Staff Training

- Staff working closely with pupils receive training in positive handling strategies
- Where PHPs are in place, only trained staff use physical interventions

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Physical intervention should be:

- In the best interest of the child
- Reasonable and proportionate
- Aimed at reducing risk
- The least restrictive effective option

Always provide verbal warning and prioritise de-escalation strategies over force.

Recording Incidents

Any member of staff involved in an incident requiring physical intervention must inform the Co-Headteachers and write a detailed report of the incident to help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the situation. This will be logged on CPOMS.

Records should include:

- Antecedents, behaviour and outcome
- Names of staff and witnesses
- Any injury sustained (with body map if required)
- De-escalation strategies used
- Pupil voice where appropriate

Any use of physical restraint within the school will be recorded, reported and notified to parents the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable. In the EYFS, physical intervention will only be used where necessary to prevent harm and must be recorded and shared with parents on the same day, in line with EYFS statutory requirements.

Post-Incident Review

Focus on actions and outcomes:

- What happened?
- What does this tell us about the pupil?
- What can we learn to improve future practice?

Monitoring of Physical Interventions

Monitoring supports:

- Reflective practice and improvement
- Identifying additional needs
- Determining placement appropriateness

All incidents are reviewed by the Leadership Team. Individual risk assessments are updated termly.

Responding to Complaints

All complaints are handled in line with:

- Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff

Any use of force that causes concern will be treated as a safeguarding matter and managed in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and allegations procedures.

Physical Contact

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching pupils, including well-intentioned gestures, can if repeated regularly lead to serious questions being raised.

Where Physical Contact may be Acceptable

There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be necessary, for example to demonstrate exercises or technique during PE lessons, during sports coaching or when providing first aid. Young children and children with special educational needs may need staff to provide physical prompts to help.

There may be occasions where a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same pupil over a period of time. Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of emotional support and should reflect the child's needs, age and level of maturity. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek the advice and guidance of the Co-Headteachers.

General Guidelines

As a general principle staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils.

Where necessary, should a child be refusing to move from an area, or where they are causing a danger to others, staff should take action to empty the environment of other children to de-escalate a situation and to ensure their safety.

There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some pupils may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background or special needs or because they have been abused. Where appropriate, staff should receive information on these children, whilst ensuring that all matters of confidentiality and sensitivity remain of paramount importance. In addition, there should be a common approach where staff and pupils are of different sexes. Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence and staff should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

Other Relevant Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Building Better Behaviour Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed by: Education Committee of Governing Board
Headteachers: Paul Bailey and Anna Lipani
Signed: Mary Sanders, Chair of Education Committee
Date: April 2026
Next Review: April 2027