



Positive Handling Policy 2025 (Use of physical restraint)

The Link Academy Trust (the Trust) is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Department of Education (DfE). All Members of the Board of Trustees of the exempt charity are also Directors of the company; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director. This Policy applies to all academies within the Trust.

The Trustees and LACs (Local Advisory Committees) will act in accordance with Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the Government guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' Sept 2022 to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils¹ at the academies within the Trust.

Introduction:

Academies within the Trust take the safety and welfare of all pupils seriously. This policy has been written to ensure that, should the situation arise, staff and parents are aware of the correct procedures in the use of reasonable force to restrain or physically direct a child; this will be taken as a last resort when there is no realistic alternative. The policy also aims to ensure staff understand that any actions they take need to be reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

The policy should be considered alongside:

- Behaviour policy and Relational Approach statement of Intent
- Exclusions and Suspension Policy
- Health and safety policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equalities Policy

A relational approach to supporting a positive climate in Trust settings

All Academies in the Trust have taken part in training into the Relational Approach which is a framework of positive behaviour management where staff understand the

reasons for dysregulation and that the way we respond can escalate or de-escalate a difficult situation. Research shows that positive physical intervention involving gentle, appropriate touch can have a beneficial impact on stressed out or dysregulated children, often preventing escalation and the need for exclusion or isolation. A “no touch policy” would be depriving to children who need to be soothed and calmed so we do not adopt this. However, this is different to the use of physical restraint that is covered in this policy.

The stages in the Relational Approach that are key to reducing the need for Physical handling are: Developing Relationships • Responding and Calming • Repairing and Restoring.

Strong and positive personal and professional relationships between staff, pupils and parents are vital to ensure a calm and purposeful environment. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our academies follow the schools' behaviour expectations and remain regulated and focussed throughout the school day.

Unhelpful, harmful or challenging behaviour is usually the result of strong emotions which have been triggered in the moment or which underpin adaptive behaviours. To maintain a calm learning environment and to support children to process their feelings and emotions so they can adjust their behaviour, we need to be able to regulate them in the moment and provide them with experiences which will assist the development of regulation.

It is also acknowledged that some children find it more difficult to self-regulate. These children will require a more tailored approach, are likely to require a co-regulation plan and risk assessment. In some circumstances, staff may need to take action and the use of physical contact may be required. In these situations, the Trust uses Devon's Passive Intervention and Prevention (PIPS) approach. Further information can be found following this link.

Passive Intervention and Prevention Strategies (PIPS) - Support for schools and settings (devon.gov.uk)

Minimising the need to use Positive Handling: De-escalation Strategies

All staff need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with challenging pupils and steps which they can take to defuse and calm a situation. We recommend that a minimum of 2 staff are trained in PIPS and we offer this training annually. Ideally this will be a senior member of staff and an HLTA or experienced TA who are employed full time. It is the responsibility of the Academy Head (alongside the trained staff members) to cascade key elements of the training and ensure all staff have a

basic understanding of dysregulation strategies, but if not trained they can only use restraint in an emergency where injury may occur.

Before using physical intervention always consider the following:

- Have you exhausted non-physical methods of intervention?
- Have you had regard for the pupil's level of understanding and age?
- As far as possible, have you made your intentions clear to the child?
- Where possible, have you discussed and agreed in advance with parents/carers the range of acceptable responses to their son/daughter's challenging behaviour? (However, we recognise that sometimes a behaviour can be unexpected, therefore will not have discussed it with parents.)
- How important is the outcome? Does the benefit of achievement involving physical intervention outweigh not achieving without physical intervention occurring?
- Is there another adult present to support or as a witness?
- Have you had appropriate PIPS training?

The use of the following may exclude the need for physical intervention.

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation, reason and distraction.
- Give clear directions for pupils to stop using simple, clear statements.
- Speak and move calmly and confidently. Be aware that staff's body language and words or own mood can escalate a situation or calm it down.
- Well - chosen language is used to de-escalate situations.
- Remove an audience from the immediate location or take other pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used in aggression.

- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help before the problem escalates.
- 'Planned ignoring' - sizing up which behaviour needs intervention and which to ignore
- Make limited demands of the child
- Showing interest - a student may be diverted from misbehaviour if an adult shows interest in the task
- Offering help when the pupil is about to become frustrated
- Changing activities - when tension mounts or interest flags
- Distraction – refocusing attention to a new task or situation

Circumstances in which Positive Handling may be used:

Physical intervention should be avoided wherever possible and where it is needed, for example where pupils with severe behavioural difficulties present a risk to themselves and others, it must be in the best interest of the child and should be only the minimum required.

There are times when physical intervention is appropriate but it must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned as far as this is possible.

Section 550A of The Education Act 2006 under the heading Power to Restrain Pupils allows teachers and other authorised staff of a school to use reasonable force in accordance with the following:

- If the young person is in immediate danger of harming himself or others
- If the young person is in danger of seriously causing damage or vandalism to property
- Physical Intervention can be used when a pupil is engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at school or amongst any of its pupils whether in a teaching session or otherwise
- Committing any criminal offence (or for a child under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be classed as an offence for an older pupil).

Examples of situations that fall within these categories might include the following, if:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- Pupils are fighting;
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate significant damage or vandalism to property;
- Misuse of equipment or dangerous materials;
- Carrying and/or using weapons;
- A pupil is running in such a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- A pupil absconds from class or tries to leave school (N.B. this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).
- A disruptive pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- A pupil is behaving a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.
- A pupil demonstrated behaviour which causes significant concern for the health and safety of a group or class.

Training of staff

The Trust believes that good training for positive handling is vital and ensures that a minimum of two members of staff in each academy are trained in Passive Intervention and Prevention Strategies (PIPS). Training is offered annually through the Inclusion Hub (IH). In the event of PIPs being needed, trained staff should be sought wherever possible. If an academy has several children needing a higher level of support, the Academy Head will complete a risk assessment which may require a higher proportion of staff to be trained.

RECORDING OF PIPs

For children who have a co-regulation plan, the guidance of how PIPS can be used will be recorded in this plan. Plans are written, shared and agreed with parents/carers. PIPS may be, for example, holding a hand, or placing a hand on a child's back to guide them to a safer space.

For more serious situations, where a child has been held or restrained (in line with DFE 2013 guidance – appendix 1), a PIPs record form (appendix 2) will be completed by the adult who dealt with the incident. This information MUST be shared with the Academy Head and the parents/carers on the day of the incident as a minimum and the form must be uploaded to CPOMS within 24 hours and the form can be confidentially disposed of. There is an expectation that any additional staff involved with the pupil are also informed of the incident. It must be attached to a CPOMS incident report under the PIPS category (see appendix 2).

Supporting staff following an event

Working with dysregulated children is challenging and can be upsetting. Following an event, the Academy Head, ITH staff or EIT will ensure individuals involved are supported and organise supervision if requested.

Risk Assessment, Relational Support Plans and Co-regulation Plans:

Where a child presents an ongoing risk to self and others, a risk assessment will be written, and relational support plan developed. For children who are specifically struggling with regulation, it is appropriate to have a consistent response or strategy including a script as to how we best co-regulate the child. They will need different relational and empathic responses at different stages of regulation. A personalised co-responsive regulation plan is a good system for agreeing this shared response so that all adults working with the child have a good understanding of their needs and that there is a consistent response to their behaviour.

Some crises situations arise unexpectedly and there may not be a specific plan in place, however every academy must have general guidelines in place as to how to make the situation safe in the moment and what needs to happen following the incident. Staff should receive staff training to ensure this is effectively in place.

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a dysregulated way that may require the use of PIPs, it is our intention to plan how to respond. Such planning needs to address:

- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary);
- Involving the parents/carers to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the academy might need to take;
- Briefing 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;
- If Positive Handling is likely to be necessary, this should be included in the pupil's provision together with de-escalation strategies, the manner in which the pupil may be held, how support will be summoned and any medical factors to be considered.

- Additional staff may need to be alerted to offer a 'change of face'

The Trust's Positive Handling Policy will be discussed, reviewed and updated by the Senior Leadership team annually. This Policy will be reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum Committee annually and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Policy reviewed by Standards & Curriculum: June 2021

Date approved by the Board of Trustees: 12 July 2021

Reviewed by Standards & Curriculum: 14th June 2023

Approved by Board of Trustees: 10th July 2023

Reviewed by Standards & Curriculum: 9th July 2024

Approved by Board of Trustees: 22nd July 2024

Reviewed by Standards & Curriculum: 8th July 2025

Approved by Board of Trustees: 14th July 2025

Next Review: Summer 2026

Appendix 1

DFE – 2013 Use of reasonable force (currently under review)

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- *remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;*
- *prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;*
- *prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;*
- *prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and*
- *restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves or others through physical outbursts.*

[DfE advice template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Appendix 2
PIPS recording form

THIS MUST BE COMPLETED ON THE DAY OF THE INCIDENT AND BE REPORTED ON CPOMS WITHIN 24 HOURS WITH THIS FORM ATTACHED. AS LONG AS THIS FORM IS COMPLETED THERE IS NO NEED TO DUPLICATE THE DETAILS ON THE CPOMS REPORT



PHYSICAL INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Pupil	Class	Date	Time of incident
Reported by Adults involved (names and roles) Others present (names)			
Where in setting did this take place?			
What led up to the incident?			
What steps did you take to de-escalate prior to the physical intervention Warning ☐ Reassurance ☐ Choice ☐ Divert ☐ Instruction ☐ Ask to stop ☐ Distract ☐ Humour ☐			
Brief factual summary of what exactly happened and approx. length of time hold was used for. Were there pupil or adult witnesses?			

Reasons for intervention

Actual injury to self ☐ Potential injury to staff/pupil ☐ Actual injury to staff/pupil ☐
Potential damage to property ☐ Actual damage to property ☐ Attempting to leave the site ☐
Potential injury to self ☐

Other

Why was it in the child's best interest to intervene?**Positive handling strategies used:**

Lap over ☐ Safe wrist hold ☐ Safe wrist hand hold ☐ Safe double wrist hold ☐
Sitting ☐ Kneeling ☐ Standing ☐

Pupil debrief ☐ Staff debrief ☐ Parents/Carers advised ☐

Date: Time

INCIDENT DEBRIEF**Possible triggers:****Possible escalating factors:****Possible de-escalating factors/subsequent behaviour:**

Has a Co-Regulation Plan been written/reviewed? If not, this should be agreed as a priority outcome.

Resolution – outcome (How a similar incident could be managed in future):

ATTACH THIS TO CPOMS, THERE IS NO NEED TO DUPLICATE THE
INFORMATION, JUST ADD KEY OVERVIEW