John Perry Primary School

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Positive Handling Policy

Date of review: November 2025
Next review date: November 2026

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1. Introduction and Purpose

John Perry Primary School is committed to safeguarding the welfare, safety and dignity of all pupils and staff. This policy sets out our approach to positive handling and the use of reasonable force, in line with statutory guidance and best practice. It should be read alongside the Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Policy, and Health and Safety Policy.

The school recognises its duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and to ensure physical intervention is not used as a substitute for appropriate support or planning.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Provide clarity for staff, pupils and parents about when and how reasonable force may be used.
- Ensure physical interventions are used only as a last resort, in proportion to the situation and in the least intrusive way possible.
- Encourage the use of preventative, de-escalation and restorative approaches to behaviour.
- Ensure incidents are properly recorded, monitored and reviewed.

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2. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy is written with reference to:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93)
- DfE (2013) *Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies*
- Equality Act 2010
- BILD (British Institute of Learning Disabilities) Code of Practice
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- DfE (2023/2024) *Behaviour in Schools* guidance

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3. Definitions

3.1 Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to using no more force than is necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- Causing harm, or risk of harm, to themselves or others
- Causing serious damage to property
- Committing a criminal offence
- Seriously disrupting good order, safety or discipline

3.2 Physical Intervention / Positive Handling

Physical intervention may include:

- Bodily contact: guiding, blocking, holding, shepherding
- Restrictive holds (only by trained staff)
- Environmental adjustments, such as closing doors or limiting access to unsafe areas (not locking pupils in rooms)

3.3 Prohibited Techniques

The following are not permitted:

- Prone (face-down) restraint
- Supine (face-up) restraint
- Pressure on the chest, neck or joints, or any action that obstructs breathing
- Pain-compliance techniques
- Restrictive holds that involve clothing around the neck
- Mechanical or chemical restraints

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4. Training and Authorisation

John Perry Primary School uses approved accredited training (e.g. Team Teach or equivalent).

While not all staff will have completed approved training in Positive Handling, all staff retain a duty of care to protect children and may need to take appropriate action in situations involving immediate risk.

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All staff receive training in de-escalation, behaviour regulation and trauma-informed approaches.

Refresher training takes place at least every two years, or sooner if required.

A list of staff who have received Positive Handling Training is maintained by the Inclusion Team and updated regularly.

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5. Positive Behaviour Management and Prevention

Our ethos prioritises prevention and early intervention.

Staff will:

- Build strong, trusting relationships with pupils
- Use trauma-informed and attachment-aware approaches
- Apply Emotion Coaching, Zones of Regulation and restorative practices
- Identify individual triggers, sensory needs and early warning signs
- Avoid confrontation and use deflection, humour, change of face and other de-escalation techniques

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6. When Physical Intervention May Be Used

Physical intervention may only be used when:

- A pupil is at risk of significant harm to themselves or others
- A pupil is causing serious damage to property
- A pupil is behaving in a way that severely disrupts safety or order
- A pupil is at risk of running into danger (e.g. leaving school grounds towards a busy road)

Staff must always consider:

- **Proportionality:** Is the level of force appropriate?
- **Necessity:** Is there a less intrusive option?
- **Risk:** Does intervening reduce or increase risk?

Staff must use:

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- The minimum force required
- For the shortest time necessary
- With continuous communication and instruction to the pupil

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7. The Last Resort Principle

Physical intervention must only be used when all other strategies have been attempted or considered and found inappropriate or ineffective in the circumstances.

Alternative strategies may include:

- Verbal instructions and clear choices
- Sensory or regulation strategies
- Removing the audience
- Use of space or movement breaks
- Distractors or diversions

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8. Risk Assessment and Individual Plans

Pupils who present with behaviour that may foreseeably require positive handling will have an Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) and risk assessment which:

- Identifies triggers, early signs and effective de-escalation strategies
- States any medical, sensory or physical vulnerabilities
- Is reviewed regularly
- Is aligned with the pupil's SEND Learning Plan or EHCP, where relevant

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9. Procedures During an Incident

Staff should:

- Calmly communicate intentions
- Seek assistance whenever possible
- Use simple verbal instructions
- Use agreed techniques only
- Disengage as soon as the pupil calms

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Staff must never:

- Use physical intervention as punishment
- Intervene in anger
- Involve other pupils
- Use untrained or dangerous techniques

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10. Off-Site and Educational Visits

This policy applies during all school-led activities, including:

- Trips and residential visits
- Sporting events
- Transport between venues

Visit risk assessments will include:

- Behavioural risk factors
- Emergency communication procedures

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11. Recording and Reporting

All incidents involving restrictive physical intervention must be recorded within 24 hours on the school's approved log, located in the Headteacher's office.

Records must include:

- Names of all those involved
- Sequence of events
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Hold used (including duration)
- Injuries to pupils or staff
- Medical checks carried out
- Parent/carer notification

Records are stored securely in line with GDPR and retained for the required period.

Parents/carers will be informed on the same day, or as soon as practically possible.

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12. Post-Incident Support

Following any incident:

- First aid is administered if required
- Staff and pupils receive emotional support
- Parents/carers are informed
- A restorative conversation takes place where and when appropriate

A post-incident review will consider:

- What triggered the incident
- Which strategies worked or did not work
- Whether risk assessments or IBSPs need updating
- Whether further staff training is required

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13. Monitoring and Oversight

The Strategic Leadership Team reviews all incidents regularly.

Governors receive anonymised termly reports on:

- Number of incidents
- Patterns or trends
- Training updates
- Any serious incidents or injuries

The Inclusion Team monitors data to identify pupils requiring additional support.

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14. Complaints and Allegations

Complaints relating to the use of force will be handled in line with:

- The school's Complaints Procedure
- Local authority and national guidance on allegations against staff
- Safeguarding procedures, where necessary

All allegations are taken seriously and investigated promptly.

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15. Policy Review

This policy was developed in consultation with staff, governors and relevant external partners. It will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- National guidance changes
- Local authority guidance changes
- Monitoring identifies emerging needs

Reviewed by: Vicky Walker, Assistant Headteacher and Inclusion Manager
Date: November 2025
Next Review: November 2026
Governor Approval: Pending ratification

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