



EARLY LIFE

ENTERPRISE | ENGAGE | INSPIRE

Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy

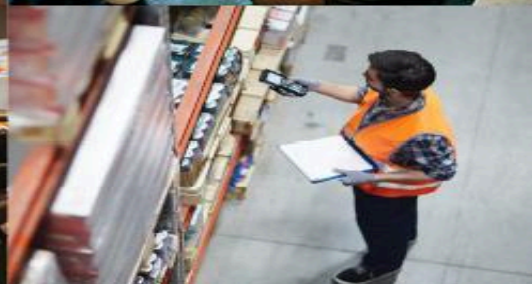
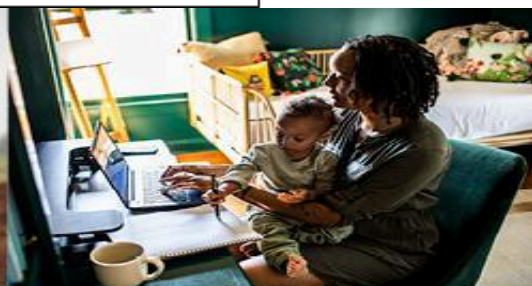
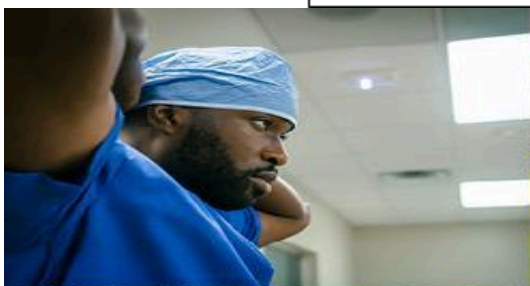
Last reviewed on: 1st september
2025

Next review due by: 1st September
2026

Signed by

Position

Director / Head of
Centre



INTRODUCTION

This policy informs practice at Early Life Enterprise making reference to July 2013's Department for Education (DfE) guidance on using force to control or restrain pupils (*Use of Reasonable Force in Schools*) which:

"... It is intended to provide clarification on the use of force to help school staff feel more confident about using this power when they feel it is necessary and to make clear the responsibilities of headteachers and governing bodies in respect of this power."

This policy has regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

All staff should be clear that any use of physical intervention should be **Reasonable, Necessary and Proportionate**.

ALTERNATIVES TO PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.
- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions to the pupils to stop.
- Give clear directions to guide the pupil to a safe place.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove any audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use 'positive touch' (a technique where the pupil is guided by touching the arm above the elbow to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressurized).

Reducing the likelihood of situations arising where physical intervention may be required

All physical interventions at the provision are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The provision's Behaviour Policy rewards effort and application, and encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The provision's Behaviour Policy also outlines the steps the school undertakes to ensure a calm, orderly and supportive climate which minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind, thereby reducing the need for physical intervention.

Staff should recognise the need to effectively manage individual incidents. It is important to communicate calmly with the pupil, using non-threatening verbal and body language and ensuring that the pupil can see a way out of the situation.

Wherever practicable, a pupil should be warned that physical intervention may have to be used before applying it.

The table below is not exhaustive but outlines some of the strategies staff at Early Life Enterprise use.

Communication/V erbal Advise and Support	Early intervention needs to be clear, positive and non-confrontational. If students are spoken to in a way in which they perceive something to be threatening this will evoke a negative response which is likely to be fight, flight or freeze. Awareness of tone of voice, body posture and eye contact is important as communication needs to be non-threatening, calm and assured. Staff should seek to support a student when they
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	are showing signs of agitation/distress/anger and support/advise them according to the situation.
Belonging	For students whose behaviour is rooted in their insecurity, it is important that they feel accepted and respected as individuals. Reject the behaviour not the person by separating the behaviour from the individual showing that you care despite the difficulties.
Distraction/redirection	Divert the student's attention from a potentially inflammatory situation to something in which they may have an interest in.
Reassurance	Support, comfort and encourage a student in a situation in which they might be feeling helpless, vulnerable, possibly defenceless and exposed to a risky environment.
Planned Ignoring	At times, highly provocative and attention seeking behaviour can be ignored to good effect. The skill is knowing when to ignore and when to intervene. Good practice is based upon Risk Assessment and individual needs.
Time Out	Move to a different environment with time to calm down and consider their actions. The student is more likely to calm down without the attention of an audience. Outside space can also be utilised e.g. school field.
Withdrawal	Involves removing the student from the situation which causes anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This could be an available calming room or an outside space. Often it is key to offer a student an honourable out. What is an 'honourable out'? It is giving students a non-shameful exit strategy from a social situation. Think about your delivery of the message, your tone, posture and the language you use.
Humour	Although self-explanatory, staff should make sure the humour is used in the right context for the particular student.
Calm Talking Stance	Staff should endeavour to maintain a calm, confident and objective approach in conflict situations.
Negotiation/Being Objective	The ability to listen and talk to students and come to an agreement by setting limits and offering options/choices to the student.
Transfer Adult	If there is an incident where the adult present is seen to be aggravating the situation, it should be assessed as to whether moving the adult out of the situation may diffuse the issue. This should be done leaving enough staff to control the situation. Please refer to student PPRA for key members of staff.

Success Reminder	Remind the student of a previous occasion when they successfully managed a volatile situation of a similar nature. If they are feeling particularly low, look to remind them of something they did in the past that made them happy/proud/feel good.
Support Daily Routine	A bored student is more likely to present with negative behaviours and therefore a strong daily routine of active engagement in the classroom and in social times, reduces their need to act out inappropriate behaviours.

WHAT MIGHT BE DEEMED 'REASONABLE'?

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force' as circumstances will always dictate what might be regarded as acceptable and what is not. 'Reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most staff at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils. Force is usually used either to control* or restrain**. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or restraining a pupil to prevent violence or injury. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

** Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.*

*** Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.*

HOW MIGHT FORCE OR RESTRAINT BE USED?

Students will occasionally make choices that compromise the safety of themselves and others or cause significant damage to the school building or public/private property. At such time it may be necessary to use positive handling techniques. These are the only techniques that will be used and should be used as a last resort when all of the above strategies have been exhausted, or a situation has developed rapidly which demands immediate physical intervention. Staff members will judge when this is a necessary intervention and will be responded to using a method that is appropriate, reasonable and proportionate whilst limiting the risks to those concerned. Each episode will have one of the following features:

- The student concerned will be at risk of harm or of harming others.
- The student is causing extreme disruption or making it impossible for the school to operate effectively.
- Staff deem that the student's behaviour is likely to escalate to a point where they and others may be at risk of harm.
- The student is likely to commit a criminal offence.
- The student is damaging property

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

Examples of situations where members of staff may use reasonable force include:

- Removing disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- Preventing a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- Preventing 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
- Preventing a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground

Staff should not intervene physically if there is risk that restraint could be misinterpreted (e.g. considered indecent).

WHO CAN USE REASONABLE FORCE?

The power to use reasonable force applies to any member of staff at the school.

It can also apply to people whom the Head of Centre has temporarily put in charge of pupils, such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

All staff at Early Life Enterprise are trained in the use of reasonable force using non-pain compliance techniques, at the discretion of the Head of Centre who will give due consideration to the support needed to enable staff to carry out their responsibilities and the needs of the pupils when doing so.

We adopt a preventative and proactive approach and individual staff are identified to assist any pupil with an individual risk assessment in place.

Information regarding the positive handling strategies, including de-escalation techniques, will be shared with all identified staff.

Non-pain compliance physical intervention techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user (student), but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent 'side effect' of ensuring that the service user remains safe.

INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

Individual pupils assessed at being at greatest risk of requiring restrictive physical intervention will be identified by the Head of Centre. These pupils will be placed on individual risk assessments, developed in consultation with the referring school, parents/carers, and the pupil. Individual Risk Assessments set out the situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and the de-escalation strategies that are most effective. Specific strategies and techniques that have been agreed by staff when physical intervention is required are also included. The Individual Risk Assessment will be discussed with parents/carers as well as the pupil in a meeting and a copy provided along with the school's Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy.

USE OF REASONABLE FORCE TO SEARCH FOR PROHIBITED ITEMS

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited items":

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force **cannot** be used to search for items banned under the provision rules.

UNACCEPTABLE TECHNIQUES

The DfE identifies certain restraint techniques which present an **unacceptable** risk when used on children and young people. These techniques are:

- The 'seated double embrace' which involves two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing
- The 'double basket-hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest
- The 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose

ACTION TO BE TAKEN AFTER AN INCIDENT WHERE FORCE HAS BEEN USED

All incidents where restraint has been used must be reported as soon as possible to the Head of Centre and a written record made of the incident outlining:

- the names of those involved
- when and where the incident occurred
- names of staff and pupil who witnessed the incident
- the reason that force was necessary (e.g. to prevent injury)
- a brief description of how the incident developed and the steps taken to calm the situation
- what force was used and for how long
- the pupil's response and the outcome of the incident
- details of any injuries sustained, damage caused and action taken to deal with these.

NOTIFYING PARENTS OF PHYSICAL CONTACT

DfE guidance states it is good practice for provisions to speak to parents about serious incidents* involving the use of force although the decision is at the discretion of the provision (see [Use of reasonable force: DfE 2013](#)).

** In deciding what is a serious incident, staff should use their professional judgement and consider the: pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident; the degree of force used; the effect on the pupil or member of staff; and the child's age.*

Where it is likely that a child poses a risk and it is probable that restraint or physical contact may be used, parental consent should be sought, and procedures explained and always reported as above in the event of it being used.

OTHER PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS

It is not illegal to touch a pupil and there are occasions when physical contact with a pupil is 'proper and necessary'. Touch is essential in order for us to provide quality care and trust for our students. Touch must always be used in an age-appropriate manner and staff should always risk assess the situation when using physical touch. Used in context and with empathy and compassion, touch supports the development of interactions and communication. Other necessary functions of touch are:

- Reinforcing, supporting, guiding
- Congratulations or praise
- Interaction
- Physical prompts
- Intensive interaction
- Play
- Therapy (massage, sensory integration, rebound therapy)
- Emotional support
- Personal care (medical care)
- Intimate care (changing, toileting)
- Protection
- Safety
- Curriculum support

Touch should always be consensual. Staff should be sensitive to any verbal or non-verbal form of communication that might indicate the child does not want to be touched. Staff should also be sensitive to responses that may require less touch or withdraw touch, such as over-excitement by the child.

Where possible, staff should minimise touch to allow students to complete tasks independently with over reliance, this may mean allowing sufficient time for a student to complete a task or follow an instruction on their own.

It is never appropriate for staff to touch any student on their intimate areas unless as part of the intimate care or medical care.



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