

Cherry Tree Hill Primary School

Positive Handling Policy



Responsible Member of Staff	Sarah Redfern
Position	Deputy Headteacher
Issue number	
Date of Approval	13/01/26
Date of Next Review	Annually

Introduction and Purpose of Policy

Staff at Cherry Tree Hill are trained to look after the children in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the school's Positive Handling Policy.

Definitions

In our school and throughout this policy, the term 'Positive Handling' refers to any type of physical support given to a child to support positive behaviour, emotional regulation and to keep the child and other children and adults safe.

Underpinning Values

Good professional relationships between staff and children are vital to ensure a positive and productive learning environment. The purpose of positive handling in our school is to ensure that all children and staff feel safe and supported. We aim to support children to learn to regulate their own emotions and behaviour, while also ensuring that the children know that staff will always support them to stay safe and to calm down when needed. All staff act in the best interests of the child when using positive handling.

Physical Touch

Physical touch is a part of human relationship. At Cherry Tree Hill, we use touch to prompt, to give reassurance or to provide support; this is used sensitively and appropriately. We understand that some children prefer not to be touched and this will be respected throughout school.

Team Teach

Some Cherry Tree staff are trained in Level 2 'Team Teach', a system which promotes positive handling. This term is used to cover a wide spectrum of risk reduction strategies. It includes an integrative holistic approach involving training, policy guidance, management of the environment and the deployment of staff. Ninety-five percent of positive handling does not involve physical intervention but in some circumstance this is necessary to ensure the safety of the child and others.

Team Teach Techniques are based on a gradual and graded approach using guides, controls and restraints. Staff must ensure that they select and apply a guide, a control or a restraint that is reasonable, proportionate and necessary and in the best interests of the child at all times.

- Guides – Used when there is minimal resistance from the child
- Controls – Used when there is moderate resistance from the child
- Restraints – Used when there is rigorous resistance from the child

The decision to use restrictive physical intervention:

- Must be in the **best interests of the child** – taking into account all the relevant circumstances
- Must employ only a **reasonable** amount of force
- Must be **proportionate** to the circumstances
- Must be **necessary** – based on an assessment of risks associated with intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention
- Must take into account any medication/illness, physical disabilities, sensory impairments or needs.

Injuries to staff, children and others

“Team-Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, 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.” (George Matthews – Director) Any injuries will be recorded appropriately.

Department for Education (DfE) Advice

DfE Use of Reasonable Force Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, July 2013, states that teachers and other members of staff at school who are authorised by the headteacher, to use force as is reasonable in circumstances where the pupil may need to be prevented from engaging in behaviours which are likely to cause injury to themselves, others or damage property. This guidance extends to maintaining good order and discipline for both on and off site activities. Physical intervention should only be used in circumstances where all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful or in an emergency situation.

Support Plans

Children who benefit from behaviour support above and beyond our Behaviour Policy may also have their own Behaviour Support Plan. These plans work in conjunction with our whole school Behaviour Policy, but are further personalised to meet the needs of the individual child and to take into account the current developmental stage of the child. Each Support Plan includes a pro-active strategies specific to the child. When appropriate, the plan also includes a Positive Handling Plan specific to the child.

Support plans are reviewed at least termly, with a reflective focus on improving the child’s emotional regulation over time to reduce the need for positive handling strategies.

Calming Rooms and Safe Spaces

For some children, particularly when they are overwhelmed and/or displaying aggressive and dangerous behaviours, close proximity to a safe space or calming room is an advantage. We have several safe spaces and rooms available in school e.g. pastoral rooms. Children can be directed to a safe space or a room to calm or be escorted there by staff. On occasions this may require some form of restrictive physical intervention. Over time, it is our aim to teach children who benefit from use of the safe space to choose to go there if they are becoming overwhelmed.

Once the child is in the safe space or a room to calm, they will be supported to relax, calm and stop any behaviours that may cause injury to themselves or others through appropriate de-escalation strategies. Staff remain in the calming room or safe space with the child to support them to calm, unless the child indicates that they want the adult to leave, in which case the staff member closely supervises and supports from just outside the door.

Recording Positive Handling

Any use of physical handling is recorded by staff on a Positive Handling Form, within 24 hours, and is then promptly uploaded to CPoms. Any incidents which involve injury to any child or adult are considered a ‘Serious Incident’ and are also recorded on a Serious Incident Form, so that a more detailed debrief can take place. If staff consider an incident to be serious for any other reason, such as intensity or length of emotional distress to children or staff, they should also fill in a serious incident form and report the incident to the headteacher. Serious Incident Forms are uploaded to CPoms.

Informing the Headteacher and Informing Parents

Staff inform parents whenever Physical Handling has been used. Staff inform the SLT promptly whenever Physical Handling has been used. Staff always inform the Headteacher promptly of any Serious Incident.

Debriefing with Senior Leadership Team or Headteacher

After any use of Positive Handling which doesn't form part of a child's Behaviour Support Plan, staff involved in the Positive Handling will discuss with SLT whether the use of Positive Handling was beneficial and should be added to a Behaviour Support plan or whether changes need to be made to the child's provision. Following any Serious Incident, a debriefing meeting will be held with the staff members involved and a member of SLT. Staff will complete the Positive Handling Record and Serious Incident Form before the debriefing and the aim of the debriefing will be to agree strategies to reduce the risk of a recurrence of the serious incident and provide support to the staff involved.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

The scheduled review date for this policy is Spring Term 2027