



Richmond Hill School

Positive Handling Policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Governors
December 2025	December 2026	Emma Gildersleve	Full Governing Body

Introduction

At Richmond Hill School there are children whose specific learning difficulties, social or emotional difficulties mean that they can present behaviour that may occasionally necessitate the use of restrictive physical interventions to prevent injury, damage to property, or a serious breakdown of discipline. All staff must be aware that use of physical force must be reasonable, proportionate, and necessary, in the best interest of the child and comply with:

- Advice from the Department for Education on Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies (2011)
- School Behaviour policy

A significant number of staff will attend annual Team Teach training and it is an expectation that any physical intervention will be in accordance with this training.

Staff may use **planned** physical intervention only if they have attended the relevant training and been signed off by the Lead Trainer for the training session they attended.

However, as Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that **all** members of staff have a legal power to use “reasonable force”, **there are occasions when, in order to fulfil our duty of care, we not only have a right but also a duty to intervene.**

(See Appendix 1)

An example of this would be in exceptional emergency circumstances where trained staff are unavailable, untrained staff may intervene using reasonable force to prevent harm, **so long as it is reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary. Staff** must report the incident immediately to the Team Teach Lead and Senior Leadership Team for follow-up and support.

Richmond Hill School does not use seclusion as a planned intervention for supporting behaviour under any circumstances.

School Expectations

The use of restrictive physical interventions should always be considered within the wider context of other measures. These include establishing and maintaining good relationships with children and using diversion, de-escalation and negotiation to respond to difficult situations. The use of physical force that is unwarranted, excessive or punitive is not acceptable. Failure to comply with this principle, when considering or using positive handling will mean that school disciplinary procedures will be invoked.

Positive Behaviour Management

The school’s behaviour policy requires teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the children in our care. If any measures need to be taken in response to an incident, they will be decided upon once full understanding of the situation has been gained. Such measures will always be designed to support the student, or students, and at no time be deemed to be punishment.



All staff should adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to build self-esteem. The school should work in partnership with those who know the child to help those concerned:

- find out why this child behaves as he or she does
- understand the factors that influence this child's behaviour
- identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing.

This approach will help to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It should reduce the incidence of extreme behaviours and ensure that the use of restrictive physical handling is rare.

Draft Behaviour support plans

When pupils come into the school, they may not have a behaviour support plan in place. If it becomes apparent that a pupil requires support beyond our universal offer, the staff team will work together to draft a plan using all of the relevant information available to them. At this stage the staff team will involve parents and will be working to draft a BSP in a period in which they seek to establish strategies to support the behaviour.

Finalised Behaviour support plans

Once a draft plan is effectively supporting the behaviour it will be finalised. All finalised Pupil Behaviour Plans must be formally agreed by parents/carers before implementing them in school. Behaviour plans must detail the date that the finalised plan is shared with the parents/carers and the medium in which it was shared (email or F2F meeting). Plans should include a Where a plan identifies behaviours categorised as 'dangerous' a risk assessment covering all behaviours where restrictive physical intervention of any kind risk assessment will may be necessary and should set out the actions which may be taken to:

- meet the pupil's needs
- encourage the pupil to make positive choices and develop self-control
- support the pupil in difficult situations
- safely manage crises if and when they occur.

Once Behaviour Support Plans have been agreed, they should be communicated to all class staff, Team Teach trainers and Phase Leaders and additionally to any member of staff called upon to work with that student.

The Behaviour Support Plan/Risk Assessment will be reviewed in line with the schools graduated response to behaviour process, which promotes review as and when required.

Pupil behaviour documentation may be amended when pupil's behaviour changes and as their needs change over time. The timescales for such reviews vary; this may be as often as once per term, but at least annually where no changes are required. Where changes are made to a BSP the family must be kept informed at least once a term and more often where necessary.



If at any time a parent/carer or pupil is not satisfied with the strategies being used as part of a plan, this should be flagged to the class teacher, who will escalate this to their phase leader and behaviour lead.

Restraint

Restraint is the positive application of sufficient force to ensure, by physical means alone, that a learner does not cause injury either to him/herself, a member of staff, another child or young person, or significant property damage.

- Restraint should only be used as a last resort once all other options have been exhausted. Any form of restraint should be used only when Reasonable, Proportionate and Absolutely Necessary.
- Should **only** be used if the learner is putting himself/herself or others in danger and where failure to intervene would constitute neglect.
- If used, it must be recorded in the school's incident recording system – CPOMs.
- An **Individual Risk Assessment and Behaviour Support Plan** will need to be carried out – this might apply when an individual learner needs physical interventions, using Team Teach strategies or as part of an on-going behaviour support plan.
- Class teams and support staff need to be able to establish the possible consequences of using a particular Team Teach method(s) of physical interventions when difficult behaviour occurs. There are currently 2 in-house trainers who deliver regular training to staff and specific class teams.
- Update the learners' Behaviour Support Plan including the Team Teach physical interventions which have been successful and share with relevant colleagues.
- If **planned** restraint is used, parents/carers will be informed **by phone or Face-to-Face** as soon as reasonably possible on the day of the incident by **the class teacher** or a member of SLT/ MLT.
- ***In all cases of unplanned RPI a member of MLT/SLT should make the call with the teacher.***
- ***In some exceptional, and pre-agreed circumstances, parents may request to be informed of planned RPI by email either daily, or on a weekly basis if this is deemed more appropriate. This must always be detailed on the behaviour plan, along with the exceptional reasons why this is agreed. In these cases all unplanned RPI must still be reported on the day.***
- Once the incident has been de-escalated and the learner is regulating well again (this could be the next day), the class team need to consider which appropriate repair work needs to be done to offer debrief for staff, and maintain a positive working relationship with the learner.
- Where appropriate, pupils will be supported to reflect on incidents involving physical intervention, to understand triggers and strategies for future prevention, contributing to their Behaviour Support Plans
- In exceptional circumstances (where permitted techniques are ineffective or staff are unfamiliar with the action they should take) – staff manage the situation as best they can and act 'in loco parentis'.

“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 – Team Teach Director)



Restricting Liberties

At Richmond Hill School learners should never be

- Locked in a room alone, without support and supervision.
- Deprived of food/drink.
- Denied access to a toilet.

In exceptional circumstances a learner may be **supported-secluded** in a safe space to reduce overall risk to him/herself or others. There must always be at least two adults present and a senior member of staff must be notified immediately.

Richmond Hill School does not use seclusion as a planned intervention for supporting behaviour under any circumstances.

If a pupil is secluded **as part of a dynamic risk assessment to keep safe**, the incident must be fully recorded **on CPOMS and reported immediately to a member of SLT. The incident** and it must be shared with parents or carers **on the same day, and** notified to the Local Education Authority, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Social Care / **virtual school head (where a pupil has a social worker or is a LAC).**

A planning and strategy meeting must be arranged at the earliest opportunity following an incident of seclusion. The learners' risk assessment must be updated to reflect the exceptional use of seclusion.

Any incidents of seclusion must also be shared with appropriate members of the governing body.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is illegal and is never used at the school.

Contingent Touch

'Contingent Touch' is used to mean everyday acts of communication by physical means to indicate approval, affection or sympathy. Touching can be a positive reinforcement to relationships and a comfort in times of stress or distress. However, staff must always remain conscious of the physical context and appropriateness of their actions.

Examples of times when we use this at Richmond Hill could be - modelling appropriate methods and techniques in a range of practical subjects e.g. Art, DT, supporting in Physical Education activities by providing appropriate physical prompts, holding hands when walking around the school, next to the road or out on a trip.

Positive Handling

Positive Handling may be used appropriately; by this we mean providing physical direction similar to contingent touch but more directive in nature e.g. the learner is guided away by the hand/arm/around the shoulder or for the very young pupils it may mean more physical support – cradling or hugging (using Team Teach practices). Learners with complex sensory needs may also request squeezing or deep pressure. This will be documented in their Behaviour Support Plan or Individual Sensory plan.

Walking Harness

The aim of using walking harness is to enhance the child's quality of life by enabling them to safely continue enjoying day to day activities within the community whilst retaining a degree



of social independence. The use of walking harnesses helps to reduce the risk of injury to the child, staff members and also members of the public, which may be incurred if the child has no or very little awareness of danger and is a flight risk. The use of Walking harnesses require parental agreement and should be included on any offsite risk assessment (ESRA) **(See Appendix 2)**

Monitoring and Reporting

We need consistent behaviour management throughout the school, appropriately adapted to the age/ability of the learner; this is partly achieved via monitoring and reflection. All instances of behaviour that challenges should be recorded on CPOMs.

All incidents involving restrictive physical intervention must be recorded, on the same day, onto CPOMS. All incidents of physical restraint must be recorded in the bound and numbered book by the member of staff involved in the restraint in liaison with a member of SLT.

The record must include:

- the name(s) of the pupil(s) involved, and when and where the incident took place;
- the names of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident;
- the reason that force was necessary (e.g. to prevent injury to the pupil, another pupil or member of staff);
- how the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to defuse or calm the situation, the degree of force used, how that was applied, and for how long;
- the pupil's response, and the outcome of the incident;
- details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil, or a member of staff and of any damage to property.

If a pupil causes significant harm to a member of staff then the member of staff hurt must complete a 'violence at work' form. Please refer to the 'Violence and Aggression Policy' for more details.

Use of physical intervention is monitored in order to help staff learn from experience, promote the wellbeing of children in their care, and provide a basis for appropriate support. The data generated is used to help determine training needs and the specialist help needed.

(See Appendix 3)

Post Incident Report

Incidents that require use of restrictive physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and may result in injuries to the child or member of staff. Following any incident, it is important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries. Immediate action should be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries that require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures. The Team Teach lead must be alerted as soon as possible that a situation involving physical intervention is taking or has taken



place. Appropriate support based on the severity of the incident will be provided for staff and children after the incident.

The Team Teach Lead member will ensure that all correct procedures have been followed. These procedures must include:

- Notification of parent or guardian that the incident has taken place
- First aid as appropriate
- Checking that all parties have recovered sufficiently before resuming their normal responsibilities.

In the event of injury to staff following a violent incident

In the event of staff incurring injury following a violent incident then the following protocol must be adhered to:

- Report the incident to the line manager who will ensure the Headteacher and SLT are informed.

Once the incident has been made safe:

- Phase leader to arrange debriefing with staff and team involved (
 - Internal support given
 - Behaviour Support Plan to be reviewed
 - Counselling to be offered through Employee Assistance Programme or Schools Advisory Service
 - If required - contact police
- Violence at Work form and accident form should be completed as soon as possible and passed to Assistant/Deputy Head who will complete page 2. Assistant/Deputy Head pass to Head.
- Incident reported on CPOMs on same day - by staff member (or witness, if staff injured)
- Violence at Work form and Accident form scanned into CPOMs after signature by Head
- Business Manager to consult Corporate Health and Safety Department with regards to informing the Health and Safety Executive and the completion of RIDDOR.

Responding to Complaints

The use of restrictive physical intervention can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive use. In the event of a complaint being received by the school regarding the use of force by a member of staff, the matter should be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff.

Any complaint will be dealt with by the Head teacher, the Governors and where appropriate a representative from the LA. **(See Appendix 4 Complaints Policy)**

Exclusions & Fixed Term Exclusions

See Exclusions Policy **(See Appendix 5)**



All staff will have access to this policy and receive regular refresher briefings to ensure understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding positive handling and behaviour management. All staff receive bespoke safe handling training annually.

This policy was adopted by the Governing Body in January 2025 and will be reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes or incidents indicate the need for revision. The current version is dated December 2025, with the next review scheduled for January 2027.

Appendix 1	Supporting Published Documentation
Appendix 2	Walking Reins Policy
Appendix 3	CPOMs guidance
Appendix 4	Complaints Policy (See website)
Appendix 5	Exclusions Policy (see website)

Appendix 1- Section 93 of the education and inspections act 2006

Power of members of staff to use force

(1) A person to whom this section applies may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing a pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely—

- (a) committing any offence,
- (b) causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself), or
- (c) prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

(2) This section applies to a person who is, in relation to a pupil, a member of the staff of any school at which education is provided for the pupil.

(3) The power conferred by subsection (1) may be exercised only where—

- (a) the member of the staff and the pupil are on the premises of the school in question, or
- (b) they are elsewhere and the member of the staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned.

(4) Subsection (1) does not authorise anything to be done in relation to a pupil which constitutes the giving of corporal punishment within the meaning of section 548 of EA 1996.



(5)The powers conferred by subsection (1) are in addition to any powers exercisable apart from this section and are not to be construed as restricting what may lawfully be done apart from this section.

(6)In this section, “offence” includes anything that would be an offence but for the operation of any presumption that a person under a particular age is incapable of committing an offence.

Appendix 2 Walking Harness Policy

Richmond Hill School

Usage of Walking Harnesses policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Governors
December 2025	December 2026	Emma Gildersleve	Full Governing Body

Aim

The aim of using walking harness is to enhance the child’s quality of life by enabling them to safely continue enjoying day to day activities within the community whilst retaining a degree of social independence. The use of walking harness helps to reduce the risk of injury to the child, staff members and also members of the public, which may be incurred if the child has no or very little awareness of danger and is a flight risk.

Without access to an aid to safely transport the individual to a set location, for example, the local park, individuals may be excluded from these activities.

- Permission will always be obtained from the legal parent or guardian of children prior to use of the harness.
- No child will be left unattended whilst wearing the harness.
- The walking harness should be the appropriate size for the individual and be fitted correctly ensuring that it is a snug fit, but not too tight as to cause discomfort/ injury.
- Walking harness should be used for the duration of an outing as required, but should not be used unnecessarily or for long periods of time once the individual is back within the safe environment where the flight risk has been eliminated i.e school.
- If the individual is in an enclosed area i.e. park and the staff member is not keeping hold of the reins, the handling rein should be either fully detached or securely tied up so it does not pose a tripping risk to the individual.
- Staff should check the child regularly during use of the walking harness particular in hot weather.
- It is recommended, where possible, that the staff member holds onto both the walking rein and the child’s hand especially when crossing the road.
- The walking harnesses are designed to help gently guide individuals when out walking, they should not be used to roughly drag or pull back an individual as this may cause the child to fall and injure themselves. However, staff will need to use discretion on this point as there are emergency circumstances where it may need to be overruled i.e. the child is heading in front of a moving vehicle.



Appendix 3 Behaviour categories for CPOMS

Type	Behaviour	Alert person/ group	Key information to include in the report.
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Child in Crisis ➤ Intentional Injury to staff ➤ Intentional Injury to another pupil ➤ Intentional Injury to self ➤ Behaviour that has resulted in the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention ➤ Bite that broke the skin ➤ Absconding ➤ New behaviour ➤ Sexualised behaviour ➤ Bullying ➤ Sexual abuse 	DHT AHT PL Family worker	What happened before behaviour? Trigger? What de-escalation strategies were used? How did the child respond? What did the child do? What did you/ the child say? What Physical Intervention was used? (calm room, cradle hug, double elbow, figure of 4, friendly hold, manual manipulation of the jaw, single elbow, single elbow to chairs) By whom? Who was involved in the incident? What help was summoned? Behaviour underlying causes? What happened after the incident? What worked? What didn't work? What first aid was administered? (if any) How were parents informed?
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Throwing objects ➤ Kicking ➤ Hitting ➤ Bite ➤ Damage to equipment/ environment ➤ Targeted behavior ➤ Racial Abuse ➤ Self harming ➤ Head butting ➤ Grabbing ➤ Stripping off ➤ Swearing 	AHT PL Family worker	What happened before behaviour? Trigger? What de-escalation strategies were used? If you went somewhere how did you walk with the child? (Guided- two handed, single guide, held hands, linked arms) How did the child respond? What did the child do? What did you/ the child say? Who was involved in the incident? Behaviour underlying causes? What happened after the incident? What first aid was administered? (if any) How were parents informed?
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scratching ➤ Dropping ➤ Hair pull ➤ Pinch ➤ Spitting ➤ Swearing ➤ Verbal abuse ➤ Smearing ➤ Climbing ➤ Pushing ➤ Running out of the room 	PL Family worker	What happened before behaviour? Trigger? What de-escalation strategies were used? If you went somewhere how did you walk with the child? (Guided- two handed, single guide, held hands, linked arms) How did the child respond? What did the child do? What did you/ the child say? Who was involved in the incident? Behaviour underlying causes? What happened after the incident? What first aid was administered? (if any) How were parents informed? (if needed)

