

Positive management of aggressive and violent behaviour policy

Summary

This policy document is to detail the approach to the positive management of aggressive and violent behavior when it is encountered in our academies.



If you are unsure about the validity of the content of this policy please refer to the Policy Owner.

Please Note: This policy is applicable to All Employees

Policy owner	Trust Board
Policy holder	Director of Education
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Policy Inventory ID Number	E07
Group Policy Area	Education

Approved by

Consultation Group	Board
Approval Committee	Board
Implementation date	March 2024
Review Date	March 2027

Version Control

Control No	Change summary	Consultation Group	Effective date
01	Policy aligned with relevant up to date legislation. Additional wording on accountability added.	Board	March 2024

Aim

It is intended that this policy will:

- protect all pupils from hurting or endangering themselves, others or property;
- protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or unlawful;
- assist staff in managing challenging behaviour in pupils and maintaining a positive school environment;
- minimise the risk of any accusation of improper conduct towards a pupil by any member of staff.

This policy only applies where all other avenues to de-escalate and control a situation have been used and have failed. ***It is effectively the last resort.***

Staff should not attempt to intervene or physically restrain pupils where to do so would exacerbate any medical condition that have or if they are pregnant.

In all instances where staff need to implement this policy, assistance from other members of staff should be sought, wherever possible, prior to action being taken.

Staff should not act under this policy without having received the appropriate training, e.g.: Norfolk STEPS.

Background

This policy has been drawn up with reference to the following documents:

<https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-safety-and-behaviour/norfolk-steps>

[Behaviour in schools guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Behaviour and discipline in schools guidance for governing bodies.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Headteachers should have regard to the Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance and must have regard to the Special educational needs and disability 0-25 years code of practice so that appropriate support can be provided to pupils who have additional needs.

[Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Searching, screening and confiscation in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Improving Behaviour in Schools Evidence Review.pdf \(d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net\)](#)

[Improving behaviour in schools \(d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net\)](#)

Education act 1996 [Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Professional and Personnel Relationships \(saferrecruitmentconsortium.org\)](#)

[Mental health and behaviour in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\).](#)

At the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust we aim to:

- foster each child's intellectual, physical, aesthetic, spiritual, emotional, moral and social development to the maximum so that individuals may realise their full potential;
- help pupils to develop perspective, spiritual and moral values, and an understanding and tolerance of the religions and beliefs of others;
- help pupils to understand the world in which they live and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations;
- give each pupil spiritual and moral guidance;
- develop a sense of tolerance and understanding of others with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, creed or gender;
- keep parents regularly informed about their child's progress or problems within the school setting;
- ensure that whatever class or group structure is used in the school, each individual child's special educational needs are being met.

Rights and entitlements of pupils

We believe all pupils have the right to:

- feel valued by staff;
- experience a teaching and learning environment which is supportive and where pupils' efforts are encouraged;
- feel safe in an environment which caters for physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs through a differentiated approach to learning;
- a school which recognises individual rights and responsibilities and attempts to establish a culture where respect for others is important and encouraged;
- express their feelings in an open, honest and polite way.

Acceptable Standards of Behaviour

The school will promote and reinforce all acceptable behaviour. The positive aspects of praise and reward are recognised by all staff, included in behaviour management programmes and used appropriately on a daily basis.

The Legal Position (The Education Act 1996/1997, DfEE Circular 10/98 & DfE Guidance – Use of Reasonable Force July 2013) [DfE advice template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/211121/Use_of_Reasonable_Force_July_2013.pdf)

The law allows teachers and other staff authorised by the Principal to have control or charge of pupils to use such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

1. Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility).
2. Injuring themselves or others.
3. Causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property).
4. Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

The Act allows all teachers or other authorised personnel at a school to use reasonable force to control or

restrain pupils. However, restraint should only be used when every other approach has been tried and all practical methods to de-escalate the situation, including retreat, have been employed.

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a pupil, which fall into three broad categories:-

1. Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
2. Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
3. Where a pupil is behaving in such a way that is prejudicing the running of the class or school good order and discipline.

For instance:

- 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 damage or vandalism to property;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which s/he might have or cause an accident likely to injure him/herself or others;
- a pupil absconds from a 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 pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- a pupil is behaving in such a way that they are prejudicing good order;
- a pupil is continually refusing to obey reasonable instructions and will not leave a class.

Although there is no legal definition of 'reasonable force' there are certain considerations:

- Where force is used it must always be done in a manner that attempts to reduce rather than provoke a further aggressive reaction.
- The number of staff involved should be the minimum necessary to restrain the pupil, while minimising injury to all concerned.
- The more serious the danger the greater the degree of force which may be used to avoid such danger.
- The force used must be the minimum necessary to deal with the harm that needs to be prevented, i.e. it must be reasonable in the circumstances.
- Whether it is reasonable to use force, and the degree of force used, must be in relation to the age, understanding and sex of the pupil.

Provided staff have acted in a professional, considered and informed manner; that school guidelines and behaviour management procedures/programmes for the pupils have been followed, and that these actions can be seen to be in the best interest of the pupil, the Principal and Governors will support such actions.

Where a member of staff clearly overreacts and the use of force is unreasonable or excessive, they may leave themselves open to disciplinary, civil or criminal proceedings.

In all cases where physical restraint is used a report must be made of the incident to show that:

- a real danger was perceived by the staff involved;
- means other than force was attempted or found to be adequate;
- when force was used it was the minimum necessary to remove the danger.

Absolute Prohibitions

- **Corporal punishment or the threat of it.** Any act, or the threat of an act, such as holding a pupil around the neck, collar or other way that might restrict breathing, hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, biting, twisting or forcing limbs against joints, holding a pupil face down on the ground etc., which causes or threatens harm or the expectation of harm to a pupil is strictly forbidden and constitutes gross misconduct. Staff engaging in such behaviour render themselves liable to disciplinary action and the possibility of prosecution.
- **Indecently touching or holding a pupil.** This includes holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear.
- **No pupil is to be locked in a room at any time.** It may be necessary at times for reasons of a pupil's own safety or the safety of others or to prevent damage to property, to restrict a pupil's movement within the school.
- **Deprivation of food or drink.** No pupil is to be deprived of full access to the amounts of food and drink normally available to other pupils in the school, nor to be forced to eat food which s/he dislikes. There is, however, no objection to encouraging a pupil in the normal course of care to try a wide range of foods.
- **Deprivation of sleep**
- **Deprivation of medication/medical or dental care.** The withholding of medication or medical or dental care as a means of punishment or control is totally forbidden.
- **Requiring the wearing of distinctive or inappropriate clothing.** No pupil is to be required to wear any clothing, footwear, badges or other mark intended to indicate or act as punishment or, any clothing or footwear inappropriate to the time of day or year and the type of activity being undertaken.
- **Fines.** The imposition and/or collection of fines for misbehaviour is not permitted. However, it is permissible to require a pupil to make reparation for damage done or to replace stolen items.
- **Intimate searches.** Intimate searches of any kind are strictly prohibited.

Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force as outlined in this policy, Principals and 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.

For further guidance staff are referred to [Searching, screening and confiscation in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Should a search be considered necessary, it should always be conducted with more than one member of staff in attendance and preferably of the same gender. Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules as opposed to those above. Under no circumstances are searches of an intimate nature allowed.

Where required, academies should also refer to the Drugs Policy and Exclusions Policy.

Appropriate management of unacceptable behaviour

The majority of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with by the adult responsible for the pupil(s) at the time. There are a range of intervention strategies which can be used and the method selected will be dependent on, and in keeping with, the circumstances at the time including the age and level of understanding of the pupil and the potential risks involved. Clear verbal instructions and warnings of the consequences of ignoring them will precede any intervention.

Reprimands are generally sufficient but sometimes it will be necessary to exert sanctions and occasionally controls. In all cases it is fundamental that the intervention is accomplished in such a manner that respect for the individual is maintained. **It is the behaviour which is unacceptable not the pupil.**

Physical restraint using Norfolk Steps techniques will only be used by fully trained staff when all other interventions have failed or where the pupil is at risk of harming his/herself, other pupils, staff or seriously damaging property. <https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-safety-and-behaviour/norfolk-steps>

Controls

On rare occasions it may be necessary to exercise control over a pupil. The concept of control involves insuring that pupils with a high level of personal stress, a dangerous lack of self-control, and a furious desire to challenge and threaten, are diverted from harming themselves, others, and seriously damaging property or are protected from the likelihood of them doing so.

Control must only be used

- when a pupil is injuring him/herself, others and/or seriously damaging property, or
- where a pupil is in potential danger of injuring him/herself, others and/or seriously damaging property.

In these situations, staff should (in order of priority):

- (a) give clear verbal instructions and warning of consequences,
- (b) maintain close supervision until the threat of departure has passed,
- (c) use permitted forms of physical action – obstructing, holding or, as a last resort, restraint.

Obstructing – a member of staff may use his/her physical presence to obstruct an exit creating an opportunity to express concern and remonstrate with a pupil and reinforce an instruction. However, obstructing must be discontinued if the pupil physically challenges it (when a decision will have to be made as to whether some other form of permitted intervention is justified.)

Holding – this should involve no more than a hand placed on an arm or shoulder or leading a pupil by one or both hands and/or possibly the flat of one hand placed against a pupil's back in order to guide him/her to some other place or activity. Holding is distinguished from 'physical restraint' by the manner and degree of force applied.

Holding is intended to discourage.
Physical restraint is intended to prevent.

In all situations where it is necessary to exercise control staff must be aware that it is not a personal failure to ask for support and assistance. Where this is not available, however, the immediate situation must be dealt with in a professional and responsible manner particularly when there is a risk to other pupils in the class.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is the intentional use of force to restrict the movement of a pupil, usually against his/her will. The use of restraint to control an assault, prevent the destruction of property or to minimise injuries is not intended to reduce a behaviour difficulty and should not be confused with an intervention programme. **It is a procedure for establishing control over an unsafe crisis situation and used as a last resort when other preventative methods have failed.**

Physical restraint must only be used

- rarely;
- as a last resort;
- where any other course of action would be likely to fail;
- when staff have good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary;
- when all other courses of action with regard to control, have been tried or the situation has developed so rapidly and to a degree that restraint has to be employed as the only justifiable response.

Physical restraint must never be used to

- punish;
- cause or threaten hurt;
- oppress, threaten, intimidate or bully.

All staff will follow the basic principles of the Norfolk Steps approach or similar in Suffolk academies and **must** be trained prior to implementing them

- Physical restraint will only be used as a last resort after de-escalation and other behavioural management techniques have been tried.
- Physical restraint will never be used as a form of punishment.
- Where possible the pupil will be given a clear warning giving him/her the opportunity to calm down.
- There will be at least two members of staff available in any situation requiring the use of physical restraint. This is for the protection of both staff and the pupil involved. If necessary, additional support should be sent for.
- A pupil will be held with the minimum force necessary and for the shortest possible period. Staff involved will remain professional and composed. The pupil's behaviour will not be taken personally. Verbal abuse will be ignored and the adult will use a calm, deliberate and conciliatory tone of voice. Positive feedback will be given as soon as possible to the pupil.
- Staff response will be commensurate with the situation, task and the individual involved.
- The members of staff involved will continue to communicate with the pupil offering reassurance that s/he will not be hurt and that help will be given to carry on with normal activities when s/he is calm.
- Having assessed the situation and judging that physical intervention is necessary staff will act quickly, smoothly and confidently.
- The incident will be recorded as soon as possible after the event on a serious incident form. This should be completed and passed to the Principal.
- All staff will receive Norfolk Steps training with regular update training at designated times throughout the year. In addition, class teachers or Classroom Assistants may request pupil specific Norfolk Steps training to ensure their management of specific behaviours is consistent and appropriate for the pupil it is intended.

It is essential that staff are always aware of how behaviours which might be seen as justifying the use of physical restraint can be prevented. Prevention involves foreseeing the possibility of challenging behaviours and taking action to reduce the likelihood that they will occur. By analysing individual behaviours, environmental and setting conditions and triggers it is possible to establish planned procedures which staff should adopt when responding to each individual. The development of planned responses to violent and

aggressive behaviour in individuals means that ad hoc strategies will not be used and this will minimise the risk of injury to both pupil and staff.

Any pupil whose behaviour follows a pattern, which may or may not require restraint at any time, should have a specific behaviour management programme identifying the strategies to be used. Parents will be involved in discussions about their child's behaviour. A behaviour management programme will be reviewed at least once every six months.

If a programme involving the use of physical restraint is required for any pupil this will be reviewed at least termly and always:

- if the incidence of restraint procedures increases beyond the baseline standard; · if there is injury to the pupil or staff;
- if there is any indication that procedures are not being followed in the agreed manner;
- if a new behaviour emerges which may also require the use of physical restraint.

It is recognised that pupils with learning difficulties are at a significantly greater risk of experiencing a wide range of medical complications. There are a number of medical conditions which increase the risk of serious injury if physical restraint is used. It is therefore essential that medical advice is sought before any intervention is agreed if a pupil has:

- a history of heart disease or heart problems;
- difficulty in breathing;
- a history of respiratory illness;
- problems with digesting food;
- gastro-intestinal conditions;
- recent fractures or brittle bones; · a history of dislocated joints;
- Down's syndrome.

Similarly, if there are concerns about a pupil's health after physical restraint has been used medical help should be sought immediately.

Recording / Monitoring of Physical Restraint

After each incident involving physical restraint a serious incident form must be completed by the members of staff involved then printed and handed to the Principal or, in his absence, a member of the senior leadership team. Where an injury has occurred the appropriate accident to pupil form or accident to employee form should be completed. Accurate recording is essential to provide a permanent record of the event surrounding the use of physical restraint. This will:

- help to prevent inappropriate use of physical restraint with pupils;
- provide protection for staff who may be required to give a detailed account of their actions;
- assist in monitoring the implementation of the policy and the use of agreed procedures;
- indicate the need for management action in response to the use of unplanned or emergency physical restraint;
- form part of the risk assessment procedure.

The record should include (see Appendix I):

- the name of the pupil(s) involved, when and where the incident took place
- the names of any 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 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.

Incidents involving the use of force can cause parents of the pupil involved great concern. Parents will always be informed if their child has been involved in an incident requiring physical restraint and given the opportunity to discuss it.

Complaints

Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, plus the fact that the school has a clear policy with regards to managing aggressive and violent behaviour, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It will not prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and Social Services Department under child protection procedures.

All complaints from pupils or parents must be investigated promptly, thoroughly and appropriately as per the Complaints Policy and process. Outcomes from that investigation could lead to action under the disciplinary policy and/or referral to other authorities. The onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that the allegation is true not the member of staff to show that they acted reasonably. Suspension should not be an automatic response and the Trust will abide by the "Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Staff" guidance. Careful consideration should be given to whether the case warrants suspension or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.

In these circumstances it will be for the disciplinary panel or the court to decide whether the use and degree of force was reasonable in all the circumstances. In that event, however, the panel or court would take into account the academy policy on restraint, whether that had been followed, and the need to prevent injury, damage, or disruption in considering all the circumstances of the case.

Physical Contact with pupils in other circumstances

There are many occasions when physical contact with a pupil is positive and in no way seeks to establish authority over a child. For instance, some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques, for instance, during PE or CDT lessons, when First Aid is being administered, when physical prompts are being given to support a pupil with particular special needs. In addition, touching may be appropriate when a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. Staff will use their professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support.

In addition, all staff should be aware of the following guidance:-

- Some pupils require assistance with personal hygiene and female staff may have to assist male pupils. However, male staff will under no circumstance assist female pupils.
- Intimate medical procedures, for instance, the administration of rectal diazepam will only be carried out by specifically trained personnel.
- A number of the pupils with whom we work have experienced sexual and/or physical abuse. Staff need to ensure that any physical contact is not misinterpreted.
- If at any time a pupil demonstrates verbally or otherwise that s/he is not comfortable with physical

contact, staff should respond immediately by ceasing.

- Pupils from different cultural backgrounds may be particularly sensitive to physical contact.
- Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence. Staff should be aware that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.
- Where a member of staff feels that it would be inappropriate to respond to a pupil seeking physical comfort, the reasons for denying this should be explained. The pupil should be comforted verbally as necessary.
- Physical contact should not be in response to, or be intended to, arouse sexual expectations or feelings.
- Pupils should be counselled with regards to socially appropriate/inappropriate times/places/situations to seek physical comfort.

It is recognised that at times children will need to be comforted or reassured. Staff should always adopt a safe way of comforting a child by:-

- (i) do this in public or with other people around - never comfort in private
- (ii) use a side to side stance and touch the child's shoulders (secondary).

Primary Academies have retained the practice of "hugging" a child to provide much needed reassurance appropriate for the age group, but this would always be done in a public environment with other staff present.

Although holding a child's hand is not a risk in itself there are potential risk factors. If a child pulls away or falls there could be damage to the small bones in the hand. Therefore, we expect all staff to use the approved Norfolk Steps guiding method of their hand around and resting on the staff members arm.

Support for staff following an incident and evaluation

Employers have a statutory responsibility to protect the health and safety of members of staff. In school this includes evaluating and minimising the level of risk involved in the management of pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour which may result in personal injury or high levels of stress.

It is recognised that each individual reacts differently to incidents of violence and aggression. Feelings of fear, anger, shame, inadequacy or violation are normal and healthy. Following an incident:

- Anyone suffering from shock or injury will receive medical attention as soon as possible.
- The Principal or another member of the senior leadership team will offer immediate support to the members of staff involved, providing an opportunity to talk through the events and feelings experienced. Feelings of anger, fear and/or distress are not seen as a sign of failure or professional shortcoming.
- Following completion of an incident form staff are encouraged to review the intervention procedures, to identify areas where further training might be needed or where behaviour management programmes need to be modified.
- Whenever it is suspected a member of staff is experiencing stress as a consequence of being involved in physical restraint, s/he will be encouraged to seek counselling from the Trust's employee support helpline.

It is recognised that the effects of aggression and violence may appear as delayed response and members of the senior management team are available to discuss issues relating to physical restraint at any time following an incident.

Evaluation

This policy and reports of interventions will be reviewed by the Principals, who will ensure that the policy is up to date and relevant to current practice. In addition, they will check that it reflects current legislation.

Annual reports on incidents recorded in relation to this Policy will be compiled by each Academy Principal and reported to their Local Governing Body.

Accountability for the implementation of this policy sits with each academy with associated oversight from the Academy Committee.

In addition, a further layer of assurance is provided by the trust executive in the form of the School Improvement Directors and the Director for Education who are responsible for reporting to the trust board and for review of the policy. Safeguarding reviews, academy audits and notes of visit provide a line of sight from the academies as part of the quality assurance process.

Strategic approval remains the responsibility of the trust board

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Appendix I - Record of Incident Form

To be completed within 2 working days of the incident

Name of Member of Staff	
Date and time of incident	
Location of the incident	
Name of student(s) involved	
Names of other witnesses to the incident Staff and students	
Reason force was necessary:	
Description of incident – how it began and progressed, the student’s behaviour, what was said by each party, steps taken to defuse the situation, the degree of force used, how it was applied and for how long plus any other relevant information	
Student’s response and the outcome of the incident	
Any injury suffered by the student/another student/member of staff/damage to property	

Signed: Date:

Name:

Once completed, this form should be submitted to the Principal.