



Positive Handling Policy

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Signed:

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Chair of Trustees

1. Introduction

Orion Academy and The Gallery Trust take seriously their duty of care towards pupils, staff, and visitors. Positive handling (including restrictive physical interventions) must always be rooted in the core principles of safeguarding, welfare, dignity, respect, and the child's rights.

This policy is fully aligned to:

- The Education & Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006)
- The Children Act 1989 & 2004
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The Department for Education (DfE) 2025 Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

The policy prioritises:

- Safeguarding the welfare and dignity of the child.
- Safeguarding the welfare of staff and others who act in good faith.

All staff must understand that any use of restrictive physical intervention must always be:

- **Absolutely necessary.**
- **Reasonable and proportionate.**
- **The least restrictive option available.**
- **In the best interests of the child.**

All physical interventions are embedded within a whole-school approach to positive behaviour management, trauma-informed practice, and pupil-centred planning.

2. Glossary

i. Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

The positive application of force with the intention of restricting movement to prevent significant harm. This includes any physical intervention where a child is actively resisting.

ii. Student Voice Student Support Plans (SSPs)

Every pupil has a Student Support Plan, co-produced with the student, parents/carers, and professionals. SSPs:

- Detail behaviours that may present risks.

- Identify proactive and preventative strategies.
- Are rooted in pupil voice to ensure interventions reflect the young person's needs, experiences, triggers, and preferred strategies.
- Are dynamic documents regularly reviewed and updated.

iii. Non-Physical Interventions

Preventative approaches include:

- Positive relationships.
- Clear expectations.
- Predictable routines.
- Use of regulation spaces.
- Proactive co-regulation.
- Calm, non-escalatory language and body language.

iv. Positive Contact (Supportive Physical Contact)

Non-restrictive positive touch, such as:

- Reassuring hand on shoulder.
- Guiding touch with consent.
- Assisting physical skills or learning.

v. Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

Use of physical force where active resistance occurs, solely to prevent:

- Significant harm to self or others.
- Serious damage to property.
- Serious disorder or crime.

3. Legal Framework

i. Best Interest Principle

The child's welfare is paramount. Any intervention must prioritise the child's emotional, psychological, and physical safety.

ii. Duty of Care

Staff have a duty of care to prevent foreseeable harm. This may include taking reasonable steps to prevent injury through safe intervention, as well as reasonable steps to avoid intervention where alternative de-escalation is possible.

iii. Education & Inspections Act 2006

Section 93 empowers staff to use reasonable force to prevent injury or serious harm. Only trained staff may use RPIs.

iv. 2025 DfE Guidance on Restrictive Physical Intervention

Restraint must:

- Only be used when there is no alternative.
- Never be used for non-compliance, refusal, defiance, or convenience.
- Be recorded, reviewed, and monitored.

v. Health and Safety

All staff are responsible for maintaining a safe environment through preventative planning and proactive behaviour management.

vi. Human Rights and Equality Duties

Interventions must not breach:

- Human dignity.
- Article 3 of the Human Rights Act 1998: Freedom from inhumane or degrading treatment.
- The Equality Act 2010: Protection against discriminatory practices.

4. Prevention & De-escalation

Staff must exhaust all alternatives prior to restrictive intervention. These include:

- Diversion and distraction.
- Offering choices and compromise.
- Regulation support (e.g. sensory input, regulation zones).
- Time, space, and supportive language.

Proactive Risk Management includes:

- Use of dynamic risk assessments.
- Timely updates to SSPs.
- Regular review of triggers, patterns, and emerging behaviours.

5. Principles Governing Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

Any intervention must:

- Be absolutely necessary to prevent harm.
- Use the least amount of force for the shortest duration.
- Be the least restrictive option.
- Be reasonable, proportionate, and justifiable.
- Avoid pain, humiliation, or injury.
- Cease immediately when the risk is managed.

Seclusion (forced solitary confinement) is not permitted unless ordered by a court.

6. Student Voice Student Support Plans (SSPs)

Each student has an SSP co-produced with:

- The student.
- Parent/carer.
- Key staff (pastoral, SEN, safeguarding, therapeutic).

SSPs must:

- Identify triggers and warning signs.
- Outline agreed calming strategies.
- Clearly record the student's views and preferred support strategies.
- Identify agreed physical intervention techniques if necessary.
- Be reviewed after any serious incident or change in risk presentation.

7. Training

- All staff involved in restrictive physical intervention must receive accredited training (currently Team Teach).
- Training includes de-escalation, trauma-informed practice, and lawful safe holds.
- Training will be regularly updated.
- Non-physical elements of behaviour management are core to all staff induction.

8. Recording and Monitoring

- All RPIs must be recorded in a named Bound Book within 24 hours.
- Records must include the rationale for intervention, student and staff debrief, and the outcome.
- All staff involved must contribute to the record.
- Monitoring and evaluation of incidents occur through SLT oversight.
- Governors receive regular anonymised reports.

9. Post-Incident Review & Support

- Immediate medical checks offered where appropriate.
- Staff and students involved will receive post-incident debrief.
- Opportunities for reflection and learning built into SSP review.
- All incidents will be reviewed to consider preventative learning.

10. Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, and Complaints

- Concerns about unsafe practice can be raised under the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.
- Allegations of improper use of force are addressed through the Complaints and Safeguarding Policies.
- All staff have a duty to report any concerns relating to safeguarding.

11. Governance and Oversight

- SLT and Governors will monitor all restrictive physical interventions.
- Policies will be reviewed annually and updated following national guidance.
- Student and parent/carers feedback informs policy review.

12. Final Statement

This policy aims to ensure that restrictive physical intervention is only ever used as a last resort to protect children and adults from serious harm. Orion Academy is committed to working with children and families to embed relational, trauma-informed practice that supports the dignity, rights, and voice of every student.