

Moorside Community Primary School

Positive Handling Policy

2025/26



Approved by:	The Governing Board and Head Learner	Date: 30 th September '25
Last reviewed on:	January 2026 – to be in line with April 2026 guidance.	
Changes from previous policy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Updated to reflect the DfE's new Restrictive Interventions guidance replacing the 2013 version on 1 April 2026. [gov.uk]Clearer terminology added, including definitions of restrictive interventions and seclusion. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]New Seclusion section: seclusion used only for safety, never as a sanction. [gov.uk]Same-day recording and reporting now required for all significant incidents, including seclusion. [assets.pub...ice.gov.uk]Strengthened safeguarding rules: explicit bans on unsafe restraint methodUpdated Incident Report Form in line with new guidance.	
Next review due by:	From 1 April 2026, this policy follows the statutory DfE requirements for recording and reporting the use of force and seclusion.	

At Moorside Community Primary School, Governors and staff believe that all children are created equal and should be given every opportunity to develop spiritually, socially and academically in order to learn, achieve and succeed in reaching their full potential.

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1. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only as a last resort. Under the Children Order 1995, it is only permissible as described under the heading "Physical Control". Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law.

It enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Head learner, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence,
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any other pupil or person (including the pupil himself),
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether in the classroom or otherwise.

From 1 April 2026, this policy must also be read alongside the DfE's *Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force, in Schools* (2026). While the 2013 guidance remains in force until 31 March 2026, Moorside will apply the strengthened expectations on terminology, seclusion, and same-day recording and reporting immediately as best practice.

2. THE DEFINITION OF POSITIVE HANDLING AT MOORSIDE

Positive Handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property.

Restrictive interventions include any action (physical or non-physical) that limits a pupil's movement, liberty, or independence. Reasonable force is a type of restrictive intervention. Seclusion is a separate form of restrictive intervention and is defined later in Section 6. These terminology updates reflect the 2026 DfE guidance.

Staff at Moorside Community Primary School recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.

A significant incident is any use of force beyond normal appropriate physical contact and requires formal recording and reporting.

Restraint may be physical or non-physical and includes actions that restrict a pupil's movement without direct physical contact.

3. THE AIM OF THIS POLICY

At all times members of staff at this school are in loco parentis and they must therefore act in the same manner that a good parent might to ensure the care and safety of all.

Staff should aim to understand what function the behaviour serves and to support the service user in learning more socially acceptable ways of expressing their feelings.

Behavioural interventions which seek only to control behaviour rather than understanding its meaning are likely to prevent individuals from making the most of their potential.

This policy provides a transparent view of how we use physical contact to both care for, and where appropriate, control our pupil and should be used in association with other key

policies. It outlines how members of staff are to apply the use of restrictive physical interventions in supplement to the Relationship Policy.

This policy is aligned with the statutory guidance outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2025), particularly in relation to safeguarding, staff conduct, and the protection of vulnerable pupils. It should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The use of positive handling must be free from bias and discrimination. Staff must be vigilant to ensure that interventions are not disproportionately applied to pupils with SEND, those from minority backgrounds, or those with social vulnerabilities.

The key objectives of the policy are:

- To protect every person in the school community from harm
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations

4. WHY USE POSITIVE HANDLING?

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him/herself or others. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the school's Positive Handling Policy.

Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting *in loco parentis* and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and wellbeing.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence.

At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

5. ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

Physical Contact with Pupils

Situations in which physical interaction occurs between staff and pupils may be to either care for pupils who may be distressed or have physical or learning disabilities, or in subject areas such as physical education in order to promote inclusive learning opportunities and deliver the National Curriculum.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary are:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
- When comforting a distressed pupil
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised

- To demonstrate how to use an instrument or piece of equipment
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To give first aid

Moorside Primary School does not operate a 'no-contact' policy. Appropriate physical contact is permitted where it supports safeguarding, learning, or pupil wellbeing.

Physical Intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the arm or shoulder with little or no force. The techniques implemented here will include 'turn, gather, guide' and the friendly or small child hold'. The important factor within these situations is the compliance of this child.

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. if a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:

- An instruction is being repeated until the pupil complies
- Use of a distraction
- Withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened

Other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)

6. THE USE OF POSITIVE HANDLING

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment and never used unless a child is out of control.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective and positive handling should be a last resort.

Seclusion

Seclusion is a restrictive intervention where a pupil is supervised in a room or area and prevented from leaving. It must only be used as a safety measure to protect the pupil or others and never as a disciplinary consequence or threat. Spaces must be safe, supervised, and not feel threatening. Seclusion must be used for the minimum possible time, with active

attempts to de-escalate. All seclusion incidents must be recorded and reported the same day in line with statutory guidance.

Seclusion must always be actively supervised and must end as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced.

All incidents of seclusion must be recorded and reported on the same day where practicable.

Reasonable Force

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers 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 where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them.

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.

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

Who can use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force

This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the head learner has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

When can reasonable force be used?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to protect pupils and/or to maintain safety of others. 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 and on a fluid 'Risk Assessment'.

While national legislation allows headteachers to authorise others in limited circumstances, Moorside restricts the use of restrictive interventions to employed school staff only.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used. Schools can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit

- Prevent 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
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

It is important to note that the use of reasonable force will only be applied at this school as a last resort, when all other alternatives have been exhausted and that force used will be reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

Strategies and the use of Positive Handling/Team Teach

Moorside Community Primary School is committed to ensuring that staff are trained to manage challenging behaviour safely, lawfully and effectively, in line with recognised best practice and Department for Education guidance. Positive handling is recognised as a serious intervention and is only used when necessary to keep pupils and others safe. Staff receive training in **Positive Handling in Schools**, which focuses on understanding behaviour, preventing escalation, and making safe and lawful decisions if physical intervention becomes unavoidable. This training emphasises that positive handling is a **last resort**, and that prevention and de-escalation are always the preferred approaches.

Training supports staff to:

- understand the **stages of aggression** and recognise early warning signs
- use **de-escalation strategies** to reduce risk before behaviour escalates
- apply **professional judgement** when balancing duty of care, safety, and proportionality
- understand the **legal framework** surrounding reasonable force
- follow **best-practice principles** if physical intervention is required

Staff are trained to use recognised behaviour-support frameworks, including:

- awareness of the **Aggression Curve**, enabling staff to intervene early and appropriately
- use of the **SCARF model** to support emotional regulation, reduce threat, and promote positive relationships

These approaches reinforce calm communication, empathy, and relational practice as the foundation of behaviour management.

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Where positive handling becomes necessary, staff are trained to:

- act in accordance with their **duty of care**
- use only **reasonable, proportionate and necessary force**
- apply techniques for the **shortest possible time** to reduce immediate risk
- prioritise the **safety, dignity and wellbeing** of the pupil and staff involved
- re-establish verbal control and move towards de-escalation as quickly as possible

Training makes clear that physical intervention is never used as a punishment, and that any use of force must be lawful, justified, and defensible. Staff are reminded that poor decision-making or unsafe practice can have serious consequences for pupils and staff, reinforcing the importance of following training and school policy at all times.

The training also covers:

- the lawful use of reasonable force in specific circumstances
- decision-making under pressure
- awareness of screening, searching and confiscation powers

- post-incident reflection and learning to reduce the likelihood of recurrence

The Head Learner maintains a record of staff who have completed positive handling training. Training needs are reviewed regularly and refreshed as appropriate, particularly where staff work with pupils who present higher levels of risk. All training delivered will reflect current Department for Education guidance, including the strengthened expectations for recording and reporting from April 2026.

7. WHEN POSITIVE HANDLING BECOMES NECESSARY

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what he/she must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible, e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

8. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN AFTER AN INCIDENT

Positive handling often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil.

Staff involved in incidents will be offered access to wellbeing support, including counselling services or supervision, where appropriate. The school recognises the emotional impact such incidents may have and is committed to supporting staff welfare.

A member of the leadership team should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff or Pastoral Team should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

Statutory Recording and Reporting (Effective 1 April 2026)

Schools must record every significant incident involving the use of force in writing as soon as practicable and, in any event, on the same day. Parents/carers must be informed as soon as practicable (normally the same day).

These duties apply to:

- Use of reasonable force
- Restraint (physical or non-physical)
- Seclusion

Records must include: individuals involved; date/time/location/duration; antecedents; de-escalation strategies attempted; description and rationale; degree of force; injuries and medical treatment; post-incident support; and details of communication with parents.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a Behavioural Learning Support Plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SENDco.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

A **significant incident** is defined as any use of force beyond normal physical contact, including any restrictive physical intervention. This definition aligns with DfE guidance and triggers the requirement for formal recording and reporting.

Monitoring and Recording

All incidents involving restrictive physical intervention must be recorded in detail using the TT Record sheet (appendix 1) and CPOMS. Records must include:

- Names of all pupils and staff involved
- Date, time, and location of the incident
- Duration and nature of the intervention
- Antecedents and de-escalation strategies attempted
- Description of the behaviour and reason for intervention
- SEND status and SEN code (where applicable)
- Approximate duration of the intervention
- Type and degree of force used
- Any injuries sustained and medical treatment given
- Post-incident support offered to pupil and staff
- Method of parental notification (written / email / CPOMS)
- Follow-up actions

Parents and carers must be informed in writing as soon as practicable, normally on the same day.

The Safeguarding Governor and Head learner will review incident data termly to identify patterns, assess proportionality, and ensure continuous improvement. The Governing Body will monitor patterns and any disproportionality in the use of restrictive interventions, including for pupils with SEND or protected characteristics.

The Governing Body will use incident data to:

- Identify patterns or trends in behaviour and intervention
- Assess any disproportionality in the use of force across pupil groups
- Inform strategic planning and continuous improvement in behaviour and safeguarding practices

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may need the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises.

Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)

- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate

10. COMPLAINTS

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents and an open and transparent approach with parents should help to avoid complaints. However this school will investigate any complaint about the use of force thoroughly, speedily and appropriately. When a complaint has been made and staff has been accused of using excessive force, this school will refer to the “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff” guidance, which will begin with the Designated Safeguarding Lead contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer.

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.



Moorside Primary School Incident Report

Section 1

Name of Pupil:	Year/Group:	Time:
Date of Incident:	Place/Activity:	
Approximate Duration:	Seclusion Used: Yes/No	
Reporting Staff:	Others Present:	
SEND status/SEN code:		

Section 2: Antecedents (a brief description of events leading up to the incident)

Section 3: Behaviour (please indicate sequence of behaviour)

Biting	Spitting	Theft	
Damage to property	Absconding (class/school)	Throwing objects	
Verbal abuse	Work refusal		
Kicking/hitting	Disruption (please specify)		
Scratching/pinching	Bullying	Other (please specify)	

Other relevant comments:

Section 4: Intervention (De-escalation techniques used)

Verbal advice & Support	Physical intervention e.g. (prompted) excluding restraint	Non-threatening body language	
Calm talking	Warning	Instruction	
Distraction	Reassurance	Seclusion (Duration?)	
Step Away	Humour		
Negotiation	Options offered	Other (please specify)	

Other relevant comments:

Was restraint used? Yes/No (if Yes, please complete restraint form overleaf)

Section 6: Action taken after incident

Talk through	Stayed with Head/Deputy	Consequence/Sanction
Moved into different class with adult	Parents informed	Suspension by Headteacher
Moved into different class independently	Parents volunteered to take pupil home	Other (please specify)

Duration of incident, how long before pupil re-integrated into the class and their routine?

Staff support provided - Time out

Debriefing with SMT member:

Signature of reporting adult:	Date:
Signature of witness:	Date:

Section 5. Report of Incident of Physical Restraint

Child's name:

5.1 Justification for Physical Restraint (please underline)

- 1) Child injuring themselves or in danger of injuring themselves.
- 2) Child injuring others or in danger of injuring others.
- 3) Seriously damaging property or in danger of seriously damaging property.
- 4) Serious disruption, prejudicial to good order.

5.2 Team Teach restraint technique(s) used. Please indicate sequence of use

Single elbow (SE)	Standing	Single staff
Double elbow hold (DE)	Seated	Two staff
Wrap (W)	Kneeling	Three staff

5.3 Resulting injury: YES/NO (please delete as appropriate) If Yes, please give details:

Staff Pupil Both Accident form completed? Yes Date:

Body map completed? Yes No Medical treatment Yes No

Any resulting damage to property? No Yes please give brief details

5.4 Name(s) of staff involved in restraint:

5.5 Signature(s) of Staff witness(es):

5.6 Any other relevant information e.g child's response, further action needed.

Signature of reporting adult:	Date:
Signature of witness:	Date:

To be completed by Headteacher/SLT/Pastoral

Recorded on CPOMS?

Parents informed Yes/No

Date/Time/Method of notification?

Any others informed (specify)

Method and time of parental notification: Written / E-mail / CPOMS

Parent Debriefed and Outcomes:

Parents and carers must be informed in writing as soon as practicable, normally on the same day. Has this been completed? Yes/No

Child Debriefed and Outcomes:

Please pass to Headteacher fully completed on day of incident

Appendix 2:

Moorside Primary School Safeguarding in Education Risk Management and Safety Plan

This document is designed for use when there are concerns regarding a child / young person in your education setting is linked to risky behaviours to themselves or others – please see accompanying guidance.

Name of child / young person:	
Gender:	
DOB:	
Child's main carer:	
Name and contact number of main carer:	
Status (i.e., LAC/CP/CIN/EH	
Allocated Social Worker (if applicable);	
Staff Member responsible for implementing the plan:	
Date:	

Please consider for each risk potential triggers and strategies to support in relation to:

Teaching and learning time / Unstructured times / Outside areas / Other children and young people

As detailed in guidance document.

What is the Risk / Risky Behaviour?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risk?	What further actions need to be taken to manage the risk?	Who is responsible for carrying out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done

Family strengths and resources – how family can support in implementation of the plan

Support available to the child/ Young person- this can include signposting

Out of Hours Support – what support is available out of hours if required

Child's and family views on the plan
Child and young person's views
Parent/ carers views

Please list any supporting documents in respect of the Risk Management and Safety Plan and attach – e.g., Strategy Meeting Minutes/ Early Help Assessment / C and F assessment.

Risk Management Plan agreed by:

(to include child / young person and parents / carers)

Name	Role	Signed	Date

Plan to be reviewed – date and agreed frequency:	
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Moorside Primary School Safeguarding in Education Risk Management and Safety Plan- Review

- To be used in review of Risk Management and Safety Plan and attached to document.
- Evaluate whether any changes need to be made to the Risk Management and Safety Plan
- Consider any new information, change in circumstances, and impact of any interventions / actions carried out.

Name of child:	
DOB:	
Date Risk Management and Safety Plan implemented:	
Date of review:	

Agreed actions / amendments for this review:

Summary of progress made:	Actions / amendments required:	Why?	Who and when?
<p>School / college setting:</p> <p><i>Eg, have there been further incidents? If so what was the actions taken? What was the outcome</i></p>			
<p>Child / young person:</p> <p><i>Eg, has the child / young person used the support available? What are their views regarding the review period?</i></p>			
<p>Parent / carer:</p> <p><i>What are the parents / carers views on the implementation of the plan? Views regarding the review period?</i></p>			
<p>Response to increased concerns:</p> <p><i>What additional support is required to respond to these concerns?</i></p>			

Review actions and amendments agreed by:

CATEGORIES OF CONSEQUENCE SEVERITY	
Catastrophic	Incident could result in <u>one or more fatalities</u> .
Major	Major injury resulting in incapacity, hospitalisation >24 hours.
Significant	Injury requires attention of a Doctor or Hospital treatment or hospitalisation <24 hours.
Minor	Small cut, bruise, abrasion, basic first aid treatment provided.
Negligible	Some discomfort, self help. No treatment required.

Name	Role	Signed	Date

Date of next review:

(this needs to be in proportion to the level of concern / risk and the degree of support and intervention).

CATEGORIES OF LIKELIHOOD	
Highly Likely	Expected to happen/reoccur, possibly frequently.
Possible	Might happen/reoccur at some time depends on circumstances.
Unlikely	Not expected to happen/reoccur but possible in certain circumstances.
Very Unlikely	Would only occur in very exceptional circumstances.

	Highly Likely	Possible	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Catastrophic	A	A	B	E
Major	A	B	C	E
Significant	B	C	D	E
Minor	C	D	E	E
Negligible	E	E	E	E

RISK CLASSIFICATIONS	
A	Unacceptable risk , requires immediate attention. Work <u>should not be started or continued</u> until the level of risk has been reduced.
B	High risk , requires immediate attention. Control measures must be identified and put into place as soon as possible.
C	Medium risk , requires attention as soon as possible. The risk should be only be tolerated in the short term and only when further control measures are being planned and introduced, Timescales must be short.
D	Low risks , confirm that there are no low/no cost solutions which may eliminate/ reduce the risk further.
E	Trivial risk , no further action required but review at regular intervals to ensure controls remain effective.