



CLOUGHWOOD ACADEMY

Positive Holding Policy

Version and Date		Author	Committee Responsible	Review frequency	Approval	Next Review Due
3.0	16.03.2022	Mr R Newton	LGB	3 yearly	Approved by LGB on 16.03.2022	16.03.2025
4.0	16.03.2025	Mr R Newton	Executive	Annually	Approved at Executive on 17.03.2025	17.03.2026
5.0	28.01.2026	Mr R Newton	Executive	Annually	Approved at Executive on 09.02.2026	09.02.2027

Contents

Key Information	3
Definitions and key terms used in this policy	3
The rationale and purpose of this policy	4
Introduction	4
Ethos of mutual respect, dignity, care & safety.....	4
The Aims of this Policy	5
The Objectives to Meet the Above Aims	5
Prevention and De-escalation.....	5
Our approach to behaviour management	5
Procedures and practices.....	5
Alternatives to Physical Controls (Pre- and De-escalation)	6
Teamwork	7
Well-chosen words	7
Getting Help	7
Physical Intervention – The Last Resort Principle.....	8
Reasonable and Proportionate	8
Unreasonable use of Force	8
Personal Searches	9
Planning and Procedures	9
Health & Safety	9
Safety Plans.....	10
Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies.....	11
The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils, Parents, Carers and Staff	11
Complaints	12
Training	12
Recording	12
Confidential Care and Accuracy	13
Monitoring and Evaluation	13
Appendix 1	14

Key Information

This policy has been written for

All staff at Cloughwood Academy who have contact with pupils, their parents and carers. All staff should have a working knowledge of this policy. Whilst pupils will not be familiar with the details of this written policy they will be made aware of its contents.

Copies of this policy can be obtained from

- The Academy web site - <http://www.cloughwoodacademy.co.uk>
- It is available as a hard copy on request from the Kaleidoscope Learning Trust Clerk
- Staff shared area drive

This policy links with the following policies

Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Staff Handbook, Health & Safety, Risk Assessment Policy

Person(s) responsible for this policy are

The Headteacher (Mr R Newton) and the Local Governing Board of the Academy.

Policy Review

This policy was written January 2026 in light of the revised guidance issued by the DfE for implementation from April 2026. This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Relevant statutory guidance, circulars, legislation & other sources of information are

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 – sections 93 and 93A

The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulation 2025

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Equality Act 2010

Definitions and key terms used in this policy

Restrictive intervention: a means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. This guidance uses ‘restrictive interventions’ as the umbrella term to describe both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain pupils in different ways.

Reasonable force: a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force in limited circumstances. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

Significant incident: Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact between pupils and staff. This includes when physical force is used to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

Seclusion: A non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a place away from others, and preventing them from leaving either by physical obstruction, blocking, or making them believe they will be punished if they try to leave.

Restraint: A term used in legislation referring to a non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may or may not include direct physical contact. For example, holding a pupil's arms to their sides or removing a pupil's crutches would both be considered forms of restraint.

The rationale and purpose of this policy

Staff at this academy are trained to look after the pupils in their care. Staff have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others. There may also be situations in which a child seriously disrupts good order in the academy or causes damage to property. If a member of staff ever needs to intervene physically they will follow the academy's Positive Holding Policy. Any parents wishing to view this policy may do so on request or by accessing the policy from our website. All new parents/carers will receive induction during admissions in relation to physical intervention practice at the academy.

Introduction

The term 'Positive Holding' describes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour by means of physical intervention. Included in this framework are a small number of responses which may involve the use of reasonable force to control or hold a pupil. The term 'restrictive intervention' is used when force is used to overcome active resistance. These are referred to as 'Restrictive Physical Interventions' in national Guidance (DfE 2026). A clear and consistent positive holding policy supports pupils who have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties within an ethos of mutual respect, dignity, care and safety.

Pupils with severe behavioural difficulties sometimes present a risk to themselves and others. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 describes the circumstances in which teachers and others authorised by the Headteacher may use reasonable force to control or hold pupils. Examples of when such action may be reasonable are to prevent injury to people, damage to property or the breakdown of good order. This policy details how we implement the guidance in this academy. It should be considered alongside the most recent local and national guidance. It is designed to help staff to ensure that any actions they take are reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary.

Ethos of mutual respect, dignity, care & safety

The law explains that any force used to manage behaviour must be reasonable, proportionate & absolutely necessary. In our academy all staff are trained on an annual basis to carry out appropriate physical interventions and to use holding to prevent injury,

harm, disorder or damage from occurring and to maintain a safe environment. The staff are trained to use reasonable, safe holding techniques which take into account the age, aptitude and needs of any pupil wherever necessary. Restrictive physical intervention is used as a last resort strategy and staff are trained to work together in situations of absolute necessity to keep everybody protected once all other de-escalatory and non-physical interventions have been exhausted.

The Aims of this Policy

To help ensure that staff are equipped to respond appropriately when pupils are in danger of hurting themselves, others or academy property or of seriously disrupting good order.

The Objectives to Meet the Above Aims

The Board of Trustees takes seriously its duty of care towards pupils, employees and visitors to the academy. Staff protection is an important part of child protection; both depend on confident and competent staff who feel supported by the senior leaders. This policy has a clear focus.

- The first and paramount objective is the welfare, safety and protection of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare, safety and protection of the adults who look after them.

Prevention and De-escalation

Our approach to behaviour management

All physical interventions at this academy are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The academy's Behaviour Policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own attainment and behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves establishing strong staff-pupil relationships, knowing our pupils, looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence negative behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading towards potential situations of risk.

Procedures and practices

Behaviour Management: Rewards and Consequences – The academy has a comprehensive set of rewards and consequences, these are detailed in the Behaviour Policy and the Cloughwood Way (displayed in all classrooms and communal areas).

Nurture academy-wide strategy – the academy adheres to the six principles of nurture and has achieved the Nurture UK quality mark.

Pre- and De-escalation skills and practice – staff receive annual training covering de-escalation. Pupil Safety Plans detail effective de-escalation strategies for individual pupils.

Safety Plans – all pupils have a Safety Plan an example of which can be found in Appendix 1.

Restorative Justice – consequences focus on repairing harm, fostering accountability, and restoring relationships rather than simply punishing pupils.

The Academy has adopted an academy-wide strategy to improve resilience and emotional literacy known as 'Nurture' which seeks to make pupils take greater ownership of their own development and generate consistent approaches across all key stages. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Safety Plan by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to pupil Safety Plans. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur. Staff must demonstrate that they can provide outstanding teaching practice which reduces incidences of Physical Intervention in their areas of responsibility. Staff also work with outside agencies such as the police and youth intervention programmes to ensure, wherever necessary, that restorative justice strategies are included in post-intervention support.

Alternatives to Physical Controls (Pre- and De-escalation)

Effective actions to reduce risks

A member of staff who chooses not to make a restrictive physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can de-escalate potentially dangerous behaviours before they occur by

- Showing care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation, reason and support.
- Giving clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Reminding pupils about rules and likely outcomes/consequences.
- Removing an audience or taking vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons or pose a safety risk.
- Using positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensuring that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

Modifications to Environment (Pre-escalation)

Equipment, storage & design

Effective and Timely Pastoral Support

Quality First Teaching and Exceptional Planning

Ideally, staff will not be waiting until a crisis is underway before conducting a dynamic risk assessment of the environment. We know that some pupils at this academy may exhibit extreme and possibly dangerous behaviour. In general, it is a good rule to keep the environment up-to-date and clutter-free. This may mean giving consideration to secure storage for a range of everyday objects when they are not being used. For example

- How is the availability of pointed implements (including pens, pencils, compasses, construction, horticulture, art, science and catering equipment) controlled?
- What small items are available to an angry pupil who may be tempted to use them as missiles?
- What objects are available to be used as blunt instruments?
- Are there sharp edges or corners which present a risk?

- Are the design arrangements or furniture safe and appropriate for pupils who exhibit extreme behaviour?
- Is there a comfortable place to sit with a dysregulated pupil?
- Are protocols in place to encourage dysregulated pupils to take themselves to a safer place?
- Are lessons of such interest that pupils are unlikely to become bored/distracted?

All teaching staff are required to provide an annual risk assessment for their teaching area and resources which is quality assured by Compliance Health and Safety.

Teamwork

The expectation at this academy is that all staff should support one another. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies. Good communication is necessary so that colleagues avoid confusion when help is offered and accepted.

Well-chosen words

The only purpose in communicating with a person in crisis is to prevent escalation.

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert an escalating crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into an argument. Telling people to calm down can actually raise levels of anxiety, aggression and distress. Pointing out what they have done wrong can often make things worse. The only purpose in communicating with an angry person is to prevent further escalation. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

Getting Help

At this academy the following support structures are in place

- Daily briefing sessions in the morning to update all staff on current issues and share information.
- Phone system to request urgent assistance (555).
- Teams to communicate issues or incidents to colleagues.
- Use of help protocols and language to remind all staff of availability of colleagues to offer help including change-overs of staff during a crisis situation with a pupil.
- Teamwork.
- Debrief sessions after a crisis with the pupil(s) involved, reflecting on how crisis was managed by all involved and identifying any points for review or learning.
- Annual refresher sessions covering strategies and techniques for all staff, and continuous review by SLT to inform these.
- Staff access to free counselling service.

Physical Intervention – The Last Resort Principle

At Cloughwood Academy we only use physical intervention when there is no realistic alternative. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced.

National guidance is clear on this point.

“All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. To prevent or stop a pupil from:

1. Causing injury to themselves or others.
2. Committing a criminal offence.
3. Damaging property.
4. Causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.”

Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools. DfE April 2026

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a dynamic risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to judge each situation on its merits and think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective, given the knowledge of the persons involved.

Reasonable and Proportionate

Useful questions

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. People should not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate, they will be supported. When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions

- Is there a clear or perceived risk of disruption/damage?
- Is there a clear or perceived risk of injury to self or others?
- Is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Is a less intrusive intervention available?
- Have the alternatives, age and competence of the pupil been considered?
- Am I the best person to be doing this?
- Is the immediate environment safe?
- Is PI a last resort?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

Unreasonable use of Force

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should

pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites, spitting and grabs).

Other than as a one-off emergency measure to protect health and safety, force should never be used to keep a pupil secluded. Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this academy. Seclusion must not be confused with isolation, such as detention or time out of class.

The annual training received by staff explicitly prohibits any physical intervention which affects a pupil's airway, breathing or circulation. All taught techniques have been designed to avoid this.

On some occasions, despite staff's best efforts, a physical intervention may result in all parties being unintentionally grounded. If this occurs the pupil must be released or moved to a safer position (standing or seated) as quickly as it is safe to do so.

Personal Searches

The academy follows Government guidelines set out in Department of Education, Searching, Screening, Confiscation document these can be found through the following hyperlink <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searchingscreening-and-confiscation>.

To minimise risk from unwanted items being brought into the academy learning environment all pupils are asked to hand in personal items at the start of the day. This includes mobile phones and other prohibited devices.

It is the policy of Cloughwood Academy that all staff working closely with pupils are trained annually in the pre-emptive and responsive positive holding strategies and techniques, to complement the behaviour management approaches and strategies reflected in the Academy's Behaviour Policy.

Planning and Procedures

Health & Safety

Shared responsibility for the identification and reduction of risk

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous behaviour should be regarded just as seriously as dangerous equipment. We all have shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk. Sometimes things go wrong even when we make our best efforts to do the right thing. Sometimes we are faced with unpalatable choices. In these circumstances we have to try and think through the outcomes of the options available, balance the risks and choose whatever course of action which seems to involve the least risk. As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with Health and Safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with academy policy and guidance, and to co-operate to make the academy safer. It is also a requirement that all staff participate in training if they are directed to do so.

This does not necessarily mean that all staff can be involved in all the physical activities. The non-physical aspects of positive holding training are crucially important too.

Safety Planning - When considering a pupil's behaviour staff should think about the following questions

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to complete a safety plan (Triggers, responses, previous incidents)?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

Dynamic risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should plan ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else. Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore, a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned.

Confidence and competence are often related to the quality and level of staff training achieved. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk. When faced by extreme behaviour, or even in a fight situation, the judgement may be that by becoming involved, the member of staff will increase the chance of somebody getting hurt. In this the correct decision is to hold back from the physical controls and wait until situations can be brought under control safely.

Safety Plans

Known effective strategies identified

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All pupils at the Academy should have a Safety Plan, an example of which can be found in Appendix 1. The safety plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have proved ineffective or which caused problems in the past. Safety Plans should be considered alongside the EHCP and any other planning documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.

Safety plans are essential tools designed to ensure the safety and well-being of both pupils and staff members. These plans exist to manage and mitigate potential risks, allowing for proactive steps to be taken in situations where a pupil's behaviour, health, or circumstances may pose a safety concern. It is important to note that even with a robust safety plan in place it is not always possible to prevent dangerous incidents from occurring. The safety plan documents are not fail safe but do act as an aid for staff to alleviate as much risk as possible. They also do not replace the need for staff to dynamically risk assess situations as they occur.

Safety plans are regularly updated to reflect any changes, such as shifts in a pupil's behaviour, identified triggers, medication adjustments, or following an incident. This ensures the most accurate and effective strategies are in place to address new or evolving challenges. Additionally, when a pupil's risk level is reassessed—whether moving from high risk to low risk—safety plans are adjusted accordingly to ensure the appropriate level of care and supervision.

We encourage co-production between pupils, parents and carers when creating or reviewing safety plans. This is important because often these stakeholders hold vital information regarding triggers and effective strategies for de-escalation. To this end we aim to review the safety plan with pupils, parents and carers at least once a year (or whenever required) usually at the annual review.

It is important to remember that safety plans aren't only about protecting pupils; they are also in place to safeguard the school community and public. Being aware of and following the safety plan, helps create a safe environment where everyone can work and learn without unnecessary risks. Regular updates and thorough reviews ensure that everyone remains protected and that responses are always appropriate to the circumstances at hand.

When any changes are made to a safety plan, it is essential that this information is shared with staff. To this end, when a safety plan has been updated the member of staff will email all staff to make them aware that it has changed. Updates are also given during staff briefings. This ensures that all relevant staff members are informed and prepared to respond appropriately to any situations that may arise.

Remember, safety plans are a team effort, and it's vital that every member of the school community is informed and involved in maintaining a safe space.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the academy recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences. The key principles are that any physical intervention should be

- in the best interest of the child;
- reasonable and proportionate;
- intended to reduce risk;
- the least intrusive and restrictive of those options available which are likely to be effective.

Where possible, staff should always attempt to use diversion or de-escalation in preference to physical interventions. They should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this academy. If staff act in good faith and their actions are reasonable and proportionate and, fall within the academy policy they will be supported.

The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils, Parents, Carers and Staff

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this academy to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Training for staff gives them a detailed

understanding of the 'Crisis Cycle'. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase.

Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. All injuries should be reported and recorded using the Academy's systems (Medi Tracker). It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice. Even when staff attempt to do everything right, things can go wrong. Part of the post-incident support for staff may involve a reminder of this, as people tend to blame themselves when things go wrong.

Time needs to be found to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long-term damage. This is an opportunity for learning for all concerned. Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that pupils have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective. When time and effort are put into a post-incident support structure the outcome of a serious incident can be learning, growth and strengthened relationships.

All incidents of physical intervention must be communicated to parents, carers and, where appropriate, social worker on the same day of the physical intervention. Contact with parents and carers must be recorded in the bound and numbered book on the reasonable force record. If staff encounter difficulties contacting parents, carers or social workers they should raise this with a member of SLT.

Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. The Academy has a formal Complaints Procedure. Pupils should be reminded of the procedure and encouraged to use the appropriate channels. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open academy and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of staff and pupils alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any safety concerns should be reported to the designated person for Health and Safety.

Training

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Headteacher who are expected to use physical intervention techniques should be trained. Positive holding training is always provided by qualified instructors with rigorous guidelines. Full training is completed every year. Our preferred approach is for whole-staff team training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our staff and pupils.

Recording

Bound and numbered book

Whenever restrictive physical intervention is used the incident must be recorded in the Academy bound Reasonable Force Record Book. All staff involved in an incident should contribute to the record which should be completed within 24 hours of the incident. The details recorded are kept confidentially and securely and overseen by the Headteacher.

Confidential Care and Accuracy

Staff should

- Read through the academy recording form carefully
- Take time to think about what actually happened and try to explain it clearly
- Complete all names in full
- Sign and date all forms
- Bear in mind these records will be retained and cannot be altered

They will be kept for many years and could form part of an investigation at some time in the future if ever needed to support an investigation.

Reasonable Force Records should not be completed until the individuals concerned have recovered from the immediate effects of the incident. They should not be rushed.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action as required. The Academy Reasonable Force Record is open to external monitoring and evaluation. Each physical intervention record will be checked, reviewed and signed off by a member of SLT. The Headteacher will report physical intervention data to the Governing Body at each LGB meeting.

Following an incident, consideration may be given to reviewing the Safety Plan, Behaviour Policy or completing any follow up actions. Any further action in relation to a member of staff, or an individual pupil, will follow the appropriate procedures.

Appendix 1



Safety Plan Cloughwood Academy

Name of Pupil:	Year Group:
Form Tutor:	
Original Date:	
Reviewed:	
Reviewed with parent/carer:	
Reviewed with pupil:	

Health Needs Pupils Diagnosis: Any known medical conditions: Details of any medication: Administered daily:
Pupil Trigger information:
Pupil Behaviour stages Stage 1:

Response & Supportive Strategies:

Stage 2:

Response & Supportive Strategies:

Stage 3:

Response & Supportive Strategies:

Physical intervention holds adopted for this pupil

Interventions	Number of staff
Prompting and Escorting – Front	
Prompting and Escorting – Back	
<i>Standing/ Sitting/ Kneeling</i>	
Humerus Contact and Control Principle (regularity of Contact)	
Cupped First Hold	
Double Wrist Hold	
Momentary Control/ Self-Protection	
Overarm Wrap with Frame	

Additional Physical Intervention Comments:

After Physical Intervention/ De- brief:

Therapeutic Interventions:

Recording

All Positive Handling incidents are recorded in the bound and numbers reasonable force book.

Low Risk Medium Risk High Risk

Description of the young person's behaviours likely to lead to risk:	Persons at risk	Risk Level	Action to take:	Residual risk rating	If action 1 fails, what are the next steps to take:
		L- Low M- Medium H- High	Action 1	L- Low M- Medium H- High	
Violence towards to peers or others					
Self harm					
Sexualised behaviour					
Transport					
Offsite activities					
Physical intervention					
Missing without permission					
Drugs, alcohol and tobacco					
Practical subjects					
Online activity in school					