

Woodside Academy



Positive Handling Policy

***“We want children to do their best and try hard to improve”
from School Vision Statement “Excellence Through Opportunity”***

1. Policy Statement

At Woodside Academy, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment where every child can thrive. We believe that the use of physical intervention should be rare, reasonable, proportionate, and used only as a last resort to prevent harm. This policy outlines the approach we take to positive handling in line with the law, including the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the DfE guidance “Use of Reasonable Force in Schools” (2013).

2. Aims of the Policy

- To keep children and staff safe at all times.
- To promote a culture of de-escalation, prevention, and relational behaviour support.
- To ensure that any use of physical intervention is lawful, reasonable, and minimal.
- To protect the dignity and rights of all pupils.
- To equip staff with clear procedures, training, and confidence.

3. Definitions

Positive Handling refers to a planned or reactive intervention where trained staff may use reasonable physical force to prevent:

- Injury to a pupil or another person;
- Serious damage to property;
- A pupil engaging in behaviour that poses a risk to themselves or others.

It does not include:

- Touching a pupil to comfort, guide, or support appropriately (e.g. holding a hand to walk);
- Positive physical contact as part of everyday interactions (e.g. high fives, reassuring hand on shoulder).

4. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE Guidance: “Use of Reasonable Force in Schools” (2013) and “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (2024)

5. Guiding Principles

Prevention first: Our focus is always on de-escalation, positive relationships, and early intervention.

- Individualised planning: Pupils with known behaviours of concern have Positive Handling Plans and Risk Assessments.
- Minimum necessary force: Used only when essential and for the shortest time possible.
- Respect and dignity: Children are treated with care and compassion, even in crisis.
- Post-incident care: Children and staff are supported and debriefed after incidents.

6. Staff Training

Only staff trained in an approved physical intervention programme (e.g. Team Teach, PRICE, or MAPA) may carry out positive handling, except in exceptional emergency circumstances.

Training includes:

- De-escalation and conflict resolution
- Safe holds and disengagement techniques
- Legal responsibilities and documentation

Training is refreshed every 5 years or sooner if needed.

7. Use of Positive Handling

Permitted only to:

- Prevent injury to the pupil or others
- Prevent significant damage to property
- Prevent a pupil from leaving the school site if they are at immediate risk

Not permitted for:

- Punishment
- Control or compliance where no risk is present
- Threat or intimidation

8. Planning for Known Risks

For pupils with ongoing risk of behavioural crisis, the following documents must be in place:

- Positive Handling Plan (PHP) detailing triggers, strategies, and safe responses.
- Risk Assessment (RA) updated at least termly.
- Pupil Support Plan (PSP) if wider behaviour strategies are needed.

These are developed with the child (where appropriate), parents/carers, and relevant professionals.

9. Working with Parents and Carers

We maintain open and honest communication with families.

Parents/carers will:

- Be informed of any incident involving positive handling
- Be invited to contribute to risk assessments and handling plans
- Receive reassurance about our commitment to child safety and support

10. Monitoring and Review

The Principal will:

- Monitor use of physical intervention and report patterns to governors.
- Investigate any complaints or allegations.
- Ensure the policy is reviewed annually and shared with all staff.

11 Complaints

Any concerns or complaints about the use of physical intervention should be addressed under the school's Complaints Policy. Allegations will be handled in accordance with "Allegations Against Staff" guidance and safeguarding procedures.

12. Linked Policies

- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy

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