



CARE AND CONTROL POLICY

September 2024

(To be reviewed September 2025)

Introduction

This policy is intended for a wide readership and reflects Larches High School's approach to the circumstances where physical contact with pupils may be appropriate or necessary.

Rationale

Physical contact is a natural and normal aspect of human behaviour, it can be used positively to reinforce self-image and sound relationships between staff and pupils or in less positive contexts as a part of a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies in which a young person may require physical intervention. There are of course instances where physical contact is necessary for First Aid or hygiene purposes.

Options & Strategies

All members of staff who have contact with pupils must clearly understand the options and strategies open to them. Through the policy, staff, parents and pupils should be made aware of the options and strategies that may be employed in various circumstances. This policy has been written with reference to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2018.
- The Standards and Inspection Education Act 2006.
- DfES circular 10/98 – Section 550A of the Education Act 1996: The use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils.
- The use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties – DfES 2003.
- The use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children & Adults who Display Extreme Behaviour Associated with Learning Difficulties and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- DfES 2002.
- 'Removing Barriers to Achievement' – The Government's Strategy for SEN, February 2004
- Team Teach Positive Handling Procedures.

The policy applies to all staff employed within Larches High School and does not differentiate between managers, teachers, support and clerical staff. The policy operates in the context of the Every Child Matters agenda and is driven by the ECM outcomes; staying safe, being healthy, enjoyment and achievement, achieving economic well-being and making a positive contribution.

Principles of Good Practice

Contact for First Aid or Hygiene Purposes

Emergency treatment may be required at any time and staff should never feel constrained from acting immediately to prevent harm even where this involves intimate body contact. In the context of Health and Safety any physical contact:

- Should have a First Aid or Hygiene purpose.
- Should not involve more contact than is necessary.
- Should be undertaken by persons of the same sex as the pupil when such a person is available and when their First Aid skills are no less than those of an available person of the opposite sex.

Wherever possible, contact may be avoided by requesting that the pupil undertakes the activity him/herself under adult direction e.g. young person cleaning a cut or graze.

Staff should spend no longer than necessary over any cleansing process and limit activities to the minimum required to restore hygiene. They should ensure that there is open access to the work area, while having regard to the pupil's dignity and requirement for privacy.

Contact Related to Positive Interpersonal Relationship Purposes

Positive handling with a clear purpose – ‘Contingent touch’

For the purpose of this policy the term ‘contingent touch’ is used to mean everyday acts of communication by physical means to indicate approval, affection or sympathy.

Touching can be a positive reinforcement to relationships and a comfort in times of stress or distress. However staff must always remain conscious of the physical context and appropriateness of their actions. Even perfectly innocent actions can be misconstrued and any physical contact should never take place in conditions which are private or in areas to which there is no open access.

Should physical contact take place in which the staff or child believes to be unwelcome or misconstrued, the details should be reported to the line manager as soon as possible and the circumstances recorded on an incident form in case of further enquiry.

Contingent Touch must:

- Take into account age appropriateness.
- Have a clear and legitimate purpose.
- Cease immediately if the pupil appears distressed or voices concern.
- Avoid any intimate contact.
- Not last longer than is necessary to fulfil its purpose.

There may also be some pupils who for personal or cultural reasons will find physical contact unwelcome. Staff need to be aware of individual circumstance and react accordingly. However staff should not be inhibited if immediate health and safety situations demand a physical response.

Contact in Relation to Escorts and Guidance Purposes

Some young people may need to be physically directed, e.g. towards a time out facility, or may need to be actively diverted from disruptive or destructive behaviour e.g. being encouraged by light touch on arm or shoulder. This type of handling encourages / discourages actions without the use of restraint or force and may be used to clearly convey teacher expectation. This form of contact is only appropriate when used in a positive way with verbal reassurance, explanation and encouragement. However, staff should be aware that any physical contact could inadvertently escalate a situation and that they should constantly be assessing the level of potential risk.

Age, gender and knowledge of the pupils should be considered when deciding appropriate forms of physical contact. Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence. For their own protection staff should report and record any incident in which they made physical contact leading to adverse reaction from a pupil, or contact made by a pupil with which the member of staff is not comfortable on Behaviour Watch. This should lead to a review of the young person’s individual risk assessment if appropriate.

In general, the use of physical contact in day to day behaviour management interventions should be avoided. In extreme cases, when the physical intervention is necessary, it must be reasonable and proportionate and applied in a way that maintains the dignity and safety of all concerned.

Defusing and De-escalation

The use of physical intervention should always be the exception not the norm; it should not become a commonly used element in the repertoire of behaviour management techniques.

Larches High School will minimise the likelihood of incidents requiring intervention by:

- Ensuring appropriate staffing levels.
- Ensure all staff receive training in De-escalation as part of continued professional development and also ensure an appropriate number of staff are trained in Positive Handling and this is renewed in line with guidance.
- Ensuring staff have access to young people's Risk Assessments and prior relevant history.
- Using planning which is responsive to identified individual needs.
- Delivering a broad curriculum which includes opportunities for personal development and expression.
- Developing students' empathy and responsibility through PD schemes of work and ELSA intervention.
- Discussing with the pupils and their parents / carers as appropriate any strategies to support the management of their behaviour.
- Taking steps to diffuse the early stages of behavioural difficulty wherever possible.
- Reviewing the nature and frequency of incidents to inform future practice.

Defusing and de-escalation strategies may include:

- Giving reminders of requirements and offering positive choices to de-escalate a situation.
- Giving positive feedback regarding behaviour as well as curriculum skills.
- Being clear about objectives, including targets and expectations.
- Offering mentoring and careers development opportunities.
- Offering 'active listening', discussion and problem solving.
- Ensuring opportunities for physical activity.
- Using weekly monitoring and rewards.
- Giving pupils time to make more appropriate behavior choices.
- Offering opportunities for regulation through intervention work.

Contact In Relation to Restrictive Physical Intervention

Restrictive physical intervention or the term restraint is defined as: 'the positive application of force by staff in order to overcome rigorous resistance'. The techniques administered completely direct, decide and control a person's free movement.

Positive behaviour management techniques and the use of the range of preventative measures are always preferable to restrictive physical interventions. Restrictive physical interventions should only be used in exceptional circumstances and only be used:

- In the best interest of the young person or the young people
- After all preventative measures have been explored
- As a last resort
- Never as a punitive measure or as retribution and must be reasonable, proportional and necessary.

The proper use of reasonable force requires knowledge, understanding, skill and judgement.

Where necessary reasonable force can be used by authorised staff to control or restrain pupils to prevent them from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- 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).
- Injuring themselves or others.
- Causing damage to property (including the pupils own property)
- 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.

There is no legal definition of reasonable force and as such the degree and reasonability of force will depend on circumstances. Physical force cannot be justified for:

- Trivial misdemeanors.
- A situation which can be resolved without force. The degree of force must:
- Be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the consequences it is intended to prevent.
- Always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.
- Take into account the age, understanding and sex of the pupil. This applies when a teacher, or other authorised person, is on the school premises, or when (s)he has lawful control or charge of the pupil elsewhere e.g. on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity.

Authorised Staff

Identified staff at Larches have accessed basic positive handling training and updates in line with guidance. Visitors to Larches and short term Agency staff are not subject to this policy and are not authorised to restrain pupils (with the exception of the police). Members of associated professions who have enhanced DBS e.g. Educational Psychology, Youth Workers, Social Workers etc. may have unsupervised contact with students, and are subject to their own departmental policy.

Reporting & Recording

Immediately following any incident the member of staff concerned should report the incident to SLT / Behaviour Support Team and record the incident on Behaviour Watch and complete a the Serious Incident Record Form (Appendix 1).

The report will be an accurate, factual record, minimising misunderstandings and providing a helpful record should there be a complaint. Parents and guardians will be informed of any such incident and given the opportunity to discuss it. Initial contact with parents will be oral; where appropriate this will be confirmed in writing. In addition, staff may find it helpful to seek debriefing and post-incident support for all involved.

Appendix 1

SERIOUS INCIDENT STATEMENT

Main Pupil involved:			
Year group:		Form Group:	
Other Pupils involved: (Forename/Initial only)		Their Role: Target (T), Witness (W), Participant (P), Bystander (B)	
Pupil A			
Pupil B			
Pupil C			
Pupil D			
Type of Behaviour Please indicate e.g. damage, threatening behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse			
Incident Details			
Incident Date		Incident Time	
Location		Subject	
Statement: detail your record of the incident			
De-escalation techniques used:			
Verbal advice & support		Humour	Distraction
Reassurance		Options offered	Step away/given time to think
Calm talking		Time out offered	Other (please specify)
Non-threatening body language			

Forms of physical intervention used			
Held by (number)		Single elbow	
Holding only		Double elbow	
Friendly hold		Inside double elbow	
Length of hold		NO HOLD USED	
Your involvement was: (Please circle)	Target Bystander	Participant Other	Witness
Statement date			
Statement by			
Role in School			
Signed			
Date			

To be completed by person(s) involved and passed to the investigating member of SLT