



Cornwall Education Learning Trust

**Positive handling and physical
intervention policy**

Exceptional Educational Experience

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

At Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT) we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect all members, trustees, community champions, staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Policy statement

Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT) aims to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all its pupils to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential. CELT takes the safety of pupils, students and staff very seriously. We believe that all pupils/students and staff have the right to be safe and feel safe whilst at school or on a school-run activity.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- CELT safeguarding suite of policies
- the school behaviour policy

Legislation or non-statutory guidance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Children Act 1989
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force in schools'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'

Definition of 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 or students.

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 pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

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

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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Each school will appoint a member of their Senior Leadership Team with the necessary status and authority to be the responsible member of staff to oversee the application of the Positive Handling Policy. It may be that this is something that the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead has the overview of, within their role of being responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare who will attend senior leadership meetings to report on, plan and help implement Safeguarding across the Academy.

Minimising the Need to Use Reasonable Force

CELT is firmly committed to creating a calm and safe environment which minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force. Staff use the PSHE curriculum to explore and strengthen emotional

responses to situations. Staff will only use reasonable force as a last resort and strongly believe in de-escalating any incidents as they arise to prevent them from reaching a crisis point. Staff will be skilled in promoting and rewarding positive behaviour and will utilise various appropriate techniques in the management of a class environment. Staff will only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved by not using force.

The overall responsibility for the appropriate application of this policy lies with the Senior Leadership Team. A key element of the application of the policy is the regular and timely training, which needs to be clearly tracked and monitored to ensure that all the relevant staff have specific training on the use of reasonable force, within the context of our Positive Handling approach.

Staff Authorised to Use Reasonable Force Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act (2006)

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 Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils, such as unpaid volunteers, or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

As a rule nobody has the right to touch, move, hold or contain another person. However, people with a duty of care operate in exceptional circumstances where it is sometimes necessary to act outside this norm. whenever they do so they should be clear about why it is necessary. If necessary, any actions were in the child's best interest and that they were reasonable and proportionate, along with being for the least amount of time, and using the least amount of force.

Deciding whether to use reasonable force

Under English law, members of staff are empowered to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from or stop them continuing:

- Self-harming;
- Injury to other children, service users, staff or teachers;
- Damaging property;
- Committing an offence; and
- Any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school, or among any of its pupils.

It is each member of staff's responsibility to make an assessment of the particular circumstances. Staff will need to decide if control is appropriate, and if it is, at what level. It is not considered appropriate to adopt a blanket approach to the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention simply because a pupil may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Staff will need to take the following factors into consideration:

- The behaviour of the pupil;
- The known intention of the pupil;
- Their known wishes, feelings and emotional state;
- The pupils personal history;
- The influence of other pupils, family and friends;
- Any events that may be causing the pupil anxiety;
- Knowledge of the pupil;
- The time of day;
- The antecedents to the situation;
- Whether the consequences of not intervening would have seriously endangered the wellbeing of a person;
- Whether the consequences of not intervening would have caused serious and significant damage to property;
- Whether the chance of achieving the desired outcome in a non-physical way was low;
- The age, size, gender, developmental maturity of the persons involved.

This could include the following situations:

- 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 puts others at risk of harm;

- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil;
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Staff training

The school will ensure that all staff have an understanding of de-escalation skills as well as ensuring that a wide range of staff receive physical intervention training to manage challenging behaviour. The overall model would be to train all staff with a broad understanding and the de-escalation approaches and strategies that are part of overall culture. CELT has invested in PRICE – Protecting Rights in a Caring Environment approach to positive handling.

The PRICE approach:

- Reinforce policy and practice, inform of current legislation, legal considerations and circular guidelines concerning restrictive physical interventions
- Reinforce the essential verbal and non-verbal skills required in a crisis situations
- Make staff groups aware of necessary interventions appropriate to the level of behaviour reached by the pupil.
- Following training, providing staff with knowledge, understanding and physical skills required for their personal safety, and the management of young people in their care.
- Offers post-incident structure to both the pupil and member of staff using the relevant reporting structures as required by CELT.
- Be underpinned by the foundations of all actions being assessed against being reasonable, necessary and proportionate.

Designated staff trained to use reasonable restraint

Although all staff can use reasonable force for situations outlined in the above paragraph all schools will also be required to have a number of staff trained in the use of the PRICE (Protecting Rights in a Caring Environment) positive handling approach.

There is a CELT requirement that all CELT Schools have a minimum number of staff trained in this approach depending on an individual basis. All staff will have received the de-escalation techniques and the understanding of PRICE principals.

Staff are also expected to remember that physical intervention is only one option and for behaviours involving extreme levels of risk it may be more appropriate to gain support from other agencies, including the police. Staff will be kept informed and have a duty to inform others about the plans around specific pupils who can present risks to themselves and others. This may include information about any specific SEN needs, personal circumstance and temporary upset. The information gathered here may be captured in the form of a pupil co-regulation plan.

Proactive Physical Interventions

Co-regulation plans or individual behaviour plans may be put in place for pupils who are known to display behaviours that may lead to them becoming distressed or violent. In these circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The overriding factor is that action is taken in the interest of the child to reduce rather than increase the risk.

Reasonable and proportionate force

When using force, members of staff should only use the minimum amount of force required in achieving the required outcome. It should never be carried out in a situation that involves anger.

When considering physical intervention staff should think about the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest for the child?
- Why is a less intrusive prevention not preferable?
- Who do we need to act now?

- Why am I the best person to do this?
- Why is this absolutely essential?

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

Staff should, where possible, avoid any type of intervention that is likely to injure a pupil, unless in the most extreme of circumstance where there was no viable alternative. Also staff should avoid using force unless a designated PRICE trained member of staff or until another member of staff is present to support, observe or call for assistance.

Other considerations:

- Remove any audience or take other vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by removing potential objects that could be thrown.
- Use positive touch to guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensure that colleagues know this is happening and that there is a clear communication plan to get help and support as required.

Help Protocols

The expectation of CELT is that all staff support one another by offering help but this does not mean taking over a situation. Staff make clear what help they need as we recognise sometimes a change of adult can make a difference.

Restriction of Access / Exit

In the ordinary course of maintaining a supportive and stable educational experience, staff may limit pupil's liberty by requiring them not to do things that they may prefer to do, including restricting them within a building. However, if the pupil complies with the reasonable request, restriction of liberty is not an issue.

There may be occasions, however, when a pupil has lost self-control, and is intent on serious self-damage; inflicting injury on others; damage to property, or is considered potentially likely to do so, that it would be appropriate to prevent access to dangerous environments by locking doors to them. Restricting access under such circumstances is considered appropriate staff action.

Recording, reporting and monitoring record keeping

All documentation must be kept in line with CELT data storage policy

In addition to the above, CELT ensure incidents of restraint are recorded on the child's CPOMS records.

The records should:

- be completed after everyone has recovered from the initial incident (before the end of the day in the case of a contentious incident, or within a 24-hour period in all other incident cases);
- use structured recording forms, a specific restrictive physical intervention record form is available on CPOMS. This will include:
 - the de-escalation techniques used;
 - what happened, including the build up;
 - pupil voice;
 - include statements from witnesses;
 - demonstrate the parent/carer's response
 - include the debrief
 - the review of the co-regulation plan;

The Headteacher/SLT monitors the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention, particularly Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI), by examining:

- The frequency of their use
- The justification of their use
- Their nature
- Their users
- The views of the pupils concerning them

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- The need to use Restrictive Physical Interventions are minimised;
- Restrictive Physical Interventions are used only in the appropriate circumstances;
- Only the appropriate Restrictive Physical Interventions are used;
- A summary report on the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions is provided to the Trust Board via the safeguarding report;
- Appropriate action is taken over issues of concern of either a generic or specific nature;

It is the responsibility of any member of the school's staff team to alert a member of the Senior Leadership Team of any concerns they have regarding any individual pupils in their care.

Post-incident support

Following the use of physical intervention, staff and pupils will be supported, the immediate physical needs of all parties will be met and staff will ensure that positive relationships are maintained.

Where necessary emotional or wellbeing support will be offered to staff and where necessary further training will be given. Pupils will be allowed time to regulate before they return to their classroom environments. The incident will be discussed with pupils and appropriate support and sanctions implemented. Sometimes it is more appropriate to discuss events with pupils later in the day when they are more receptive to discussion.

Parents/carers will also be notified and appropriate action and support agreed for their child.

Parents / Carers

Parents and carers are entitled to information on the behavioural management and positive handling techniques which staff employ in last

resort situations or as part of a documented planned response to a student's behaviour. The responses should be documented in the students co-regulation plan.

When appropriate, they are also invited to contribute to their child's individual Behaviour Plan/ Co-regulation Plan.

When creating a co-regulation plan it is good practice to demonstrate the hold which may be used with the pupil, allowing the pupil to experience the hold to know how it feels when regulated.

Complaints and allegations

CELT recognises the contribution it can make to protect its children and support pupils and staff in school. The aim of CELT's Complaints Policy is to provide clear guidelines for the handling of any complaints.

The school will also make clear to pupils that they have a right, and are able, to question/complain about the use of reasonable force. The school will ensure that mechanisms are in place for pupils, parents, carers and staff to voice the opinions, comments or concerns. Please refer to CELT complaints policy for further information.

Complaints and allegations will be taken seriously and will be investigated by the Headteacher/relevant member of the SLT/Executive team and outcomes discussed with the relevant parties. Appropriate procedures will be followed.

Appendix: History of Changes

Version	Date	Page	Change	Origin of change