



# The Milford Academy Positive Handling Policy

Document Information			
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Approved by: (if applicable)	Governing Body	Owner:	L Barker / K Matthews
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### Policy Statement:

- a) It is recognised that the vast majority of pupils in our school respond positively to Milford expectations. The well-being, welfare and safety of all pupils and staff at The Milford Academy is of paramount importance.
- b) It is acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required.
- c) The Milford Academy acknowledges that physical techniques are only part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management. Positive Handling will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils or staff are at risk.
- d) The Milford Academy does not support the routine use of physical interventions.
- e) All staff at Milford understand that school cannot use force as a punishment; it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.
- f) Positive Handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming themselves and others.
- g) The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- h) Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school: a. clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and b. are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

### Different types of physical contact with pupils:

Physical Contact Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- a) Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when together around the school;
- b) When comforting a distressed pupil;
- c) When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- d) To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
- e) To demonstrate exercise or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching;

f) To give first aid.

g) Intimate care (see Intimate Care Policy).

### Use of Reasonable Force

Positive behaviour support/ positive handling strategies are holistic approaches intended to reduce risk, restraint and restriction. Strategies include non-verbal, verbal and physical restraint (where reasonable and necessary). As a school we use the RPI approach in dealing with children with challenging and distressed behaviours. A number of teaching and support staff are trained in using these techniques.

What is a reasonable force?

No legal definition of “reasonable force” exists; however, for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it at The Milford Academy, the clarification provided in the DfE guidance document ‘use of reasonable force’, 2013 is used.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. ‘Reasonable in the circumstances’ means using no more force than is needed.
4. 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 out of a classroom.
5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances.
6. 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.

**RPI (Restrictive Physical Intervention)** is a holistic approach to deal with children who display challenging and distressing behaviour. Techniques seek to avoid injury to the child, but it is possible for bruising or scratching to occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent ‘side effect’ of ensuring the pupil stays safe. RPI guides and holds will be recorded.

Who can use reasonable force?

Individual members of staff may be required to use physical restraint to ensure the safety of the pupil and other pupils in the environment. However, as teaching and support staff work in ‘loco parentis’ they should always operate with an appropriate ‘Duty of Care’. It might be argued that failing to take action (including a failure to use reasonable force) may in some circumstances breach that duty (DfE guidance document ‘use of reasonable force’, 2013).

Authorised staff Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 permits adults who have lawful charge or control of children to use reasonable force to control or restrain them. These include:

- a) Teachers;
- b) family support workers;
- c) teaching assistants;
- d) representatives from outside agencies.

Physical Restraint should only be used by those with appropriate training (at The Milford Academy, we currently use RPI training for staff). However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible and physical restraint may be used as an emergency measure by someone without appropriate training to ensure the safety of children in their care. Any physical intervention should be conducted making reasonable adjustments for students with SEND or disabilities. The child's Positive Behavior Plan/ Positive Programme will take this into account. In this instance, someone with appropriate training should be called for immediately. It is recognised that some of the students will have varying degrees of physical disability and/ or learning disability. Therefore, under certain circumstances, particularly in the context of rehabilitation, therapeutic handling or medical emergencies, it may be necessary to use further manual assistance and handling techniques.

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 control pupils or to restrain them.
- 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.
- 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/ crisis points.

Schools cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment;
- Use force to get a required action or behaviour.

Staff should be able to justify that strategies other than force have been attempted and proved ineffective or would have been impractical. Furthermore, staff should recognise that restraint is only a small part of a wider spectrum of a positive framework that may include use of space, safe environments, diversions, calm stances and postures, non-threatening facial expressions, low tone, volume and pace in communication, careful use of words, and physical reassurance and prompts.

Consideration of these strategies should be maintained during and after the need for physical contact. As soon as it is safe, any hold or restraint should be gradually relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control. The pupil should be informed about what will happen next and be offered reassurance and encouragement to remain calm. In this way, the pupil will be more likely to see the restraint as an act of care.

e) Other adults who may be working with children either on school premises or accompanying them on out of school activities, e.g., during field trips or on school journeys.

#### Record Keeping

a) School keeps a record of all incidents where physical intervention involving the use of force against resistance from a child has been necessary. The record should be completed by the end of the working day on which the incident took place. A physical intervention log will be completed. A member of the Leadership Team will be told at the earliest possible time after an incident. Parents/carers will be informed.

b) A member of the Leadership Team will discuss the incident with any children or staff who were present using the written account of events. In line with our commitment to working with parents, we aim to maintain an open discussion during any relevant procedure which may follow an incident.

c) School will regularly review the number and type of incidents in which physical intervention and/or restraint has been necessary. This will be used to ensure that there is adherence to this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the school.

#### Sharing of information

All members of the school community should know of the existence of this policy. In principle, as few people as possible should know of any specific incident and staff should maintain confidentiality to the greatest possible extent. This is to enable governors and staff involved in any consequence or complaint to do so without having acquired hearsay knowledge.

#### Monitoring Incidents

Where Physical Restraint is used the Head Teacher will monitor records of any incidents in order to:

- a) Identify any patterns of behaviour resulting in the use of physical intervention;
- b) Review the levels of staff awareness of and compliance with the school policy;

- c) Inform staff training needs;
- d) Explore the relationship between the use of physical intervention and behaviour in school;
- e) Governor's may monitor incidents where physical restraint is used.

#### Action after an Incident

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed, investigated and recorded as stated above. If further action is required, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedures which may include:

- a) Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy;
- b) Dealing with Allegations against Staff Policy;
- c) Behaviour Policy;
- d) Exclusion Procedure.

#### Complaints

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Complaints following a dispute about the use of physical intervention by an adult should be pursued in accordance with the Complaints Policy.

#### Policy review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review programme and no later than the following date: September 2025

## Appendix

### 1. Child's Individual Handling Policy

The Milford Academy  
INDIVIDUAL HANDLING POLICY



Name: xxxxx

Date: xxxxx

Inclusive, high-quality teaching and learning at The Milford Academy caters for the whole child. This holistic approach ensures that children's social and emotional needs are met, as well as their academic needs. We ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to support all SEND needs (inclusive of SEMH), as well as to remove barriers to learning.

As we understand that behaviour is always a form of communication, we have structured, positive pathways in place (i.e., Routes to Inclusion and School Counselling) to understand the root causes of challenging behaviours, to minimise aggression/emotional distress and to give children the tools they need to successfully self-regulate.

Our emphasis is on the avoidance of physical intervention, with unsafe behaviour being dealt with through risk assessment, appropriate curriculum planning, de-escalation, diversion etc. if at all possible. Health and Safety of the child, their peers and staff will be the priority alone. Restrictive Physical Intervention will be for the minimum time required to restore and maintain a safe environment.

### **Context and Background**

#### **Example:**

xxxx has severe emotional and behavioural difficulties and finds it extremely difficult to meet the normal behavioural expectations of school. His/her aggressive behaviour is often severe, targeting both his peers and teachers.

### **Behaviours (see Risk Assessment)**

#### **Example:**

- Verbal and physical abuse to both staff and peers
- Damage/ destruction of property, both personal and school

### **Behaviours likely to cause harm (see Risk Assessment)**

#### **Example:**

- Throw chairs
- Punch peers/adults

### **Known triggers**

#### **Example:**

- Transition times

- Being asked to comply with a work task

**Strategies to avoid these triggers and reduce the likelihood of harm include**

Strategies to avoid these triggers are listed on **xxxx's** Positive Behaviour Programme/ Risk Assessment.

**Example:**

The reasonable adjustments to his provision include:

- Time out/movement breaks
- Adult support at key points of the day

**De-escalation strategies**

**Example:**

Move other children out of the space and leave xxx in their space.

Remind xxx of expectations and their choices.

Give xxx an alternative activity to reduce their anxiety and stress levels.

Offer of support from Mrs. Butler, Miss Barker, Heidi (School Counsellor) or any other key adult and offer of a safe space.

Offer of time with the Pastoral Team to calm down, talk and play with toys of xxx choice.

Offer of time in the Sensory room or Counselling room.

**In the event of adults being unable to reduce the risks then the following techniques and strategies will be used wherever possible**

Physical intervention will only be used if xxx is causing significant disruption to other pupils' learning and/or at risk of hurting themselves, staff or peers and the de-escalation strategies have failed. When Physical Intervention is used the following procedures will be followed:

- Trained staff (listed/signed below) will be called for to assist in keeping xxx safe using the Physical intervention strategies.
- Staff will remain calm and will concentrate on diffusing the situation. The health and safety of xxx, their peers and staff will be the priority. At no time will staff intervene alone; at least two staff must be present where possible, however one member of staff may intervene if xxxx needs to be guided for their own safety. Physical intervention will be for the minimum time possible.
- If physical intervention is required, staff will use the positive handling techniques recommended by Approach Training Ltd, to ensure the safety of both xxxx and the staff involved; and include:
- Bar over, Underarm thread or Reverse harness for the least possible time. Hold sleeve or support arm without using hand if possible.
- Release as soon as xxxx is able to sit away from people without attacking/causing a Health and Safety Risk even though they may still be angry.
- Allow space for xxxx to settle.
- Ignore requests for adults or xxxx to leave the room, stay away from xxxx whilst maintaining supervision.
- xxxx to be kept safe. Staff to guide xxx from doors they can kick or open (if xxx is at risk of trying to escape).
- Re-hold and repeat the process if situation escalates again.
- Offer drink at regular intervals.

Guidelines set out within the following documents will be followed at all times:

- School behaviour policy;
- School SEND policy;
- Approach Training Ltd (Physical Intervention Accreditation Scheme, BILD accredited);
- Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, enables a school's staff to use such force as is reasonable. There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force;
- SEND Code of Practice;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Health and Safety Act 1974;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Children's Act (Revised 2004);
- Children's and Families Act September 2014.

**Once a safe environment has been restored the following procedures will be followed.**

Allow xxxx to join in activity with no discussion about the incident at that time.  
First Aid check.

**Follow Up**

LB and LaB to review xxxx Risk Assessment and amend if necessary.  
Parents/carers will be contacted and all incidents will be discussed.  
An incident form will be completed whenever these procedures have been followed.

Policy discussed with:

Child (name and signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/carers (name and signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Head Teacher (name and signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Class Teacher (name and signature) \_\_\_\_\_

**RPI Trained Staff:**

Mrs. Butler (name and signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Miss Barker (name and signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Turner (name and signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Matthews (name and signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Burrows (name and signature) \_\_\_\_\_

**NB** This handling policy offers guidelines only. Strategies may vary from situation to situation and will be guided by Health and Safety needs of all concerned.

