# Positive Handling Policy

**More Than Ed** | Independent School

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This policy should be read in connection with our Relational (Behaviour) Policy, our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, our Staff Code of Conduct, and our Ending a Placement Policy and Statement.

The position this policy takes must be understood at the outset. More Than Ed does not use physical restraint, planned physical intervention or seclusion as a way of managing behaviour. Our model is wholly relational, grounded in PACE, DDP and the Trauma Recovery Model, with no punishments, no rewards and no planned physical holds. All staff are trained by React UK so that, in the exceptional moment where a student is about to come to serious harm or to cause serious harm to another person, they are able to act safely and lawfully rather than improvising. Restraint may be used only where it is absolutely necessary to prevent injury. This policy sets out how that exceptional action is taken, recorded and reported. It does not authorise physical intervention as a behaviour management strategy, and nothing in it should be read as doing so.

## 1. Introduction

Behaviour is always a form of communication. Understanding that children communicate through their behaviour gives adults the opportunity to respond differently. When children feel valued and respected and have their needs met, there is no longer a reason to use challenging behaviour to communicate. Punishing a child for a behaviour may stop it for the moment, but it does not support the child or provide alternative ways to act in difficult situations. When adults help children find positive ways to communicate their needs, children learn important social and problem-solving skills that will help them throughout their lives.

We are committed to a positive behaviour policy that encourages children to make positive behaviour choices. On rare occasions, circumstances may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff. Our approach to physical intervention is based on the following principles:

- Physical intervention should be used only as a last resort, when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required.
- Physical intervention must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Parents and carers will be informed as soon as practicable after the incident and no later than the same day, and given the written record of it.

## 2. The Purpose of This Document

We believe everyone has a right to:

- Recognition of their unique identity and to be treated with respect.
- Learn and work in a safe environment.
- Be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Students and their parents and carers have a right to:

- Individual consideration of the student's needs by the staff responsible for their care and protection.

- Expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies.
- Be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all students and staff working in school.

## 3. Managing Challenging Behaviour

We recognise that there is a need, reflected in common law, to physically intervene when there is an obvious risk to the safety of children, staff or property. This applies both on and off the school site. If used at all, the use of force to control or restrain students will take place in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the child, to ensure minimal risk of injury to children and staff.

It should never be acceptable for a member of staff to restrain a child by themselves. Restraint means to hold back physically, or to bring a student under control. If there is no other choice but to do so, it should be for the shortest amount of time possible while waiting for help and assistance from other staff.

## 4. The Legal Framework

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 allows teachers, and other people who are authorised by the Headteacher and who have control or charge of students, to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Causing injury to themselves or others.
- Committing an offence.
- Causing damage to property (including the student's own property).
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school.
- Although the statutory power is drawn this widely, More Than Ed restricts its own use of force more narrowly than the law allows. At this school, force is used only where it is absolutely necessary to prevent injury to the student or to another person. It is not used to prevent damage to property alone, to prevent an offence alone, or to maintain good order or discipline. Those are not grounds for physical intervention here, and staff must not rely on them.

## 5. Our Approach

We aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard it as a last resort in managing situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate, and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations that arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly when dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Staff should be aware that, when they are in charge of children during the school day or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and have a duty of care to

all children in their charge. They must therefore take reasonable action to ensure all students' safety and wellbeing.

Staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention. Staff should understand the importance of listening to and respecting children, to create a calm and supportive environment — especially when dealing with children who have emotional and behavioural needs that may increase their aggression. All staff should respond to the feelings of the child that lie beneath the behaviour, as well as to the behaviour itself.

If a child is behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every non-physical strategy will be used to manage the behaviour positively and prevent the situation from deteriorating. Staff should view physical intervention as a last resort and for the purpose of maintaining a safe environment.

## 6. Use of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint should be applied as an act of care and control, with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible while allowing the student to regain self-control. It should never take a form that could be seen as punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this. What constitutes reasonable force depends on the particular situation and the student to whom it is applied. All staff are trained by React UK. Staff must apply that training to de-escalate first and in every case. Only where de-escalation has not succeeded and injury is imminent may a member of staff use the holds practised in training, and only for as long as the risk of injury persists. As a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used.

Examples of situations where positive handling may be appropriate include where a child or young person:

- Attacks a member of staff or another child.
- Is fighting.
- Is engaging in, or on the verge of, committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property in a way that places a person at risk of injury. Damage to property alone is not a ground for physical intervention at this school.
- Is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.

Refusal of a student to remain in a particular place is not enough on its own to justify force. It would be justifiable where allowing a student to leave would entail serious risks to the student's safety (taking into account age and understanding), to the safety of other students or staff, or of damage to property.

The procedure for restrictive physical intervention set out below must always be followed:

- Give the child a clear warning, and offer an escape route from the situation — for example, through calming or following instructions.
- Once restrictive physical intervention is judged necessary, it should happen quickly, smoothly and confidently.

- Always remain calm and talk in a conciliatory tone. Ignore any abuse and let the high emotional state run its course.
- Intervention is reduced and stopped as soon as the immediate risk of harm has reduced. It is never continued beyond that point, and never to make a point or to secure compliance. If an intervention appears to be escalating the situation, staff reconsider their approach.
- The aim is to help the student regulate and feel safe again. The incident is not talked through with the student afterwards, as revisiting it is likely to retraumatise them, in line with our Relational (Behaviour) Policy.
- The extent of force used should be no more than necessary to control the situation.

## 7. Actions After an Incident

Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations, and there is a clear need for debriefing afterwards for the staff involved. The Headteacher should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for arranging debriefing once the situation has stabilised. The student is not asked to revisit or discuss the incident. An individual risk assessment for the student may be considered if required, and any other student affected by the incident should be offered support. Parents and carers will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity.

- If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through a behaviour support plan, which may include a therapy programme or other strategies. This may require additional support from other services.
- Where physical intervention becomes a recurring feature of a placement rather than an isolated emergency, that is a signal that the placement may no longer be viable within our model. It is raised with the Headteacher and considered under the Ending a Placement Policy and Statement. Continuing to manage a student physically is not an alternative to that conversation. Where an emergency restraint has been required, the circumstances that led to it may prompt a review of the placement.
- All incidents must be recorded in writing on the appropriate React UK School Positive Handling form as soon as practicable, and on CPOMS the same day, recording what happened beforehand, what was tried first, what was done and why. This meets the requirements of the Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025, in force 1 April 2026, which apply to every incident in which a student is secluded, restrained or immobilised, and the record is also needed in the event of any future complaint or allegation. A copy should be filed in the child's appropriate file and may be used to inform individual and school risk assessments.
- A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally the same day, to explain the actions taken and why, and to provide an opportunity to discuss it.

## 8. Arrangements for Informing Parents

- All parents and carers will be informed as soon as practicable after an incident where positive handling is used with their child, and no later than the same day, and will be

given the written record of it. They will be notified sensitively and made aware of the full circumstances.

- Where informing a parent would be likely to result in serious harm to the student, the incident is reported instead to any parent it can safely be reported to, or, if there is none, to the local authority in whose area the student lives. The Designated Safeguarding Lead decides this and records the reason.
- Parents and carers will be informed of the school's policy on positive handling and its behaviour policy.

## 9. Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a student is likely to behave in a disruptive and/or challenging way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Strategies to be used prior to intervention.
- Ways of avoiding triggers, where these are known.
- Involvement of parents and carers, to ensure they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take.
- Briefing of staff, so they know exactly what action they should take.
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate.

## 10. Complaints and Allegations

A clear restraint policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation under the complaints, disciplinary or allegation management procedures. It is our intention to inform all staff, students, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

## 11. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the school's other policies, including:

- Relational (Behaviour) Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

## 12. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been written with reference to the following key legal concepts and documents:

- Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools (Department for Education, April 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)

- Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools (Department for Education)
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 93 and 93A)
- The Schools (Recording and Reporting of Seclusion and Restraint) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2025
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Offences Against the Person Act 1861 (concepts of assault, and assault and battery)
- Common law concepts of false imprisonment and the common law defence