GOSBERTON
HOUSE ACADEMY

UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Gosberton House Academy

Behaviour and Physical Support Policy 2026-2027

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1. Aim

The aim of this policy is to outline Gosberton House Academy's approach to positively supporting children to ensure that everyone learns in a safe, orderly environment. This policy outlines the type of physical intervention, or positive support, that may be used.

2. Introduction

At GHA non-consensual physical support will only be used as a last resort once all other options have been exhausted. Any form of physical support will be reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary. Our priority is to be proactive in managing behaviours that challenge, and to use the 95% de-escalation strategies (Team Teach) to avoid physical intervention.

3. Relevant legislation and DfE Advice

Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools: April 2026

Keeping Children Safe in Education: 2026

DfE's 'Behaviour in Schools': February 2024

Equality Act: 2010

Section 93A of the education and inspections Act: 2006.

The use of all forms of physical intervention and physical contact are governed by the criminal and civil law. The unwarranted or inappropriate use of force may constitute an assault. In addition, it may infringe the human rights of a child or young person.

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- committing a criminal offence
- causing personal injury or damage to a property
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among the pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

We have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for children with special education needs – GHA's best practice de-escalation strategies are outlined below. 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. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury. **It is always unlawful to use force as punishment.**

4. Safeguarding

- The school recognises that changes in behaviour may be an indicator that a pupil is in need of help or protection.
- We will consider whether a pupil's misbehaviour may be linked to them suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.
- If this is the case, we will follow our child protection and safeguarding policy, and consider whether support from familiar staff, communication with family, an early help assessment or referral to children's social care is appropriate.
- Please refer to our child protection and safeguarding policy for more information

Restricting Liberties

At Gosberton House Academy children are **never**

- Locked in a room.
- Deprived of food/drink.
- Denied access to a toilet.

At times a child may calm in a breakout room/den, supervised by a member of staff.

Best Practice – De-escalation (proactive support)

Staff conduct a real time risk assessment if a child is posing a safety risk to themselves, others or good order. This may allow the time to decide on the appropriate action necessary. Behaviours that challenge are a form of communication or a sign of dysregulation. Our approaches reflect best practice for supporting children with complex needs. GHA works within the NAS SPELL approach and is a UNICEF Gold Rights Respecting School. Our emphasis is always on safety; we encourage and model respect for others and positive behaviour. Staff are strongly advised not to physically stop children from leaving

a space unless there is a risk of injury.

GHA's proactive strategies/approaches include:

- Modelling and encouraging a positive approach
- Ensuring access to appropriate sensory integration approaches or resources
- Supporting a range of communication styles
- Intonation and use of voice – a calm, slow voice
- Humour at an appropriate level
- Highly engaging activities
- Distraction/redirection
- Language of choice – helpful choices, kind choices
- Coregulation
- Snack/drink/rest/movement
- Support for transitions at a micro and macro level
- A personalised approach to learning, movement, breaks, communication
- Support from familiar staff
- Significant processing time
- Change of face
- Visual support (first/then board, cue card, object of reference)
- Motivators (a favourite activity/object)

Help Script:

- Connect by using the child's name. "Can I help?", then if yes "How can I help?"
- Recognise and acknowledge the child's feelings.
- Tell the child you are there to help: "You talk and I will listen."

Using body language to diffuse a situation:

- Intermittent eye contact or no eye contact
- Allow children to pace – if safe, follow at a distance rather than closely
- Relaxed body posture - palms open, step back out of child's personal space, use a calm, side-on stance

Repair/reflect

- At a bespoke level
- Traffic light timetables
- Social stories
- Discussion with familiar staff member

In the event of a serious incident e.g. a fight, staff should:

- Give clear and immediate instructions - "stop fighting."
- Send for assistance
- Instruct and/or remove any other children from the environment if possible
- Intervene physically if necessary, having assessed the degree of risk - if not safe or necessary, call for assistance.

5. Physical Intervention

All children at the academy have a Child Centred Profile which includes their individual risk assessment, individual needs, bespoke and supportive approaches/de-escalation strategies and a positive behaviour plan including physical intervention if necessary. This is updated at least annually.
Physical intervention is a last resort and must be proportionate, reasonable and necessary. All staff have a duty of care to all children. If staff take no action, and the outcome is that a child injures him/herself, or another, including staff, this could be seen as negligence.

Contingent touch may be used **appropriately** e.g. pat on shoulder in a public place, high five in the appropriate context, hand-hold or guide to the next activity or for a sensory (or other) break.

At times we may provide physical support similar to contingent touch but more directive in nature e.g. the child is led away by hand/arm/around shoulder (using Team Teach practices) or for very young children it may mean more direct physical support - cradling or hugging. Learners with complex sensory needs may also request squeezing or deep pressure. This will be documented in sensory profiles. Some children carry an absconding risk and based on a risk assessment of their vulnerability, staff may 1-1 them and hold their hand to ensure safety. Some children display self-injurious behaviours which will be supported at a personalised level in discussion with families – eg helmets, redirection, distraction, sensory chew, ear defenders.

On very rare occasions it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically using reasonable force to stop a child from:

- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence.
- Damaging property
- Causing disorder among pupils at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Restraint
Restraint is the positive application of sufficient force to ensure, by physical means alone, that a child does not cause injury either to themselves, a member of staff, another child or young person, or significant property damage.

- It will only be used if the child is putting themselves or others in danger or significantly disrupting the learning of others and where failure to intervene would constitute neglect.
- Significant incidents will be recorded in the Bound Book.
- CPOMS is used to record physical support.
- Tapestry is our main form of communication with families and will be used to communicate the use of physical support.

6. Anti-bullying strategy

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 89) states that maintained schools must have measures to prevent all forms of bullying. **Equality Act 2010:** Requires schools to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, protecting pupils with disabilities or specific needs.

Bullying is defined by the Anti-Bullying Alliance as 'the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.' Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face to face or online. it is not simply 'falling out' and this is a concept that, should fallings out occur, GHA staff will clarify with our children, at a level appropriate to their understanding.

At GHA, all members of the school community create a positive, safe environment in which bullying, physical threats or abuse and intimidation are not tolerated. We create an environment in which pupils are safe and feel safe and everyone is treated respectfully. Staff frequently refer to the importance of being safe, making safe choices and keeping everybody safe. Staff prioritise understanding why a child may be displaying behaviours that challenge and/or are unsafe; seeking to find replacements, redirection or distractions to ensure safety.

Any incidents of bullying, discrimination, aggression, and derogatory language (including name calling) are dealt with quickly and effectively. Staff at GHA will support children to repair and reflect following any incidents, including restorative conversations at a level appropriate to the child's level of understanding.

7. Staff Training

Classroom-based staff receive up-to-date behaviour management training (Team Teach), with a focus on de-escalation. Very occasionally, whilst every effort is taken to ensure safety, during a restrictive physical intervention, injuries such as bruising or scratching may occur; this is not necessarily a failure in the approach but a regrettable side effect of acting in the best interests of maintaining a safe learning environment. In the majority of cases, de-escalation approaches ensure that situations that might result in a threat to the health and safety of any individuals are avoided. Similarly, class staff discuss strengths and needs and are skilled in identifying and pre-empting potentially tricky or triggering situations for children, and supporting them before the situation escalates.

The ideal situation is that appropriately trained staff would support a child in need of physical intervention however, in an emergency, any of the following may be able to use reasonable force in the circumstances set out in Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act (2006):

- Any teacher who works at the academy, and

- Any other person whom the Principal has authorised to have control or charge of pupils.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- SEND Information Report
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Policy updated by Katharine Saywell, November 2026

ABSCONDING POLICY

Emergency Action Plan for a child or young person who has absconded from the school setting/off site provision

A child or young person is considered to have absconded if they leave the school premises or the immediate area of an offsite activity/trip.
If only one staff member observes a learner leaving school - inform SLT
If two staff members observe a learner leaving school

- One staff member to observe learner from the school gate, whilst one returns to reception immediately to inform reception and any additional staff support. Staff to leave together to follow young person and follow the steps below
- Reception team to inform SLT and a member of the safeguarding team immediately and an extra staff member to keep in contact with staff who have left the school
- All available staff to search for the child – allocate staff to travel in cars to the estate around the back of school and others to the front of school.

For MLD children and/or independent travellers:

- Where possible and if appropriate, a member of staff to encourage the child to come back to school (if not in immediate danger).
- Family to be informed and kept updated
- Report to the Police on 101 if it is unknown where the young person is

Children with complex learning and/or behavioural needs:

- Mini bus and driver to be allocated and on stand-by for collection
- Family to be informed and kept updated.
- Report to the Police on 999 if it is unknown where the young person is.

Actions to be taken following an incident involving a learner absconding:

- De-brief with class team, family and student (where appropriate)
- Child's Individual Risk Assessment to be updated with appropriate safety measures clearly outlined and shared with the relevant professionals. (SLT, Class Team, Social Care and Family).
- Any issues with site security to be reported to SLT and site manager immediately.
- Children and young people who may be at risk of running away or absconding should be made know to all staff including reception.