

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY



**Resilience
Multi Academy
Trust**

Summary	Positive Handling
Responsible Person/Author:	COO
Applies to: (please circle/delete as appropriate)	Colleagues Student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ratifying Committee(s) and Date of Final Approval:	Standards Committee
Available On:	Academy Websites, SharePoint and On Demand
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Document Control

Date	Version	Action	Amendments
31.07.22	1	Policy codified	
7.10.24	2	Policy amended	Nomenclature changed
May 2025	3	Policy amended	Rebranding
September 2025	4	Policy amended	EIA updated

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Introduction

1. RMAT's positive handling policy has been prepared in order to codify each Academy's response to behaviour that requires physical intervention. It is designed to provide guidance to colleagues who may need to hold, escort or restrain a student of when that is appropriate and what strategies should be used.
2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the RMAT Safeguarding policy and its behaviour (PD) policy.

Scope and Purpose of this Policy and who it applies to

3. This policy applies to all colleagues. Colleagues are expected to follow this policy and non-compliance may lead to disciplinary action being taken against them.
4. Positive handling places colleagues in a vulnerable position and it should only be undertaken by colleagues who have received sufficient training. It should only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when students, colleagues or property are at immediate risk.

Publication of this Policy

5. This policy will be brought to the attention of all Trustees, Local Review Boards, and the Principal of each Academy. The policy will be available on Academy websites and be available to all parents and carers, students, members of the public and colleagues. Following any further review of the policy resulting in an updated version being adopted by RMAT, colleagues and stakeholders will be advised by email where they may access it and advised whether they are required to provide confirmation that they have read the document.
6. Guidance on any aspect of this policy can be obtained from the COO whose email address is amarham@rmat.uk.

Responsibility for this Policy

7. The RMAT Board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory or RMAT framework. The RMAT Board has delegated day to day responsibility for operating the policy to the RMAT Executive, the Local Review Boards, and the Principal at each Academy.
8. The Local Review Board and Principal has a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy, and all members of colleagues are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

Aim of this Policy

9. To make it clear in the circumstances when it is appropriate for Positive Handling should be used and by whom.

Definitions

10. "Physical intervention" may be used to divert a student from destructive or disruptive action such as guiding or leading a student by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.
11. "Positive handling" involves the use of reasonable force when there is a risk to students, colleagues or property or good order is being seriously prejudiced. All such incidents **must** be noted.
12. "Reasonable force" in this policy is the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a student harming themselves, others or property.

Before the use of Positive handling

13. Before the use of Positive handling, colleagues should use other strategies to defuse a situation by:
 - Appropriate use of colleagues voice in terms of pace, volume and tone;
 - Adjustment of colleagues body position to ensure a minimum threat to a student and maximum safety for colleagues. Generally, this should be a sideways stance;
 - Facial expressions including eye contact which is seen as positive and calming;
 - Appropriate use of humour;
 - Seeking help from other colleagues to defuse the situation.

Training

14. Only colleagues who have been trained in positive handling should engage in the same. This includes initial training and refresher training which should take place every 2 years.
15. Human Resources (HR) will maintain details of colleagues who have been trained in positive handling.

The Legal basis for using force

16. **Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006** enables Academy colleagues to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:
 - Committing any offence.
 - Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the student themselves); prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline of the Academy or among any students receiving education at the Academy, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

When Physical Intervention may be used

17. Physical intervention may be used to prevent a student from doing or continuing to do the following:
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to good order and discipline at the Academy or among its students whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom, during a teaching session or elsewhere such as out of Academy activities.
 - Self-injuring or placing themselves at risk.
 - Injuring others.
 - Causing damage to property including property that belongs to them.
 - To prevent the commitment of a criminal offence.

Justification for Physical intervention

18. Positive handling can only be deemed reasonable if:
- It is warranted by the circumstances of an incident.
 - It is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident.
 - It is minimised to achieve the desired result.
 - The age, understanding and gender of the student are taken into account.
 - It is likely to achieve the desired result.
19. Assistance should be sought from another member of trained colleagues before intervention takes place.
20. Forms of physical intervention may include the following:
- Physically intervening by placing themselves between students.
 - Blocking a student's path.
 - Escorting a student.
 - Shepherding a student away.
21. The minimum amount of force should be used in any physical intervention. It should not be a test of strength or a punishment. It is an act of care and control.

22. If a hold is used it will gradually be relaxed as soon as it is safe to do so, and the student has begun to regain some self-control.
23. Throughout the use of physical intervention, colleagues should continue to talk to the student.

Forms of positive handling

Escorting and Holding

24. The most commonly used forms of physical intervention are escorting and holding. These depend upon the degree of compliance from the child as to whether they constitute 'restrictive'. The development of trusting, confident relationships is of high priority so that children are accepting of the use of the friendly escort and calming holding to support their own efforts to manage their behaviour. These positive handling holds rarely need force and are not 'restraint'.

Physical Intervention

25. This may be used to divert a student from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a student by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

Physical Contact

26. Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between colleagues and students, e.g. in the care of students with learning disabilities; in games/PE; to comfort students.

Restrictive Physical Intervention ("RPI")

27. This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to students, colleagues or property. It is important to note that the use of 'reasonable force' should be seen as a last resort. The level of compliance from the student determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a method of physical control.
28. Academy colleagues use RPI as opposed to holding or escorting as the last resort after:
 - appropriate de-escalation techniques have failed to help the child to control themselves;
 - instant risk assessment by colleagues lead them to believe that injury, or serious damage to property, is an immediate danger;
 - knowledge of the child's history and behaviour pattern leads colleagues to believe that speedy removal from the room is necessary to prevent escalation or breakdown of the session or other students behaving in a similar manner;
 - the student has been cautioned that their continued choice of behaviour may lead to restraint.
29. De-escalation techniques may include:
 - requests to comply, partial agreement, negotiation;

- exposition of consequences or application of sanction;
- verbal advice and support, reassurance using calm talking, humour, distraction;
- options offered, stepping away, time out offered;
- holding without force.

Recording of the use of positive handling

30. Each Academy Principal must maintain a Positive Handling log and complete form PH1 when positive handling is used. It **must** be updated on the day of any use of positive handling and include the following details:
- Name of the student;
 - Date, time and place of incident;
 - Brief description of the incident and actions taken;
 - Attempts made to calm the situation and names of positive handling holds used;
 - Names of students and colleagues who witnessed the situation;
 - Any damage/harm to persons or property;
 - Signature of colleagues involved verifying that they agree with the log.

Communication with parents

31. Parents/carers should be informed as soon as possible where RPI has been used. If a parent/carer raises a concern, an appointment should be made for the use of RPI to be discussed. Principals may wish to make reference to the PH1 form and other evidence to help parents/carers understand the necessity for the same.

Review and Investigation

32. Following the initial use of positive handling on a student, a positive handling plan should be put in place by the Academy for any future use of positive handling and this should be shared with the student's parents or carers. This should be reviewed if there are any further uses of positive handling with a student.
33. It is a matter for the Academy Principal to consider following an incident whether further action needs to be taken against the student or a member of colleagues. In respect of a student, the Principal should consider the Positive Discipline Policy and in respect of colleagues they should take the advice of HR.

Complaints

34. The availability of this policy and the involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints in respect of the use of positive handling should be pursued through RMATs complaints procedures.

Monitoring

35. The COO will monitor the relevant legislation, guidelines, and information forthcoming from the relevant statutory bodies for any recommendation or changes. Where a gap, potential inequality or shortfall in performance is identified within the policy, the COO will advise the Board of

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Trustees of any changes that are needed, and a proposal will be submitted to the RMA Board within an appropriate timescale. There will be a full review of the policy by the COO prior to the stated review date where recommendations will be made for consideration by the RMA Board.

Diversity

36. RMAT is committed to a policy of celebrating diversity, promoting equality of opportunity, providing an inclusive workplace, and eliminating any unfair treatment or unlawful discrimination. This overriding objective applies to all policies and procedures relating to colleagues and students. RMAT will always comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and associated guidance produced by the Department for Education.

RMAT POSITIVE HANDLING LOG

PH1

PLEASE NOTE: THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED WITHIN 24 HOURS OF A DECISION TO USE POSITIVE HANDLING

Student Name		Form		Date of Incident	DD	MM	YY
Time and Place of Incident				Student(s) statement(s) included (please attach)	Y	N	

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INCIDENT AND ACTIONS TAKEN

A formal colleagues statement should be attached to this document within 24 hours.

ATTEMPTS MADE TO CALM THE SITUATION AND NAMES OF POSITIVE HANDLING HOLDS USED

E.G. Escorting and Holding; Physical Intervention; Physical Contact; Restrictive Physical Intervention (“RPI”).

NAMES OF STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES WHO WITNESSED THE SITUATION

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ANY DAMAGE/HARM TO PERSONS OR PROPERTY

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I agree to the contents of this log

Name of member of colleagues	Signature

RMAT POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN	PH2
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PLEASE NOTE: THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED FOLLOWING THE INITIAL USE OF POSITIVE HANDLING OR WHERE THERE IS A KNOWN FORSEEABLE RISK OF A STUDENT WHO PRESENTS CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Student Name		Form	
Colleagues Responsible for this plan			

Identification of risk	
Describe the foreseeable risk	
Is the risk potential or actual	
List who is affected by the risk	
Assessment of risk	
Why were your actions in the best interest of the child?	
In which situations does the risk usually occur?	
How likely it is that the risk will arise? [highly unlikely/unlikely/likely]	
If the risk arises, who is likely to be injured or hurt?	
What kinds of injuries or harm are likely to occur?	
How serious are the adverse outcomes? [slightly harmful/harmful/extremely harmful]	
Risk rating (see table below) [likelihood x severity]	

Risk reduction options			
Measures	Possible options	Benefits	Drawbacks
Proactive interventions to prevent risk			
Early interventions to manage risk			
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes			

Examples of Risk Reduction Options:

- Eliciting student view in planning and review
- Providing regular feedback and pastoral support to student
- Involving parent/carer in decision-making and planning
- Involving outside agencies (e.g. EP, EWO, Social Services)
- Establishing an individual plan
- Providing regular supervision to colleagues working with the student
- Adapting curriculum arrangements to reflect challenge, choice and structure levels which are appropriate to the pupil's assessed needs
- Adapting group arrangements to promote positive peer models and minimise inappropriate contact
- Arranging furniture and other equipment to minimise movement and frustration
- Providing frequent rest or change of activity opportunities
- Establishing a positive teaching programme to increase the student's range of appropriate skills
- Providing a range of rewards which the student can earn by demonstrating the skills defined in the teaching programme, and through other appropriate behaviour
- Identifying the message communicated by the student's behaviour
- Agreeing key reactive strategies for handling incidents of challenging behaviour with all colleagues likely to be in contact with the student, and ensuring that these plans are shared with parents
- Assistance in the use of an agreed strategy such as a particular communication symbol, or an exit card (specify)
- Physical intervention (specify the planned technique)

Agreed Behaviour Management plan & school risk management strategy		
Focus of measures	Measures to be employed	Level of risk
Proactive interventions to prevent risks		
Early intervention to manage risks		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		

Communication of Plan & Academy Risk management strategy		
Plans and strategies shared with:	Communication method	Date actioned

Colleagues training issues		
Identified training needs	Training provided to meet needs	Date training completed

Evaluation of Behaviour Management Plan & School Risk Management Strategy		
Measures set out	Effectiveness in supporting the child	Impact on risk
Proactive interventions to prevent risks		
Early interventions to manage risks		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		
Any actions for the future:		

Risk rating table:

RISK RATING	Slightly harmful	Harmful	Extremely harmful
Highly Unlikely	Trivial	Tolerable	Moderate
Unlikely	Tolerable	Moderate	Substantial
Likely	Moderate	Substantial	Intolerable

Appendix 3 Equality Impact Assessment

Policy title: Positive Handling Policy

Policy owner: RMAT

Date of assessment: September 2025

Assessed by: COO

Next review date: September 2026

Purpose of the policy: Ensure any use of physical intervention is lawful, necessary, and proportionate. Protect students and colleagues from harm. Set clear processes for de-escalation, recording, review, and oversight. Align with Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2010.

Scope: All colleagues. Students. Parents and carers. Visitors where relevant.

Protected characteristics considered: Age. Disability. Gender reassignment. Marriage and civil partnership. Pregnancy and maternity. Race. Religion or belief. Sex. Sexual orientation.

Policy context: Use de-escalation first. Use the minimum reasonable force for the shortest time when there is an immediate risk to persons, property, or good order. Only trained colleagues to use positive handling. Refresher training every two years. Record all incidents the same day using PH1. Communicate with parents. Put a Positive Handling Plan in place using PH2 after an initial incident or where risk is foreseeable. Monitor compliance and review annually. Comply with Equality Act 2010.

Potential impacts:

Positive impacts:

- Protects students and colleagues from injury by setting clear thresholds for intervention.
- Reduces inconsistency through training, planning, and mandated recording.
- Strengthens accountability via PH1 logs, parental communication, and post-incident review

Negative or unequal impacts to watch:

- Higher likelihood of intervention for students with SEND or SEMH needs, students with trauma histories, or EAL learners due to communication or sensory factors.
- Disproportionate impact by race or sex if de-escalation and decision thresholds vary between colleagues.
- Cultural or religious considerations around physical touch not anticipated in planning.
- Risks for pregnant students or colleagues during any holding.
- Stigma or anxiety for students repeatedly subject to intervention.
- Barriers for carers to understand incidents without timely, clear communication.

These risks arise from the nature of restrictive practices and require controls built into training, planning, and monitoring.

Mitigation actions

Practice and procedures

- Prioritise de-escalation. Use positive handling only as a last resort. Keep force minimal and time-limited.
- Apply Section 93 thresholds consistently. Stop as soon as safe. Keep talking to the student during intervention.
- Use same-sex colleagues for holding where practicable and safe. Consider cultural and religious needs in advance within PH2 plans.
- Complete PH1 the same day. Secure witness accounts. Note de-escalation attempts and any injury.
- Inform parents or carers promptly after any RPI. Offer a meeting and explain the plan for next steps.

- Put a PH2 plan in place after the first incident or where risk is foreseeable. Include known triggers, reasonable adjustments, and agreed strategies. Review after each incident.

Training and competence

- Train only designated colleagues. Maintain a live register of trained staff. Refresh at least every two years. Include trauma-informed practice, bias awareness, SEND strategies, and safe holds.

Reasonable adjustments

- Anticipate needs for students with SEND, sensory, or communication needs. Adapt environment and routines to reduce triggers. Build individual strategies into PH2. Provide accessible visual supports or scripts where helpful.

Data, monitoring, and assurance

- Monitor PH1 logs by protected characteristic, year group, SEND, EAL, LAC status, time, location, and staff involved. Look for disproportionality and repeat incidents.
- Review sampled incidents termly with the Principal, DSL, SENCO, and Designated Teacher for LAC where relevant.
- Report patterns and actions to the Local Review Board and RMAT Board as part of the annual policy review.

Student and family voice

- Capture student views in PH2 reviews and post-incident debriefs.
- Provide translated or simplified information for carers where needed. Offer a clear route for concerns via the complaints process.

Health and safety

Complete individual medical risk checks for pregnancy, musculoskeletal concerns, or known health conditions for both students and colleagues involved in planned holds. Reflect controls in PH2

Assessment outcome

Proceed with the policy and action plan. No policy change required now. Strengthen controls through training, PH2 quality, and data monitoring to prevent unequal impact.