



# LISAL

LANCASTER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL  
FOR ALTERNATIVE LEARNING

## LISAL Positive Handling Policy

**Staff are trained in Positive Behaviour Management but not in handling techniques. If children cannot be contained within the building without physical contact then the police should be called and extra measures put in place.**

Version date: September 2025

Document review period: September – November 2027

## INTRODUCTION

The purposes of this policy are as follows-

- To protect the interests and well being of the pupils of Lancaster Steiner School;
- To protect staff in their duties in care of the children;
- To protect Lancaster Steiner School and its trustees, who have ultimate responsibility for actions of staff.

Positive Handling involves the use of 'reasonable force', which is defined by The Department of Education as:

1. *"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.*
2. *'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.*
3. *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 by the arm out of a classroom.*
4. *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.*
5. *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."*

(Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Head teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies. 2012)

Control by positive handling is the **last resort** intervention and should only be used where other de-escalation techniques have failed. Use of physical handling should only be used when

- the child is in danger
- other people are being harmed
- there is serious damage to property.

Immediate and significant injury would be defined as actual or grievous bodily harm; physical or sexual abuse; risking the lives of, or injury to self or others by wilful or reckless behaviour; and self poisoning.

Serious damage to property is defined as damage which places the child/young person or other people at risk of injury, or damage which is causing or would cause serious distress or trauma to others. It also includes protracted wilful damage to property i.e. where a child/young person sets out to do considerable damage as a premeditated act. It would not normally include 'one-off' temper tantrums unless the previous criteria were met.

### Aims and Objectives

This policy lays out a framework for positive handling for all staff at Lancaster Steiner School. Its aim is to inform all staff, families and pupils where appropriate, of the permissible forms of control.

### Relationship to other policies

Please also see Lancaster Steiner School Whole School Behaviour Policy, Inclusion Policy, Risk Assessment- positive handling (See Appendix 1) Complaints Policy and Procedure, Health and Safety Policy

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### All staff and volunteers are responsible for-

- ensuring they are familiar with the contents of this policy;
- ensuring they work within the guidelines set out in this policy;
- asking for clarification or further training if they do not feel confident in their ability to comply with this policy;
- completing training where necessary and attending further training to maintain qualification;
- work in partnership with a child and their family to minimise any possibility that positive handling will become necessary.

#### In addition to this, the college of teachers is responsible for-

- ensuring that all members of staff and volunteers are given internal advice on Positive Handling and the approaches used in the school,
- providing school staff with the time and support they need to manage behaviour effectively in their classroom.

#### The trustees are responsible for-

- ensuring all the staff have access to training if it is required;
- monitoring the effectiveness of this policy;
- providing the College of Teachers with support in evaluating and developing this policy;
- ensuring the health and safety of the pupils and school staff.

#### Parents and Carers are responsible for—

- informing the class teacher or other member of staff where they believe children's behaviour may escalate beyond normal levels so staff can be prepared in their responses;
- sending their child ready and equipped to learn in school;
- work in partnership with the school staff to minimise any possibility that positive handling will become necessary.

### Crisis management

If staff feel that it is possible that certain situations have the potential to escalate emotions for a child, a positive behaviour plan will have been written with the family and SENDCo which will include calming, proactive and active strategies. While every effort will be made to support pupils there may be an instance where the child's emotions escalate despite preventative measures being put in place.

Our priority is everyone's safety. Staff have been trained in Positive Behaviour Support and are aware that knowing their own triggers and state of their own emotional health is key to remaining calm and preventing a situation from escalating any further. Our staff work as a team and at any point may ask each other for a handover adult if they feel this would help de-escalate a situation.

Any additional adult entering a space should do so calmly and from the side. They should speak to the adult already there to find out what help is needed and find out what has taken place so far. The adults should then agree on the next steps.

The space must be made as safe as possible: remove any additional people from a situation and any objects that could be used to cause harm. Send for additional help from another member of staff if you have not done so already. Remain at a safe distance where you are able to observe the child.

At all times use a low voice if it is necessary to speak but otherwise remain silent to reduce any additional stress caused by noise.

In the event that a child is trying to hurt themselves or others and it is impossible to remove that person from the scene, physical restraint may be necessary.

**Physical restraint is always a last resort and we do not advise staff members to use it.**

**It should only be used if the child is hurting themselves or others, or using an object in such a way that it will cause harm to others and all other methods of de-escalation have failed.**

**Physical contact should avoid the joints and be the least amount of restraint for the least amount of time.**

**Physical restraint can also escalate a situation and cause a child undue stress. Their dignity is also a priority and any restraint should be done compassionately. Phrases such as "You can go free as soon as I know you can keep yourself safe" should be used.**

Any incident of this kind must be recorded with parents informed at the first opportunity. Staff or children involved will be given time to rest and debrief after the event. Possible triggers and

additional proactive measures will be discussed as soon as reasonably possible and added to the pupils Behaviour Support Plan.

### Induction

All staff and volunteers will be internally advised in the use of the schools positive behaviour approaches during their induction.

### Planning and Risk Assessment

Staff are more able to act confidently and decisively where problems have been anticipated and possible interventions planned in advance. Pre-planning in respect of individual pupils where the need for positive handling might be anticipated because of the nature of a child's assessed needs should form a part of that child's Individual Pupil Plan (IPP) or Behaviour Management Plan (BMP). The plan should reflect the needs of the child and the training, skills and abilities of the school staff and address any need for them to receive additional support if necessary. Wherever possible, plans should also involve and take into account the views and opinions of the child and their family. Risk assessment should be carried out and regularly reviewed e.g. before trips or change of staffing.

### Exercising judgement

Discussions of the risks and procedures must take place in College around possible scenarios and analysis of actual incidents, enabling staff to build up a body of experience of good judgement and feel more confident about their decision making in crisis situations.

## Positive Handling Techniques

In line with our Whole School Behaviour policy, the teachers and staff work to use pre-emptive strategies to avoid the escalation of behaviour that might require the use of Positive Handling.

### Control by physical presence

This refers to the day-to-day 'supervisory' role of the school staff. At its simplest level, the presence of an adult in a room may be a deterrent to misbehaviour. Control by physical presence involves emphasising verbal instructions / directions by a look or gesture. It may also include standing in the way of a pupil who is not responding to verbal instruction or is losing control.

### Touch and physical contact between children and teachers

It is recognised that hugs and warm physical contact may be an appropriate and comfortable part of school life, particularly with the younger children. It is best for adults not to initiate physical contact. Some examples of times when physical contact are acceptable are:

1. Times of reassurance e.g. through a pat on the shoulder or arm if a child is in distress and needs comforting.

2. Physical contact with younger children e.g. helping children use the toilet, dressing, comfort and general care and is likely to occur in general play activities.
3. Physical contact is necessary when administering first aid.
4. Physical contact may be appropriate in certain subjects such as during craft, PE and music to help and direct a child.
5. Young children with Special Educational Needs may need staff to provide physical prompts or help.

It is worth all staff and volunteers bearing in mind that some children may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background, sensory issues or because of abuse.

### Calming by holding

Holding is an intervention that is intended to avert, distract, or calm but does not use such force as to overwhelm the child/young person and prevent them from acting on their own volition. Holding is distinguished from physical positive handling in the manner of the intervention and the degree of force applied. It may be used most effectively with small children, or with children with high anxiety and proprioception needs, especially where they are unlikely to respond to verbal influence alone. Incidents of holding should be recorded in the same way as physical positive handling unless part of an ongoing support strategy, in which case it will be detailed in a support plan.

If the child/young person forcibly resists or makes a major objection the adult should stop immediately, remembering the aim is to prevent a situation from escalating. Call for more support if necessary.

### Recording the use of Positive Handling Strategies

See appendix 2 for recording form

All incidents requiring the use of positive handling strategies must be recorded. Reflective Incident Forms should be completed as soon as possible in addition to a Record of Physical Restraint (if applicable) (Appendix III) from the office. The form should be signed by the parent of the child(ren) concerned and filed in the child's confidential file in the Teacher's Filing Cabinet.

### Debriefing Incidents

Staff must be given a supportive environment in which to discuss and evaluate positive handling incidents. They may need time to reflect on the incident and to calm themselves before continuing with their duties; pupils also will need time to calm themselves and reflect. Learning can take place when pupils are provided with the opportunity to consider alternatives to the behaviour that caused the incident; we use Reflective Incident Forms to facilitate this (Appendix III).

All recorded incidents of positive handling must be discussed at College meetings to analyse why they happened and how policy and risk assessments may be changed to reduce the likelihood of a

similar incident in the future. The record should be used to analyse successful strategies which might be replicated as part of a future planned response.

## Complaints

Should control by positive handling cause a family to complain about a child's treatment, all complaints will be dealt with as defined within the Complaints Policy. In line with DfE guidelines *"When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true: it is **not** for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably"*

(Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Head teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies. 2012)

Appendix 1

Risk Assessment for Positive Handling

**Lancaster Steiner School**

**Risk Assessment**

Date of Assessment: 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2022				Assessor: The College of Teachers				
Activity: Behaviour: Positive Handling				Location: Lancaster Steiner School				
Hazard	Who does it Affect?	Risk			Control Measures	Residual Risk		
		S	L	R		S	L	R
Behaviour which could cause severe injury to self, or others	All	4	2	8	Implementation of Positive Handling Techniques: such as Control by Holding	4	1	4
Behaviour which could cause minor injury to self or others.	All	2	3	6	Implementation of Positive Handling Techniques: such as Control by physical presence	2	1	2
Behaviour which may result in a criminal offence being committed.	All persons above the age of 10	4	1	4	Implementation of Positive Handling Techniques: calling another member of staff to support the carrying out of the procedure	4	1	4
Behaviour which may result in significant damage occurs to property.	All	3	2	6	Implementation of Positive Handling Techniques: such as guiding the child away,	3	1	3
Behaviour which may result in a child trying to leave the school grounds	All	5	3	15	Following security procedures and if necessary Implementation of Positive Handling Techniques: such as Control by Holding	5	2	10

Risk = Likelihood x Severity  
Likelihood Range 1-5  
Severity Range 1-5

Severity  
5 Fatalities  
4 Major Injuries  
3 Moderate injuries  
2 Minor Injuries

Likelihood Risk  
5 Almost a certainty  
4 Probable  
3 Likely  
2 Unlikely

21-25 Intolerable Additional Control Measures Required  
16-20 Substantial Additional Control Measures Required  
11-15 Moderate Additional Control Measures Required  
6-10 Acceptable Negligible/No Effect 1 Negligible

1-5 Trivial

Appendix 2 – SODA Reflective incident sheet

Situation – What happened?

Options- What could you have done?



Disadvantages



Advantages

What could you do next time?

Is there anything you want to do now?

Appendix 2 – SODA Reflective incident sheet



Reflective incident sheet  
Child focused

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name of child \_\_\_\_\_

Name of adult facilitating conversation \_\_\_\_\_

Additional notes

Parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Staff \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



