

This policy has been approved by the LMC (March 2026) for an extension pending a Trust-wide update expected September 2026. This is owing to the changes to guidance about the use of physical restraint in schools for governing bodies, headteachers and school staff (1st April 2026)



Hayle Academy

Physical Handling Policy

Academy Name: Hayle Academy

Dissemination: Website, Staff Shared Drive

Date policy approved by Governors: February 2026

Date policy becomes effective: Immediately

Review date: September 2026

Person responsible for Implementation and Monitoring: Headteacher

Links to other relevant policies: Safeguarding, Behaviour, Exclusion

1. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- clarify the circumstances in which staff may reasonably use physical intervention;
- clarify the procedure for recording and reporting incidents where physical handling has been used;
- explain the various responsibilities of school staff.

2. Use of physical handling in a school setting

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 confirmed the right of staff to use 'such force as is reasonable' for the purpose of preventing a student from:

- committing an offence;
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including themselves);
- substantially interrupting the maintenance of good order and discipline.

It is highly unusual for a child in a mainstream school to require physical intervention. The incidents as described above are very rare and therefore the use of physical handling within the school is likely to be very rare. Only where necessary, in the circumstances described above, will staff use physical handling. Where physical handling is used, the member of staff will use the minimum amount of intervention required to prevent harm or injury to the child, or other members of the school community.

3. Right to search

The school's right to search students is clarified by the Behaviour Policy. This should be read in conjunction with this policy.

4. Circumstances where physical handling may be justified

Physical handling should only be used as a last resort; other non-physical strategies for de-escalating a situation would usually be tried first, unless there is an immediate risk of harm or injury.

Whenever possible, the age and level of understanding of the student should be considered. In addition, staff should be mindful of any student who is subject to a Child Protection Plan.

It is understood that in an emergency situation, staff may have to act quickly and without the time to fully consider all the circumstances. Staff are expected to give due regard to the need to act reasonably, to use physical restraint as a last resort and to use the minimal amount of physical intervention necessary to reduce risk of harm or injury.

5. Examples of behaviour which may mean that physical intervention is needed:

The following situations exemplify the circumstances where physical intervention may be required to protect the safety of the school community and to prevent substantial interruption to good order and discipline. These are examples and other circumstances may arise in which it is reasonable for a member of staff to use physical handling:

- a physical attack by a student on an adult or another student;
- deliberate damage to school property, risking harm to themselves or others and/or impacting on the good order and discipline within the school;
- a student behaving in a way which places others at risk, e.g. pushing, tripping on a staircase, rough play or running in a corridor;
- preventing a student running into a busy road;
- attempt by a student to enter a classroom without authorisation where their presence could pose a threat to the safety or others or the good order or discipline of the school.

Physical handling is not a sanction and is never used as one by any member of staff.

6. Parameters for the use of physical handling:

In a situation where a member of staff considers physical handling is required, they should, wherever possible seek assistance from another member of staff who will also be able to act as a witness. It is acknowledged that this may not always be possible, for example in circumstances which pose an immediate risk of harm or injury. Whenever possible:

- The student(s) should be told that physical handling will be used, beforehand;
- Other students will be removed from the situation to prevent potential harm and distress.

In all incidences, the minimal physical handling should be used to reduce the risk of harm or to protect good order and discipline for example:

- Using a guiding hand to stop a child running in a corridor;
- Touching a child's arm to prevent them running into a road;
- Blocking access to another student or adult by standing in front of the child.

The member of staff using physical handling should have due regard for their own safety and should not act in a way that could reasonably be predicted to increase the risk of harm to themselves or others.

The following examples are obviously NOT permitted in any circumstances:

- holding a student around the neck or collar, or in a way that might restrict breathing;
- slapping, punching or kicking;

- twisting or forcing a limb against a joint;
- tripping a student;
- holding or pulling a child by the hair or ear; or
- holding a student face down on the ground.

7. Physical contact with students

Normally all staff should avoid physical contact with students. Physical contact where it provides essential support or care or directly facilitates a child's education, is appropriate. It is essential that physical contact is only made where it is appropriate to a member of staff's professional role and is considered essential to provide care or to directly facilitate a child's education. Physical contact where these parameters do not apply, should be avoided.

8. Reasonable Use of Physical Handling

When physical handling is used, it should be of minimal duration, using the minimal force appropriate to the circumstances and should be appropriate to the child's age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. It is acknowledged that in some situations, staff may need to act quickly to protect the safety of others. Where it is possible to do so, physical handling should be done in a considered way, taking account of the above factors.

9. Responding to a student leaving the school site without permission.

The school sites are fenced in some areas to provide appropriate security and to prevent unauthorised persons from accessing the school buildings and grounds. The school site has a number of entrance and exit points. Students are not prevented from leaving the school site by fencing or other barriers. In general, students remain in school because they are required to do so by the school and their parents. Registers are taken at the start of each lesson and any unexpected absence will be responded to as a priority by the school's attendance officer and on-call team. Students who attempt to leave the school without permission will not be prevented from doing so by physical handling unless there is an immediate risk to their safety. Where a member of staff is with a student as they attempt to leave the school site without permission, the member of staff will provide verbal guidance and reassurance to discourage the student from leaving. If the student continues to leave the school premises, the member of staff will use the on-call system to alert other staff who will contact parents, and if appropriate, notify the police. Members of staff should not accompany the student away from the school site and must remain within line of sight of the school building.

10. Reporting Physical Handling

If a member of staff has been required to use physical handling, this should be recorded as soon as possible in the school's incident sheets (see Appendix 1) and a copy provided to the Head of School and Designated Safeguarding Lead. A copy of this report will be placed on the student's file for future reference.

11. Staff Code of Conduct

All staff are expected to:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described;
- only use physical handling in the circumstances described in this policy and as a last resort and using other methods to intervene wherever possible;
- use the minimum amount of physical contact for as short a time as possible;
- be prepared to explain actions and understand that all physical contact with students will be open to scrutiny;
- be fully aware and follow the school's Safeguarding policy;
- ensure that all incidents of physical handling are reported and logged in the school's Incident Log.

Staff are expected to understand that the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence and will be investigated using TPAT's Staff Disciplinary policy. In the event of a disciplinary procedure relating to the use of physical handling, the Headteacher will refer the incident to the LADO for advice.

12. Training and Support

The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate training is provided for staff and that this policy is shared and available to staff for reference via the website and staff shared area.

13. Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for regular review of this policy, every 2 years. The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy and for monitoring incidents where physical handling has been used. All staff have a responsibility to know and understand this policy and to implement it in their daily practice.

14. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will:

- ensure that the recording and reporting system is in place and is maintained;
- ensure the Incident Log (see Appendix 1) is monitored by the DSL.

15. Use of Physical Restraint

The school does not physically restrain students. Where physical restraint is required by a child's EHCP then the school will work with the Local Authority and parents to ensure that appropriate provision to meet their needs was available. It is unlikely that the child's need which required regular physical restraint would be able to be met within the school.

16. Use of Isolation

Isolation is the supervised confinement and isolation of a student, away from others, in an area from which the student is prevented from leaving. Generally, the school does not use isolation and it is only used in response to the most serious of incidents. As with physical handling, any use of isolation has an associated risk of further harm to the child and should therefore only be used as a last resort and in response to rare and serious incidents within the school. The only circumstances in which isolation may be used in a school setting are where there is a clear and immediate risk of harm to the child or others e.g. to contain a student whose behaviour poses a very serious risk of harm to themselves or others. As with physical handling, isolation should only be used for the least amount of time possible, and with the lowest level of restriction possible. Isolation must only be used in exceptional circumstances and should **not** be part of an Individual Behaviour Management Plan or Physical Handling Plan.

Any use of isolation must be recorded and logs will be robustly monitored by the Headteacher and DSL. Isolation is part of a continuum of restriction and could be considered to be a deprivation of liberty. Deprivation of liberty will engage the person's Article 5 rights and would require authorisation. Therefore, it is expected that the decision to use isolation would only be made by the Headteacher, or senior leader deputising for the Headteacher. Whenever possible, other less restrictive options would be employed to avoid the use of isolation.

16.1 Managing incidents requiring isolation

Whenever reasonably possible, the following procedures will be used to minimise the impact of isolation on a child:

- the child will be isolated from others by removing others from the space/area that the child is currently in. Wherever possible, the child will be restricted to the space they are currently in and not moved to an alternative space. Only if essential to their own safety, or that of others, would a child be moved to an alternative space to be isolated.
- the student will be supported and monitored within the space by a member of staff. Only if their own safety, or that of the member of staff were at substantial risk would the child be left in the room or space alone.

Parents/carers will be informed about the incident as soon as possible and will be able to/asked to collect their child as soon as possible to ensure that any isolation is for as short a time as possible.

APPENDIX 1: INCIDENT REPORT

This form is to be completed by the member of staff involved in use of physical handling or isolation with support from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Leadership Team. It should be noted that this is a legal document. A copy of this document will be held in the child’s file and must be provided to the Headteacher.

Student Name:		Year Group:	
Class:		Staff member:	
Date of Incident:		Time of Incident:	
Reported by:		Location & Duration of Incident:	
Staff involved:			
Others present:			
Antecedent (situation prior to the handling incident)			
Behaviour (describe the actual behaviour that led to the use of physical handling or isolation)			
Risk or Harm identified in incident:			
Serious assault/police involvement		Accidental	
Physical Harm		Deliberate assault by student	
Damage to Property			
Accidental		Other:	
Intentional			
Sexualised Behaviour		Substance Abuse	
All categories		Which substance?	
Threatening Behaviour		Staff	Students
Verbal abuse towards others			
Physically threatening behaviour towards others			
Description of Physical Handling Strategy used:			

Student Comment on incident

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Debrief of Staff Involved

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Senior Staff Comment ~ Further Action Required ~ Lessons Learnt

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Does this child/young person have a Behaviour Plan/Individual Risk Assessment?	Y / N
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Is one needed/or does it need amending?	Y / N
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Agencies informed:**Comment**

Agencies informed:	Comment
Police Involvement	
Social Care	
Safeguarding	
Parents	
TPAT	
Other	

