POSITIVE HANDLING AND PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

The Courtyard offers a tailored educational and social provision with a holistic approach. We aim to equip our students with the skills and experiences needed to discover and thrive with increased independence in their next stage of life.

POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY STATEMENT

Approval Committee:	**Full Governing Body**
Author:	**Head of The Courtyard**
Last reviewed:	**March 2026**
Next review date:	**March 2027**
Required to publish on website?	**No**
Statutory?	**No**

This policy is in place to afford the individual student with opportunities to access support to understand their behavioural reactions and to implement strategies to change behaviour either with or without support.

This policy is in place to offer guidance to staff on when it is appropriate to intervene physically with students, and how to do this as safely as possible.

It is acknowledged that even with the best planning, there may occur situations where the student may participate in violent, aggressive or self-abusing behaviour that causes concern due to the immediate risk of harm to themselves or others in their presence and, as a community, we must react in the best interests of all students. However, as professionals, our response should be aimed at being proactive and attempting to anticipate the possibility of challenging behaviour that causes concern and taking action to reduce the likelihood that these such incidents they may occur.

Key Beliefs

At the Courtyard we consider that behaviours which challenge always happen for a reason and might be the only way a student can communicate – it can arise for different reasons which are personal to the individual.

Students who display, or are at risk of displaying behaviours which challenge, might need support which involves both positive support, such as positive behavioural support and some form of restrictive practice or intervention. Any restrictive intervention must be legally and ethically justified, be absolutely necessary to prevent serious harm and be the least restrictive option. Refer to the behaviour for learning policy for further guidance on how to prevent behaviour from escalating to this level of concern.

Key Principles

When developing, implementing and evaluating positive handling plans, the following key principles should always be taken into consideration:

1. At all times, a 'Duty of Care' should be of primary concern.
2. Any planned physical intervention should be justified in respect of what is known about the student's autism neurodevelopmental differences based upon multi-disciplinary assessment, and information about alternative approaches to and behaviour support plans which have been tried, an evaluation of the potential risks involved, and reference to Norfolk Steps Techniques and methodology. Physical interventions should only be employed using '**the minimum degree of force for the shortest possible period'.**
3. Working within this policy, only staff who have received practical training should implement physical intervention (Norfolk Steps).
4. Students who receive physical intervention should be routinely assessed for signs of injury, pain or psychological distress and these should be recorded in the Care Plan section of the student's file.
5. The techniques to be used during physical intervention should be clearly

recorded on the plan and shared with relevant staff, and parents/carers. A copy of the plan should be kept in the student's Care Plan.

6. The staff should ensure that all incidents are clearly, comprehensively and promptly recorded in line with school policy, these will be indicated on the Positive Handling Plan proforma (see Appendix AB2).

The use of Physical Intervention/Restraint

Introduction

This guidance should be used in conjunction with:

- DfE Guidance Use of Force 03/12 Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Islington Council Care and Control Guidance.
- The Courtyard School Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- The Courtyard School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where there is clear potential that exists for an individual student to repeat behaviour that may be harmful to themselves, others or property, it is good practice to draw up a Positive Handling Plan for that student. The need to do so may be evidenced by documentation that could be included in the students' Positive Behaviour Support Plan, EHCP or previous accident and injury recording and reporting procedures (incident forms, CPoms).

A positive handling plan for an individual student should be seen as an integral part of the whole school process of education and care. It must relate to the Individual Education Plan (Student Appendix A of the Education Health and Care Plan; EHCP), Student Passport and Student's Zone of Regulation. It should also work in conjunction with the Courtyard's fundamental values and ethos.

It's success will be derived from a whole school, holistic approach to positive behaviour support. The process for appropriate implementation is firmly based within a procedural approach that is owned by all staff involved, and which includes the student.

Positive Handling Strategies

Physical Intervention should only be used where it is reasonable to do so to prevent harm occurring to the student or others. In the event of a legal challenge the school would be expected to provide evidence to show how the behaviour procedures promoted the avoidance of harm being caused. A Positive Handling Plan clearly links policy to practice and shows how an individual planned approach has been developed for the student. When producing Positive Handling Plans, reference should always be made to the Courtyard's policy and multi-agency involvement where appropriate, which includes the involvement and support of both the student and their parents/carers.

The Positive Handling Plan is based upon four main criteria:

- That the student is involved from the outset.
- That the plan promotes and on occasion, improves curriculum access.
- That a specific target is set which aims to reduce physical intervention.
- That the plan is based upon changing conditions and approaches toward the student from one of control to one of co-operation.

Care and Control of Students Policy

Staff have received training from an accredited Norfolk instructor in the use of the following Protective Safety Responses:

- Wrist Hold Responses.
- Strangle/Neck Hold Responses.
- Clothing Hold Responses.
- Hug and Bites Responses.
- Responding to Hair Grabs.
- Responding to Punches and Kicks.

Staff have also received training from an accredited Norfolk Steps Instructor in the use and application of the following Positive Holding Techniques:

- Single Elbow Hold/Escorting students to safety (use of chairs).
- Double Elbow Hold/Escorting students to safety (use of chairs).
- Figure of Four Hold.
- Wrap Standing Hold.
- Cradle Hold.

All class staff are authorised to use and employ Positive Handling Techniques.

Staff Training and Induction

Staff, who are new to the school, will not be permitted to undertake any of the authorised Positive Handling Techniques until they have received training from one of the school's accredited Norfolk Steps instructors. This training is currently received from **qualified Courtyard Norfolk Steps instructors.** Arrangements for training will be made at the school's earliest convenience. On completion of the course, all new staff will have their names added to the list of approved users of the techniques (found on SIMS).

All staff will receive termly updates and refreshers to ensure that their skills are maintained and appropriate use of techniques remain within acceptable practice and within legal requirements. Staff are also encouraged to take the time to observe and provide support for each other throughout the year.

Louise Norman (Deputy: SEN/Safeguarding) is available to discuss individual cases of behaviour support and the use of Positive Handling Techniques as required. Where safeguarding is a concern, Louise Norman will lead on discussions, interventions and possible referrals to external services.

Appendix A – Positive Handling Plan

BEHAVIOUR PLAN STUDENT NAME: DATE OF BIRTH: YEAR:	
Date plan starts: Date of next review:	Medical conditions/needs: Staff working with the student: Link member of staff:
Challenging behaviour Triggers:	**Targets**
Strategies for positive behaviour Phrases to use: Rewards/motivators ●	**Early warning signs** Prevention Response ●
Reactive strategies **Level 2:** **Level 3:** **Level 4:** **Level 5:**	**Support after an incident**
Agreement: Parent	Headteacher

BEHAVIOUR PLAN STUDENT NAME: DATE OF BIRTH: YEAR:			
Skills and Talents Making people laugh		**Achievements**	
Likes Physical Education Positive Praise		**Dislikes**	
Log of incidents:			
Date	**Description of behaviour**	**Trigger for incident**	**Action taken**
	See Student CPoms-		

Plan to reduce restrictive practice

The school team is working hard and investing in CPD to best support the student's needs. His/Her/They funding in medium-high which covers his/her/they place and the Courtyard and the impact of external professionals. Significant time and resources have been put in place to support the student to fully integrate into the Courtyard. Ideally, the student should be receiving full time 1:1 support to help him/her manage his/her emotional regulation. This should be seen to be a temporary measure in order to support the student to develop these skills under guidance.