LEADING SUCCESS

SECURING SUCCESS

DEVELOPING SUCCESS

STANDARDS FOR SUCCESS

SUPPORTING SUCCESS

ACHIEVING SUCCESS

# POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY (PRIMARY)

Accord MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

| **Document Detail** | |
|---|---|
| **Document Type:** | Education |
| **Document Name:** | Positive Handling Policy |
| **Purpose:** | To set out the Accord Primary Academy's approach when children and young people present extremely challenging behaviour, which may require some form of physical intervention from adults. |
| **Version Number** | 2.0 |
| **Effective from:** | January 2026 |
| **Owner:** | Headteacher |
| **Approved by:** | Board of Trustees |
| **Last Review:** | N/A |
| **Next Review Date:** | 08 December 2026 |
| **Consultation:** | Accord MAT Board of Trustees, Accord MAT CEO, Academy Principals / Headteachers |

| **Approvals** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Name** | **Position** | **Signature** | **Date** |
| A Lancashire | Chair of Trustees | A Lancashire | 02 January 2026 |
| A Warboys | CEO | A Warboys | 02 January 2026 |

| **Document History** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Version** | **Date** | **Author** | **Note of Revisions** |
| 1.0 | December 2024 | J Tucker | Merge of individual primary policies to create an Accord Primary Academy Drugs Policy. |
| 2.0 | January 2026 | J Lilley | Updates to incorporate the opening of MPA's 2-Year-Old Provision. |

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe Accord Primary Academy's approach to the management of relatively rare situations when children and young people present extremely challenging behaviour, which may require some form of physical intervention from adults. This is sometimes referred to as restraint or positive handling.

## The Legal Framework

Positive handling should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Under the Children Order 1995, it is only permissible as described under the heading "Physical Control". Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It enables trained staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil themselves)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

(Examples of possible situations are given in Appendix 1)

Whilst it is anticipated that only trained staff would undertake positive handling; in an emergency situation it would be appropriate for any member of staff to respond to the situation at hand. Staff presented with a situation would always request support from a trained member of staff. All staff are protected by law if they act with reasonable force in order to prevent a child hurting themselves or another child or member of staff or if they are preventing damage to property.

## Definition of Positive Handling at Accord Primary Academies

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming themselves or others or seriously damaging property.

## General Policy Aims

Staff at Accord Primary Academies recognise that the use of reasonable force **is the last resort** in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety / well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. Therefore, our policy on positive handling should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Behaviour and Discipline policies.

## Specific Aims of the Positive Handling Policy

To protect every person in the school community from harm.

To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.

To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.

## Why Use Positive Handling?

Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm themselves or others. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which positive handling would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the Academy's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis. Therefore, they should take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.

Failure to positively handle a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time, staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

## Alternative Strategies

There are some situations in which the need for positive handling is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. if a pupil is about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives strategies e.g. those set out in the Academy's Behaviour and Discipline policy.

## Use of Positive Handling

Positive handling should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

There are staff who have had training in order to use reasonable force in applying positive handling, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing themselves between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

In all circumstances, other methods should be used if appropriate or effective positive handling should be a last resort.

## Actions after an incident

Positive handling often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. A member of the leadership team should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural PLP, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SENDCO.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately (Appendix 3) and then a copy must be uploaded onto CPOMs. All sections of this report should be completed so, that in the event of any future complaint, a full record is available. A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

## Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary)
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate

## Application of the Positive Handling Policy in the Two-Year-Old Provision

The principles of the Accord Multi Academy Trust Positive Handling Policy apply across the entire academy, including our two-year-old provision. Our paramount goal is the safety and well-being of all pupils.

However, the application of physical intervention in the two-year-old provision requires specific consideration due to the unique developmental stage of the children and the regulatory framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

**Key Considerations for the Two-Year-Old Provision:**

- **Developmental Context vs. Malicious Intent:** In two-year-olds, challenging behaviour rarely stems from malicious intent or a desire to disrupt "good order and discipline" in the way described for older pupils (Section: The Legal Framework). Behaviour requiring intervention is almost universally a result of underdeveloped communication skills, impulse control issues, emotional dysregulation, or unmet needs (including SEND).

- **Focus on De-escalation and Redirection:** In the two-year-old setting, physical intervention is an extreme last resort. Our primary alternative strategies involve proactive environmental management, intensive adult supervision, verbal redirection, comfort, and addressing the underlying cause of the distress. Staff are highly trained in EYFS behaviour management techniques that focus on teaching social skills and empathy rather than enforcing formal discipline.

- **Definition of "Reasonable Force":** The application of physical force with two-year-olds must be exceptionally minimal. Interventions are more likely to be gentle physical guidance (e.g., physically interposing an adult's body to block a child from hitting another, or moving a child safely away from a hazard) rather than formal holds or restraints. The primary intention is always protection and immediate safety, never punishment.

- **Safeguarding and Welfare Focus:** Any incident requiring physical intervention is treated with the utmost seriousness and immediately triggers safeguarding procedures and an in-depth incident review. We prioritize a "trauma-informed approach" to understand the child's perspective and prevent recurrence.

- **Communication with Parents:** As outlined in the "Actions after an incident" section of the main policy, parents/carers of two-year-olds involved in an incident will be contacted immediately. Transparency and collaborative working are essential in the EYFS to ensure consistent strategies are used at home and in the academy setting.

- **Staff Training and Risk Assessment:** All staff working within the two-year-old provision are briefed on this policy and understand the specific risks and appropriate physical management strategies for this age group. Individual risk assessments are created for children with known patterns of challenging behaviour, focusing on proactive support plans rather than reactive restraint techniques.

In summary, the use of positive handling in the two-year-old provision remains an absolute last resort, applied only to avert immediate danger, and is always proportionate to the situation and the child's physical and emotional vulnerability.

## Complaints

A clear positive handling policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. However, it is unlikely to prevent all complaints, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and social services department under child protection procedures. It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

We will review this policy on a yearly basis.

## Appendix 1

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?

Examples of situations that may require restraint are when:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- pupils fighting
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others
- a pupil absconding from a class or trying to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)
- a pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave an area
- a pupil behaves in such a way that seriously disrupts a lesson.

**Appendix 2**

| **Record of Restraint** |
|---|
| Date of Incident: Time of Incident:<br><br>Pupil Name: DOB:<br><br>Member(s) of staff involved:<br><br>Adult witnesses to restraint:<br><br>Pupil witnesses to restraint:<br><br>Outline of event leading to restraint: |
| Outline of incident of restraint (including restraint method used); |
| Outcome of restraint: |
| Description of any injury sustained and any subsequent treatment: |
| Date/time parent/carer informed of incident:<br><br>By whom informed: |

| |
|---|
| Outline of parent/carer response: |
| Signatures of staff completing report:<br><br>Name:…….…… Signed:……..<br><br>Name:…….…… Signed:……..<br><br>Name:…….…… Signed:…….. |
| Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action: |