

Physical Restraint Policy & Procedure

Date Created:	September 2021	Date Reviewed:	September 2025
		Date of Next Review:	September 2026
<p>This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with any new recommendations or legislation as it is made available.</p>			
Signature:			

Key Personnel

Role	Name	Tel.	Email
Managing Director	Helen Yeadon	01672 514535	helen.yeadon@greatwoodcharity.org
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Ben Ferris	01672 514535	ben.ferris@greatwoodcharity.org
Deputy DSL(s) (DDSL)	Vicky Candy Karen Helliwell	01672 514535	vicky.candy@greatwoodcharity.org karen.helliwell@greatwoodcharity.org
Trustee responsible for safeguarding	Helen Yeadon	01672 514535	helen.yeadon@greatwoodcharity.org

Children's Social Care referrals: Integrated Front Door (IFD):	0300 456 0108
Vulnerable Adults Social Care referrals: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):	0300 456 0111
Out of hours:	0300 456 0100

If you believe a learner is **at immediate risk** of significant harm or injury,
you **must** call the police on 999.

Introduction

Greatwood Charity is committed to providing positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for our learners, underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and colleagues.

Greatwood's core values should underpin any decision to use restrictive physical intervention; they must be considered in relation to the person being restrained **and** the other children/persons on the premises (including the person carrying out the restraint).

Scope

The Staff Behaviour policy (August 2025) outlines how staff at Greatwood create and maintain good order and relationships through positive approaches. This policy supplements the Staff Behaviour policy and both should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety policy (September 2025) and the Child Protection & Safeguarding policy (August 2025).

This policy aims to give all members of staff clear guidance to ensure that any physical intervention that they undertake is carried out. This policy will:

- Describe the circumstances in which physical intervention is an appropriate response
- Make restrictive physical interventions as safe as possible and relevant for both staff and learners
- Put safety of staff during restrictive physical interventions at equal importance with the best interests of learners, and both take priority over care of property
- Indicate how staff will fulfil their responsibilities in those circumstances.

The managing director will be responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of this policy and will ensure that all necessary training takes place so that staff know their responsibilities.

This policy applies to all staff working at Greatwood.

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the organisation full or part-time, in a regular paid capacity.
- A **volunteer** is a person who performs an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, within our organisation.
- **Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults in a parenting role, e.g., stepparents, foster carers and adoptive parents.
- **Child** refers to all children attending our provision and any child under the age of 18 who encounters our organisation, including unborn babies.

Expectations

All staff:

- Are familiar with this policy and have an opportunity to contribute.

- Understand the definition of 'physical intervention'.
- Ensure that all methods of restrictive interventions are used as infrequently as possible and in the best interests of the individual learner.
- Understand that every reasonable effort is made to minimise risk/harm/injury to all involved parties.
- Are aware that failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal, criminal action and/or barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity.

Procedures

Physical touch

Physical touch is an essential part of human relationships and at Greatwood staff may well use touch to prompt, guide, give reassurance or provide support to our learners.

In order to be acceptable, physical contact must be:

- Non-abusive, with no intention to cause pain or injury
- In the best interests of the learner
- Have a clear educational purpose (e.g. to access the curriculum or to improve social relationships)
- Guided by gender issues.

At Greatwood, the education team are responsible for ensuring that all relevant staff are aware of any learner that finds physical touch unwelcome, and staff must be aware that this sensitivity may arise from cultural background, personal history, age, etc.

Physical intervention

Physical interventions can be categorised into two distinct areas – non-restrictive and restrictive.

Non-restrictive interventions are ones where the learner can move away from the intervention if they wish to, or where a child is held supportively but will be released immediately should they so wish. For example:

- Physical presence
- Non-verbal prompts
- Touch or physical prompts
- Guiding/shepherding

Restrictive interventions are any form of intervention that is designed/used to limit or restrict movement, be that physical, mechanical, chemical, environmental or psychological. For example:

- Physical containment or holding
- Escorting or manoeuvring
- Blocking an escape route
- Isolation
- Full restraint

Be aware - restrictive interventions carry a higher risk and require a greater degree of justification.

Both restrictive and non-restrictive physical interventions can fall into two further categories:

- Unplanned/emergency interventions – in response to unforeseen events.

- Planned interventions – staff employ pre-arranged strategies and methods that are based on a risk assessment and recorded on the learner ILP.

Restrictive physical intervention is rarely used at Greatwood, however there will be times when it is necessary to prevent a learner injuring themselves and/or others, or to prevent them damaging property.

Physical restraint using reasonable force will only be used when all other behaviour management procedures have failed and it is obvious that the child is at risk of harming themselves or others.

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force' but the degree of force used must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour. Any force used must always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result within the shortest possible time.

Risk assessment

Whenever it is foreseeable that a learner might require a restrictive physical intervention, then the referring agency should complete and provide a risk assessment, and it is essential that the outcomes of any assessment are shared with all relevant staff/agencies.

Adequate staff must be available to safely complete any holding and restraint that is undertaken as part of a planned strategy, and this must be pre-arranged with the referring agency before the commencement of any education programme.

The use of a restrictive physical intervention will be the outcome of a professional judgement made by staff based on this policy. It is avoided wherever possible and will not be used for staff convenience.

Staff are not expected to intervene physically against their better judgement, nor are they expected to place themselves at unreasonable risk.

Authorisation

Only staff trained in correct physical restraint may use physical restrictive interventions, except where they have been specifically authorised to do so by the managing director, e.g., in the case of an emergency where learners may be at risk of significant harm.

Parents, volunteers and visitors to Greatwood are not given authorisation. Staff from referring agencies or the LEA will have their own policies and procedures, and these should be shared with the education team at Greatwood prior to arrival.

Interventions

When a restrictive physical intervention is justified, authorised Greatwood staff shall use 'reasonable force', the degree of which will be determined by the situation. It will be proportionate to the circumstance and the consequences it is intended to prevent.

Staff will:

- Use the minimum amount of force for the minimum amount of time.
- Avoid causing pain or injury; holding or putting pressure on joints; holding long bones (unless absolutely necessary).

- Never hold a learner face down on the ground or in any position that might increase the risk of suffocation.

Before the incident escalates to requiring restraint, staff must tell the learner that their behaviour may lead to them being physically restrained. This must be informative and not used as a threat or said in a way that could exacerbate the situation. Staff will not act out of anger or frustration and will adopt a calm, measured approach whilst always maintaining communication with the learner.

Acceptable methods of restrictive physical intervention are as demonstrated in training provided by Wiltshire Council.

In an emergency, staff must summon assistance by sending the nearest free member of staff to the front office, who must be informed that a restrictive physical intervention is taking place.

Communication

Information relating to intervention strategies should always be discussed with all parties involved, including the learner and their families (where appropriate). All parties must agree with the intervention strategy, and any issues/differences of opinion must be documented and recorded.

After the use of a restrictive physical intervention

Once a restrictive physical intervention has taken place, the following steps will be taken:

- Details of the incident will be recorded by all adults involved as soon as possible, and within 12 hours of the incident taking place.
- Any injuries suffered by those involved will be recorded in the Accident Report book.
- The DSL will check that there is no cause for concern regarding the actions of the adults involved. If it is felt that an action has put a learner at risk of significant harm, the DSL will follow the charity safeguarding procedures and inform all relevant agencies, including parents/carers.
- Parents/carers will be informed by the DSL on the day of the incident, initially by phone and then followed up in writing. Parents/carers will be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have.
- A debrief will take place for all those involved, and support will be offered by the DSL/managing director as appropriate.

Training

It is the responsibility of management to identify the training requirements for staff to ensure they can safely employ restrictive physical interventions. Staff involved in the use of both planned and unplanned physical interventions must have suitable training at the correct level, ensuring their own safety and that of learners.

Training in the use of restrictive physical interventions must be recorded and refreshed in accordance with the training provider's accreditation scheme. Any training regarding restrictive physical intervention must be carried out by accredited organisations, with suitably qualified, professional facilitators.

Dress code

Where staff may be involved in the use of restrictive physical interventions, they must:

- Wear suitable clothing that allows freedom of movement.
- Wear sensible low heel footwear.
- Not wear any jewellery and/or piercings that could cause injury.
- Ensure that fingernails are kept short to prevent scratching injuries to learners when implementing any physical intervention.

Infection control

Since the nature of physical interventions can be unpredictable, there is a risk to staff of contamination from bodily fluids through injury, e.g., biting, scratching, blood from self-harm. In order to minimise risk, staff must cover any open wounds with an appropriate adhesive dressing.

Complaints procedure

Any complaint will be first considered in relation to the Safeguarding Adults & Child Protection policy and the procedures within. If these procedures are not appropriate, Greatwood's complaint procedures will be followed.