



FIRST BRIDGE SCHOOL

# Physical intervention policy

## Introduction

First Bridge School's work is set firmly in a framework of Behaviour Analysis. Staff, therefore, are behaviour experts, ready to address any challenging behaviour in an appropriate and safe manner, based on these principles.

Pupils attending First Bridge School may display challenging behaviour that poses a risk to themselves, others, or property. In such situations, staff may be required – as a last resort – to implement positive handling procedures to maintain the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved.

First Bridge School ensures that all staff are trained in Team Teach behaviour support and positive handling strategies. The use of positive handling (reasonable force / physical intervention) will always adhere to Team Teach guidance and will only be used when it is proportionate, necessary, and in the best interests of the pupil.

Training in Team Teach is provided to all staff; however, as this training is delivered on scheduled training days, there may occasionally be short periods when newly-appointed staff have not yet completed the training. During this time, they will not undertake any physical intervention and will be supported by trained staff until they have received the appropriate certification.

This policy pays regard to the Department for Education's latest [Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools](#) guidance and should be considered alongside, and in addition to, our behaviour and safeguarding policies.

## Terminology: Challenging behaviour and assessments

"Challenging behaviour" refers to any behaviour that is disruptive to learning or poses a risk to the safety (emotional or physical) of the person or another. This includes but is not limited to:

- Disruptive behaviours – hitting, biting, scratching, kicking, pulling hair, smearing, spitting, pushing, licking, swearing, motor stereotypy.
- Tantrums – yelling, crying, screaming, flopping, flailing.

- Property Destruction – throwing furniture, tearing books/stimuli, breaking items, defacing, throwing stimuli.
- Off-task behaviours – leaving the work area (eloping), wandering around the room, “staring off”.
- Non-compliance – refusing to complete an activity, refusing to follow directions, refusing to respond in any way.
- Self-injurious behaviour – headbanging, hand-biting self, hitting self (slaps, punches, strikes), pinching/picking, rubbing/scratching, hair pulling, pica (mouthing inedible items).

“Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)” refers to the assessment conducted by a Board-Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) / Clinical Supervisor. This assessment:

- Identifies the behaviour of concern in observable and measurable terms
- Identifies under what conditions the behaviour is more and less likely to occur
- Analyses data collected to hypothesise the function of the behaviour (what purpose it serves the pupil)
- Consists of records review (all data recorded on the Antecedent-Behaviour- Consequence data sheets) data collection, and interview.

Sometimes, an FBA will also include a Functional Analysis (FA), during which staff contrive opportunities for the behaviour to occur to assess how the pupil will respond to different scenarios.

First Bridge School will always request written consent from the Clinical Director and pupils’ families before conducting an FBA or FA.

“Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)” refers to an individualised set of strategies and procedures that aims to minimise the occurrence of inappropriate or challenging behaviours. BSPs:



- Include a plan to teach appropriate replacement behaviours, increase skill deficits and how to set the occasion for these using prevention strategies.
- Addresses how to respond to inappropriate behaviours in a safe and dignified manner that will minimise future occurrences.

Every pupil at First Bridge School has a written BSP that is specific to them and their needs and details the necessary and required antecedent and consequence strategies required to support the pupil's learning and behaviour and to keep them safe, happy and engaged in effective learning.

### ***Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions definitions (DfE, 2026)***

For the purposes of this policy, and in line with this guidance, the following additional definitions apply:

- Restrictive intervention: Any action or intervention that prevents, restricts, or subdues the movement of a pupil's body, or part of their body, whether physical or non-physical.
- Reasonable force: A form of restrictive intervention involving physical contact. Reasonable force means using no more force than is necessary, for the shortest amount of time, to prevent injury, serious damage, a criminal offence, or serious disorder.
- Restraint: A non-disciplinary intervention which immobilises a pupil or limits their movement. This may occur with or without direct physical contact.
- Seclusion: A non-disciplinary intervention involving keeping a pupil confined to a space away from others and preventing them from leaving, either physically, by blocking, or by making the pupil believe they will be punished if they attempt to leave.
- Significant incident: Any incident where the use of force goes beyond appropriate physical contact and includes the use of force to implement a non-physical restrictive intervention.

These definitions are used to support clarity, lawful practice, and compliance with statutory recording and reporting duties.

## **Training**

All staff at First Bridge School receive training on general behaviour management, teaching replacement behaviours (i.e.: functional communication), and the use of general environmental/antecedent interventions as preventative measures.

Staff who support a pupil with a BSP receive additional training on that pupil's individualised strategies. Data will be collected on the staff's fidelity of implementation of each component of the treatment plan by the Clinical Supervisor and will be reviewed with the Clinical Lead and/ or Clinical Director.

Staff also receive Team Teach training delivered by a certified Team Teach Trainer, in accordance with Team Teach guidelines. Recertification will occur every 12 months from the date of the previous certification, for both Level One trained therapists and Intermediate Trainers (Team Teach Trainers). The training is practical and interactive, equipping staff with the skills to maintain their own safety, implement simple de-escalation strategies, and apply basic positive handling interventions. These interventions are approved for use at First Bridge School and are carefully considered by the Team Teach Trainer in collaboration with the Clinical Supervisor.

Only staff members who hold a valid, in-date Team Teach training certificate are authorised to implement any Team Teach restrictive physical interventions.

In addition to the core Team Teach training, all staff members who work directly with pupils receive termly refresher sessions covering manual handling and general Team Teach strategies to ensure ongoing competence and confidence in their application.

## **Daily practice including use of safe physical touch**

All staff are responsible for setting the tone and context for positive behaviour across the school.

We:

- Create and maintain a stimulating environment that encourages pupils to be engaged, developing a positive relationship with pupils, which includes:
  - Establishing clear routines
  - Communicating expectations of behaviour in ways other than verbally
  - Highlighting and promoting good behaviour
  - Concluding the day positively and starting the next day afresh
  - Having a plan for dealing with low-level disruption
  - Using reinforcement-based strategies to promote pro-social behaviour.
  - Where appropriate, using physical gestures such as offering comfort or acknowledging achievements to provide reassurance, encouragement and positive reinforcement.

First Bridge School uses safe physical touch as part of its usual practice, with parental consent obtained when pupils begin their education with us. Staff receive termly training on engaging in appropriate physical play, which includes regular refreshers on what is considered appropriate and inappropriate contact in line with pupils' ages and developmental needs.

Not all pupils will engage in challenging behaviours that are to the level that warrant an FBA; however, they will still need individualised strategies to help them learn. In these scenarios, Behaviour Support Plans for these pupils will focus on the antecedent strategies required to support them most effectively, and sequence-analysis data (Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence (ABC)) will be taken daily to continuously keep information on any potential environmental stimuli and behaviours that could evoke challenging or inappropriate behaviours, that may require an FBA/FA in the future. Staff will work with each pupil's family to determine what skills should be addressed to support this. Staff will model appropriate behaviours and facilitate positive social interactions.

If a pupil is engaging in inappropriate behaviours that are persistent (occur more than three times within a fortnight) or are severe in frequency or duration (pose a safety risk to the child or others), First Bridge School staff (therapists, senior therapists and/ or room lead) will notify the pupil's family and supervising BCBA, immediately, so that it can be determined if an FBA is



needed. Staff will only collect behaviour data if the parents have consented to this.

BSPs are individualised to a pupil's needs and are written in a manner that scientifically explains the components that are controlling the behaviours; however, they are also designed to be easy to understand. BSPs are reviewed with parents prior to implementation. Data on the specified challenging behaviour will be collected each session and will be reviewed by the BCBA/Clinical Supervisor and/or Clinical Lead to ensure appropriate interventions are implemented. A plan for generalisation will be agreed which may include parent consultation as needed.

In the rarest of circumstances, a pupil's behaviour may present an imminent risk to their own safety or the safety of others. In such cases, staff may determine that the use of restrictive physical intervention is necessary as an emergency measure to maintain safety. Any use of positive handling involving restrictive physical intervention will always be reasonable, necessary, and proportionate to the level of risk presented.

Use of seclusion at First Bridge School is strictly forbidden and is not used.

## **Team Teach physical interventions**

First Bridge School restricts usage of Team Teach restrictive physical and positive handling interventions to the below examples. These provide a graded and gradual response aimed at intervening with the appropriate amount of reasonable force. Restrictive physical intervention where two members of staff are used will be deemed to be more restrictive holds and used only in extraordinary circumstances. As the amount of restriction / number of people increases, so does the risk; staff need to make a dynamic risk assessment based on the situation as to the level at which they are going to intervene.

<b>Name of the intervention</b>	<b>Description of intervention</b>	<b>Number of people involved</b>
<b>Carrying C escort</b>	Shape hand in a c position. Place at shoulder level and guide the pupil towards a safe environment	<b>1</b>



<b>Hair pull release</b>	Fix the hair at the base of the scalp. Using your thumb, move it inside the pupil's closed fist to release the hold	<b>1</b>
<b>Bite release</b>	Support the head into the bite to start the gag reflex. Bite will automatically open	<b>1</b>
<b>Elbow cradle and cup</b>	Hands positioned in carrying c's cup at the elbow level to prevent pupil from injuring themselves	<b>1</b>
<b>Single-elbow escort</b>	Adult on right hand side is placing their left hand (using carrying c's) on the pupil's left arm (wrist level) with arm bend and drawn back. The adult's body is acting as a gate cover. Adult on the left-hand side is engaging in the same movement, on the right-hand side of the pupil.	<b>2</b>
<b>Single elbow seated</b>	As above, position is seated. In order to prevent headbutting, the adult can protect their heads by placing their open palm by the side of the pupil's head.	<b>2</b>

## **Recording and reporting incidents**

All incidents requiring use of reasonable force / physical intervention / positive handling are recorded as soon as possible after the event.

All staff involved or witnessing the incident will be included in writing the incident report, which will be recorded on the incident log and acknowledged by a member of the senior team.

Staff will always record the incident on the same day of the incident.

The required information includes:

- name of the pupil involved
- name(s) of staff involved
- the pupil's specific SEND
- date, time, and location of the incident
- duration of the incident and intervention
- description of the incident and events leading up to it
- any known triggers or contributing factors
- de-escalation and/or preventative strategies attempted
- type of restrictive intervention (including specific positive handling procedure) used and degree of force
- a brief account of why force was felt to be necessary
- any injuries sustained and medical support provided
- any post-incident support that may be necessary for either the staff or pupil involved
- confirmation, date and time the child's parents/carers were informed of the incident.

It is essential that the incident contains this information to ensure transparency, accountability ongoing monitoring and any necessary follow-up actions.

All staff involved in an incident will receive a debrief from a member of the senior leadership team (usually the headteacher or the clinical lead).

Incident reports will be shared with parents via our online platform, Family, and staff will do so no later than the same day of the incident. Following the incident, parents will also be invited to meet with the clinical supervisor, either in person or online. After this discussion the school will use the information to amend any existing behaviour support plan, as necessary.