Thames Ditton Infant School
Touch Policy and Acceptable forms of Touch/Physical Intervention
2026-2027

Written By:	Monika Dennemont
Approved By:	Full Governing Board
Date Approved:	Spring 2026
Next Review Date:	Spring 2027

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for children and staff with protected characteristics**,** as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. This includes having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations**.**

At the heart of Thames Ditton Infant School (TDIS) community, we provide a nurturing environment where we prioritise emotional growth and wellbeing for every child, staff member and parent. Through fostering empathy, resilience and positive relationships, we empower individuals to flourish academically, socially and emotionally, ensuring a holistic wellbeing for all.

There are many occasions when staff may need to have physical contact with children or young people. Examples include:

- First Aid - providing medical assistance when necessary;
- Comforting a child or young person in distress - only when appropriate for their age and individual needs;
- Guiding or directing a child or young person - for example, holding hands or placing a hand on the shoulder;
- Supporting educational activities - such as physical education, drama, or other practical lessons;
- Assisting with life skills - for example, changing for PE, toileting, or using cutlery;
- Emergency situations - to ensure the safety of the child and/or staff.

All physical contact should follow the principle of least restrictive intervention, and staff should ensure that any contact is safe, necessary, and respectful. In emergency situations, staff may need to use reasonable force, taking into account their statutory duty of care to ensure the safety of the child, other children, and staff.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and children may take place, staff must carefully consider the following:

- The child or young person's age and level of understanding - ensure the approach is appropriate for their developmental stage;
- The child or young person's individual characteristics and history - including any known triggers, vulnerabilities, or previous experiences;
- The location of the contact - physical intervention should never occur in private; others should be present whenever possible to ensure safety and accountability;
- Risk and severity of the situation - physical intervention should only be used when there is an imminent risk of harm and as a last resort;
- Staff training and competence - only staff trained in physical intervention techniques should engage in any physical intervention;
- Vulnerable children - staff must be aware of children with SEND, on Child Protection Registers, or other significant concerns, and follow additional safeguarding procedures as required;
- Minimising force - any intervention must follow the principle of least restrictive intervention, using the minimum force necessary for the shortest time possible.

If a child or young person requires physical support on a regular basis, this information will be documented in an individual plan, such as a handling plan, toileting plan, or positive plan.

Physical contact is never used to enforce compliance and is always a last resort. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with a child or young person's neck, chest, abdomen, genital area, or other sensitive body parts, and staff will not apply pressure to joints. Physical contact will not become habitual between a member of staff and any particular child or young person.

OBJECTIVES

Thames Ditton Infant School endeavours to ensure that all children are safe. The main objective of this policy is to ensure all staff, parents and children or young persons are aware of the procedures and practice that will be carried out to ensure that this is the case at the school. This policy links with the school's Relationship Policy, Anti-bullying Policy and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy. It is intended to de-escalate situations, maintain a safe and supportive environment, reduce the risk of injury to individuals, and prevent serious damage to property, while preserving the dignity of all involved.

In order to minimise the need for physical intervention, TDIS will adopt a proactive, preventative, and relational approach to supporting children and young people in crisis. This includes:

- Creating calm, structured, and predictable environments that reduce anxiety, confusion, and triggers that may lead to crisis situations;
- Building positive, trusting relationships between staff and children or young people, recognising that strong relationships are central to emotional regulation, cooperation, and a sense of safety;
- Ensuring consistent routines, expectations, and responses from all staff so that children feel secure and understand boundaries;
- Using evidence-based strategies and resources to teach children how to recognise, express, and manage strong emotions, solve problems, and resolve conflict appropriately;
- Providing staff with appropriate training, guidance, and ongoing support so they feel confident, competent, and emotionally prepared to respond effectively to distressed or escalated behavior;
- Developing individualised support and behaviour plans (including handling or safety plans where appropriate) for children or young people who have been identified as needing additional support;
- Using verbal and non-verbal de-escalation strategies first, including clear communication, empathy, redirection, and offering choices;
- Giving clear explanations whenever possible before any physical intervention is considered, helping the child understand what is expected and what may happen next;
- Applying the principle of least restrictive intervention, ensuring that physical intervention is used only as a last resort, when there is an imminent risk of harm.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that all staff are aware of their legal responsibilities, boundaries, and duties of care in relation to physical intervention. This includes ensuring staff understand when and how physical intervention may be used in line with the principles of prevention, de-escalation, and least restrictive practice.

As part of the school's induction process, the Headteacher will ensure that staff are:

- Informed of the school's Relationship and Touch and Acceptable Forms of Intervention policy;
- Made aware of who is trained and authorised to use physical intervention;
- Provided with guidance on who to seek support from if they are concerned about a situation involving a child or young person;
- Trained in Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI)-aligned approaches that prioritise early intervention, verbal de-escalation, and relational safety.

The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body, through the Headteacher's report, on staff who have received appropriate CPI-aligned training and are authorised to use physical intervention as part of their role.

While all staff have a duty of care to act to keep children safe, only those who have received appropriate training should use physical intervention techniques. Any physical intervention must always be:

- A last resort;
- Used only when there is an imminent risk of harm;
- Proportionate, reasonable, and necessary;
- Applied for the shortest time possible;
- Focused on maintaining the dignity, safety, and emotional wellbeing of all involved.

A record of trained and authorised staff will be maintained in the school office and linked to safeguarding and DBS records.

Safe Decision-Making in Crisis Situations

The decision to use physical intervention must always be situational, thoughtful, and based on professional judgement. Staff must carry out a dynamic assessment of the risk and severity of the situation, considering the child's emotional state, behaviour, known triggers, and the potential for escalation or harm.

Only staff who have received appropriate CPI-aligned training should engage in physical intervention. Staff must always follow the principle of least restrictive intervention, using physical intervention only as a last resort, when all other de-escalation strategies have been attempted or are not appropriate.

Physical intervention should only be used when there is an imminent and serious risk of harm to the child, other children, staff, or property, and when it is necessary to maintain safety.

Staff must be aware of any vulnerable children, including those with SEND or who are subject to Child Protection procedures, and take their individual needs, histories, and triggers into account when making decisions. In rare and extreme circumstances, staff may need to follow school procedures for involving external services, including the police, to prevent serious danger to the child or others.

All actions must aim to maintain the safety, dignity, and emotional wellbeing of everyone involved.

Post-Incident Recording, Reporting, and Support

A written record must be completed for any incident involving physical intervention, including all staff who were involved or present, even if they did not physically handle the child. This record must be uploaded to CPOMS and stored centrally within the school's safeguarding system. Reports must be completed as soon as possible after the incident once the situation has been safely resolved, to ensure the account is accurate, factual, and reflective of what occurred. All reports must be passed to the Headteacher for review.

The Headteacher will inform the child's parents or carers as soon as reasonably practicable, usually by telephone, followed by written confirmation. Where appropriate, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the incident, provide reassurance, and outline any next steps.

All accidents, incidents, and near misses must be recorded. Surrey schools should use the SCC online Health and Safety Event Reporting Portal (surreycc.oshens.com) where required.

Following any incident where physical intervention has been used, the Headteacher will ensure that appropriate support and debriefing is offered to both staff and children:

- First aid will be administered by a trained first aider where required.
- Emotional support and reassurance will be provided to the child and any affected staff.

Within two working days, staff involved will meet with the Headteacher to reflect on the incident. This review will focus on:

- Whether procedures were followed correctly;
- Whether de-escalation strategies were effective;
- What can be learned from the incident;
- How future situations may be prevented.

Complaints Procedures

The school has a clear complaints procedure and any complaints would be received in the first instance by the Head Teacher. If matters were not resolved, then the complainant would take the matter to the Governing Body. Parents wishing to make a complaint will be issued with the guidance booklet detailing the procedures from the school.

Appropriate Physical Contact

There may be circumstances where appropriate, supportive physical contact is necessary and beneficial, outside of situations covered by Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Examples include:

- Supporting learning in physical education or practical activities, such as demonstrating techniques or exercises;
- Administering first aid or medical assistance;
- Offering appropriate reassurance or praise, such as a congratulatory gesture;
- Comforting a child who is distressed, where this is welcomed and appropriate;
- Providing physical prompts or assistance for younger children or those with SEND, where needed to support learning, safety, or independence.

In all cases, staff must use their professional judgement, taking into account the child's age, level of understanding, personal history, and emotional state. All physical contact must be:

- Respectful and appropriate;
- In the best interests of the child;
- Proportionate and necessary;
- Sensitive to the child's wishes and boundaries;
- Transparent and accountable.

Staff should seek consent where possible and remain alert to verbal and non-verbal cues indicating discomfort.

Written By:
Monika Dennemont

Date:
Autumn Term 2025

On behalf of the Governors

Date to be reviewed:
Autumn Term 2025

Thames Ditton Infant School procedures for the use of restrictive physical interventions by staff

This procedure supports the implementation of the Surrey County Council policy and guidance on the use of touch and restrictive physical intervention. The person responsible for authorising staff to use restrictive physical intervention as part of a structured and planned intervention within the school is Elspeth Leach, Headteacher.

Risk Assessment

The following staff are responsible for ensuring that all planned use of restrictive physical intervention is risk assessed:

- Elspeth Leach, Headteacher
- Monika Dennemont, Deputyhead for Inclusion and SENDCo
- Karen Lita, the Manager of the Unit for Children with Autism and Social Communication Difficulties

Copies of all risk assessments are held in the Headteacher's office or on a child's SEND file, and are reviewed after every use of force and termly.

Training

Training of staff authorised to use restrictive physical interventions is based on the needs of the cohort and delivered annually, or sooner if the needs of the children require additional support. Only staff who have been trained in appropriate techniques within the last year may be authorised to use restrictive physical interventions.

The following staff are responsible for ensuring that appropriate annual training and updates are provided:

- Melanie McGuiness, School Business Manager
- Monika Dennemont, Deputyhead for Inclusion and SENDCo
- Karen Lita, the Manager of the Unit for Children with Autism and Social Communication Difficulties

Training records are maintained by Sue Coulter, Office Manager.

Use of Unplanned or Emergency Intervention

Staff who are not involved in planned risk assessments but whose roles include supervision of children may use reasonable force in an emergency or unplanned intervention, but only where it is necessary to prevent serious injury to the child, other children, or staff.

Reporting and Recording

- Every use of restrictive physical intervention must be reported on the same day to the Headteacher or, if the Headteacher is off-site, the Deputy Head or an appropriate senior manager with safeguarding responsibility.
- The Headteacher or Deputyhead for Inclusion and SENDCo will ensure that the child's parents are notified on the same day that force has been used.
- Details of every incident must be recorded on the Child/Young Person Incident Report Form (Appendix 1).
- The staff member leading the planned or unplanned intervention is responsible for completing the form.
- The Headteacher will review all incidents of physical intervention to ensure compliance with policy, evaluate effectiveness, and identify opportunities for prevention and learning.

Appendix 1

Individual child risk assessment
Surrey County Council – child risk assessment

A plan for assessing and managing foreseeable risks for children or who are likely to need Restrictive Physical Intervention

School/Setting:[Control]

Name of Child: [Control]

DOB: [Control]

Class group/setting: [Control]

Name of teacher/support worker: [Control]
Name of parents/Carers: [Control]
Name of Support Service Member/s:
[Control]

Identification of Risk	
Describe the foreseeable risk (i.e. what specific behaviours have occurred)	
Is the risk potential or actual (i.e. has this happened before?)	
List who is affected by the risk	

Assessment of risk	
In which situations does the risk occur?	
How likely is it that the risk will arise (i..e has it happened before?)	
If the risk arises, who is likely to be hurt or injured?	
What kinds of injuries are likely to occur?	
How serious are the adverse outcomes?	

Assessment completed by: [Control]

Date of review: [Control]

Signature: [Control] **Date:** [Control]

Agreed plan and risk management strategy		
Focus of measures	**Measures to be employed**	**Level of risk**
Proactive interventions to prevent risks		
Early intervention to manage risks		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		

Agreed by:Date: [Control]

Parent/Carer

[Control]
Child (if appropriate)

[Control]

(Class teacher)
[Control]

(Support Service Member/s)
[Control]

Communication of plan and risk management strategy		
Plans and strategies shared with	**Communication method**	**Date actioned**
Proactive interventions to prevent risks		
Early intervention to manage risks		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		

Staff training issues		
Identified training needs	**Training provided to meet needs**	**Date training complete**

Evaluation of plan and risk management strategy		
Measures set out	**Effectiveness in supporting the child**	**Impact on risk**
Proactive interventions to prevent risks		
Early interventions to manage risks		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		

ACTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Plans and strategies evaluated by: [Control]

Title: [Control]

Date: [Control]

Appendix 2

Child Incident Report Form

Schools and other similar establishments are responsible for creating their own incident reports. Such reports can be as extensive or as brief as required. The following basic information must however be recorded as a minimum:

- Name of School/Establishment
- Child or young person's name/Date of Birth
- Staff member name and status
- Incident date/time/duration
- Nature of incident
- Events leading up to incident
- Description of what happened
- Consequences
- Names of those involved
- Names of witnesses
- De-escalation techniques used
- Justification for physical intervention
- Response and view of child or young person
- Details of any injuries
- Other relevant information
- Signatures of head teacher/manager and report author.

Schools and other similar establishments are free to create their own versions or to use the template provided below

At the end of each term the Head teacher should submit data via the s157/175 audit which will then be passed by the Education Safeguarding Team to the school effectiveness team. This will be followed up with the CPI training team where there are any concerns raised
Appendix K

Appendix 3

Thames Ditton Infant School Physical Intervention Recording Form

Name of young person……..Date of incident……

WHAT DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES WERE USED PRIOR TO PHYSICAL CONTROLS:
(tick the appropriate box below)

Defusing		**Time out offer**	
Deflection		**Time out directed**	
Distraction		**Changes of task**	
Appropriate Humour		**Choices**	
Proximity control		**Limits**	
Verbal advice/support		**Consequences**	
Rule reminder		**Another member of staff**	
Hurdle help		**Take up time**	
Planned ignoring		**Other (please state):**	

JUSTIFICATION FOR USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION:
(tick the appropriate box below)

To prevent/interrupt;	**A criminal offence**	
	Injury to pupil/staff/others	
	Serious damage to property	
	Significant Disruptive behaviour	
	Pupil absconding	
	Other (please state)	

NATURE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION USED:
(Identify level of hold used, estimate of duration and factual staff accounts from each individual involved)

RESPONSE AND VIEW OF THE YOUNG PERSON: (this field **must** be completed if possible)
Name of staff: Date:
DETAILS OF ANY RESULTING INJURY: (injury to whom and any action taken)

First Aid Book completed	**Yes No**	**Date:**	
OSHENS	**Yes No**	**Date:**	

ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTUAL INFORMATION:

NAME OF SENIOR PERSON NOTIFIED:		**TIME/DATE**	
HEADTEACHER'S COMMENTS:			
SIGNATURE OF HEADTEACHER:		**DATE:**	
PARENTS INFORMED	**Yes No METHOD:**	**DATE:**	
EXCLUSION OF YOUNG PERSON	**Yes No**	**DETAILS:**	

Appendix 4

Pupil Significant Incident Form

For all incidents involving unsafe/risk or unacceptable behaviour where a physical intervention using force was not used.

Pupil name:	
Staff name/s:	
Incident date/time/place:	

Reason for intervention (tick boxes as appropriate)	**Vandalism**			**Physical control**	
	Bullying			**Absconding**	
	Assault			**Substance abuse**	
	Diversion			**Serious disruption**	
	Isolation				

ANTECEDENTS: (events leading up to incident)
BEHAVIOUR: (how did the pupil respond, describe what actually happened)

CONSEQUENCES: (how did the staff intervene, how did the child respond, and how was the situation resolved)
NAMES OF ALL INVOLVED: (observers/support staff) **HEADTEACHERS COMMENTS**:**DATE:**

NAME OF REPORT COMPILER:	**DATE:**
NAME OF SMT INFORMED:	**DATE:**
FIRST AID REQUIRED:	**PAGE NO:**
OSHENS RECORDED:	**DATE:**
PARENTS INFORMED: ☐☐ **Yes No METHOD:DATE:**	
EXCLUSION OF YOUNG PERSON	☐☐☐ **Yes No DETAILS:**