



Leigh Academy
Strood

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Positive Handling Policy

Academic year 2025/26

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Leigh Academy Strood Positive Handling Policy

Legal Authority for Positive Handling in schools

Schools have the legal power to use reasonable force to manage student behaviour. This power comes from Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Introduction

This policy outlines Leigh Academy Strood's position on physical interventions and ensures the well-being of students and staff when such intervention becomes necessary.

Legal Authority

The law allows authorised academy staff to use reasonable force to prevent students from:

- Committing a crime (or something that would be a crime for an older student, if the student is too young to be criminally responsible).
- Causing injury to themselves, others, or damaging property.
- Disrupting good order and discipline at the academy.

Staff should feel empowered to act in these situations, following this policy and the accompanying guidance. However, they should always consider if their actions would be deemed reasonable by their professional peers.

Levels of Intervention

- **Reasonable Force:** This is the appropriate and proportionate amount of force required to achieve the desired outcome of the handling strategy without putting the student, staff, or others at further risk.
- **Restraint:** This is the positive application of force to actively prevent a student from causing significant injury to themselves, others, or damaging property. Significant Injury includes actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives or injury of themselves or others through willful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning. It must be clear that without immediate intervention, significant injury would have likely occurred.

Implementing Physical Intervention

- **Authorisation:** All staff authorised by the Principal to work with students are empowered to use handling, reasonable force, or restraint when necessary. However, no staff member is obligated to use physical intervention strategies if they lack confidence or comfort doing so effectively.
- **Safety First:** Staff should not intervene physically if they believe it will worsen the situation.
- **Seeking Assistance:** Whenever possible, staff should request backup from other adults before using physical intervention. However, they should be prepared to act independently if circumstances require immediate intervention.

- Communication: Before using physical intervention, staff should clearly communicate with the student, providing an opportunity to change their behaviour and explaining the intended intervention.
- Proportionality: The level of physical intervention used must be the minimum force necessary for the shortest possible duration.

Recording Physical Intervention

- All incidents where staff use force to modify student behaviour or conduct must be documented using the Leigh Academy Strood online Google Form.
- Intervention Recording Forms: These can be accessed electronically through Julie Tingley. Completed forms should be submitted to both the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Julie Lindsay) and Julie Tingley. The Principal will also be informed.
- Timeliness: The staff member involved must complete the record form on the same day as the intervention.
- Record Keeping: Details regarding the circumstances and nature of the physical intervention will be included in the student's record.
- Reporting to External Agencies: The DSL will follow Department for Education (DfE) and Local Authority (LA) guidelines to determine if any external agencies or authorities need to be informed about the physical intervention.
- Parental/Carer Communication: The Principal or Head of College will ensure parents/carers are appropriately informed about the incident.
- Investigative Process: To ensure impartiality, any investigation into the situation should be conducted by a staff member not involved in the physical intervention.

Searching Students (search, screening and confiscation)

[Searching, screening and confiscation](#)

Searching can play a critical role in ensuring that the academy is a safe environment for all pupils and staff. It is a vital measure to safeguard and promote staff and pupil welfare, and to maintain high standards of behaviour through which pupils can learn and thrive.

The Principal and staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item or any other item that the academy rules identify as an item which may be searched for.

The list of prohibited items is:

- knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used: to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the pupil), tobacco, vapes and cigarette papers, fireworks and pornographic images.

In some instances, a staff member may have reasonable suspicion that a student is carrying items that violate academy rules and could potentially harm themselves or others. The Education Act 2011 allows staff to search students without their consent under these circumstances.

- **Confiscation of Prohibited Items:** Any banned items found on a student will be confiscated and not returned.
- **Confiscation of Disruptive Items:** Items deemed harmful or disruptive to academy order will also be confiscated. These items may be returned to students after discussion with senior leaders and parents/carers, if appropriate.

Search Procedures

All searches and screenings will be conducted following the latest Department for Education (DfE) guidance. Should a pupil refuse a search the Police will be contacted.

Key principles include:

- **Two-Person Searches:** Searches will be conducted by two staff members, with at least one staff member of the same sex as the student.
- **Physical Searches Not Performed:** Leigh Academy Strood does not endorse or conduct physical searches of students' bodies.
- **Search Procedures:** When necessary, a student may be asked to:
 - Remove their coat and/or blazer.
 - Empty all pockets.
 - Open their bags.
 - In some cases, remove shoes and socks.
- **Confiscation and Communication:** Any unauthorised items discovered will be confiscated. Parents/carers will be contacted (if not present) to explain the situation and any resulting consequences.
- **Returning Confiscated Items:** Where appropriate, parents/carers may be invited to retrieve confiscated items, with the understanding that the items cannot be brought back to academy.
- **Discovery of Illegal Items:** If illegal items are found, the Police will be notified and the items will be given to the Police.