Awaken Education Ltd

Restraint and Physical Intervention Policy

Date Issued: June 2026
Review Date: June 2027

1. Purpose and Ethos

Awaken Education Ltd is committed to providing safe, respectful, nurturing, and trauma-informed environments where children and young people feel:

- emotionally safe,
- supported,
- regulated,
- and valued.

We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and aim to respond through:

- relational practice,
- de-escalation,
- emotional regulation support,
- restorative approaches,
- and individualised intervention strategies.

Physical intervention and restraint are only ever used:

- as a last resort,
- where there is an immediate risk of harm,
- and when all reasonable de-escalation strategies have been attempted or are not possible.

The welfare, dignity, rights, and safety of children and staff remain central at all times.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- employees,
- volunteers,
- freelance staff,
- contractors,
- agency workers,
- sessional workers,
- and anyone working on behalf of Awaken Education Ltd.

The policy applies across:

- Alternative Provision,
- Wraparound Care,
- Holiday Camps,
- Short Breaks Provision,
- off-site activities,
- community venues,
- transport arrangements,
- and online or outreach provision where relevant.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Use of Reasonable Force – DfE Guidance
- Human Rights Act 1998

- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- SEND Code of Practice

4. Definitions

Physical Intervention

The use of physical contact to:

- guide,
- redirect,
- support,
- or prevent harm.

This may include:

- guiding a learner away from danger,
- blocking unsafe movement,
- or supporting a learner to move safely.

Restrictive Physical Intervention / Restraint

The use of reasonable force to:

- restrict movement,
- prevent immediate harm,
- or manage serious safety risks.

This may include situations where a learner is:

- attempting to harm themselves,
- harming others,
- absconding into danger,
- or creating serious risk to safety.

5. Core Principles

Last Resort

Physical intervention must only be used:

- when absolutely necessary,
- and where no safer alternative exists.

De-escalation First

Staff must prioritise:

- calm communication,
- regulation support,
- distraction,
- reassurance,
- reduced demands,
- environmental adaptation,
- and restorative approaches.

Proportionality

Any intervention must be:

- reasonable,
- proportionate,
- necessary,
- and appropriate to the level of risk.

Safety and Dignity

Interventions must:

- minimise distress,
- protect dignity,
- avoid unnecessary force,
- and maintain emotional and physical safety.

Trauma-Informed Practice

Staff recognise that physical intervention may be distressing or triggering for some learners and must respond sensitively and professionally.

6. Preventative and De-escalation Approaches

Awaken Education prioritises proactive support to reduce the likelihood of crisis situations.

Strategies may include:

- relationship building,
- predictable routines,
- calm spaces,
- emotional regulation support,
- sensory support,
- movement breaks,
- restorative conversations,
- individual behaviour support strategies,
- and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).

Where appropriate, learners may also have:

- Individual Behaviour Support Plans (IBSPs),
- risk assessments,
- or positive handling plans.

7. Situations Where Physical Intervention May Be Used

Physical intervention may only be used where there is immediate risk of:

- injury to the learner,
- injury to others,
- serious damage to property creating safety risk,
- serious disruption impacting safety,
- absconding into immediate danger,
- or access to dangerous items or environments.

Examples may include:

- preventing a learner from running into a road,
- stopping physical assaults,
- preventing self-harm,
- or preventing access to dangerous objects.

Physical intervention must never be used:

- as punishment,
- to gain compliance,
- to humiliate,
- or because staff feel frustrated, challenged, or disrespected.

8. Prohibited Practices

Awaken Education Ltd prohibits:

- excessive force,
- pain-inducing techniques,
- dangerous restraint methods,
- deliberate humiliation,
- restriction of breathing,
- holds around the neck,
- prone restraint unless in exceptional life-threatening circumstances,
- or any intervention that compromises dignity or safety.

9. Procedures Following Physical Intervention

Immediate Response

Staff must:

- assess risk quickly,
- attempt de-escalation first,
- remain calm,
- and use the minimum intervention necessary.

Where possible:

- trained staff should respond,
- and another adult should witness the incident.

Reporting

All incidents involving physical intervention must be:

- reported immediately to DSL/DDSL or leadership,
- communicated to parents/carers as appropriate,
- and reviewed promptly.

Recording

A written incident report must be completed as soon as possible and include:

- date and time,
- individuals involved,
- reason for intervention,
- de-escalation attempts used,
- nature of intervention,
- duration,
- injuries or distress,
- witnesses,
- and follow-up actions.

Records must be:

- factual,
- professional,
- secure,
- and stored confidentially.

Post-Incident Support

Following incidents:

- learners must be supported emotionally,
- restorative conversations should take place where appropriate,

- staff wellbeing should be considered,
- and plans or risk assessments reviewed if needed.

10. Positive Handling Plans and Risk Assessments

Where a learner presents ongoing risk, Awaken Education may develop:

- Positive Handling Plans,
- Individual Behaviour Support Plans (IBSPs),
- or individual risk assessments.

Plans may include:

- known triggers,
- regulation strategies,
- communication approaches,
- agreed responses,
- and proactive support measures.

Plans should be developed collaboratively with:

- learners,
- families,
- schools,
- local authorities,
- and relevant professionals where appropriate.

11. Staff Training

Relevant staff will receive training appropriate to their role, which may include:

- de-escalation strategies,
- trauma-informed practice,
- behaviour support,
- safeguarding,
- positive handling,

- safe physical intervention,
- and restorative approaches.

Training forms part of:

- induction,
- ongoing CPD,
- and safeguarding updates.

Only appropriately trained staff should use restrictive physical intervention techniques unless emergency circumstances require immediate action to prevent harm.

12. Safeguarding and Whistleblowing

Awaken Education recognises that inappropriate use of restraint may constitute:

- unsafe practice,
- professional misconduct,
- or safeguarding concern.

Staff must report concerns immediately through:

- safeguarding procedures,
- leadership,
- or the Whistleblowing Policy.

All concerns will be:

- taken seriously,
- reviewed appropriately,
- and investigated where necessary.

13. Monitoring and Review

All incidents involving physical intervention will be:

- monitored,
- reviewed,
- and analysed for patterns or learning.

Reviews may inform:

- behaviour planning,
- risk assessments,
- training needs,
- safeguarding reviews,
- and provision adjustments.

This policy will be reviewed:

- annually,
- following incidents,
- or where guidance or legislation changes.

Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Daniel Jarvis (Level 3 DSL)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Lydia Jarvis (Level 3 Safeguarding)

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Police Non-Emergency

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NSPCC Helpline

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Website

Awaken Education

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