



Positive Handling Policy

Autism Mentors Ltd – Neurodiversity Mentoring & Support Services

Location: Oxfordshire, UK

Date: 1st September 2025

Next Review Date: September 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines Autism Mentors Ltd's approach to physical intervention and reasonable force when working with neurodivergent children, young people, and vulnerable adults in Oxfordshire.

The approach is underpinned by safeguarding legislation and promotes the rights, dignity, and safety of those in our care.

Relevant guidance and legislation:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Use of Reasonable Force – DfE Guidance (2013)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – DfE (2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – HM Government (2023)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- OSCB & OSAB Guidance
- Human Rights Act 1998

- Equality Act 2010

Applies to all staff, sessional workers, volunteers, and contractors working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

2. Key Principles

- Welfare first: The safety of the child or adult at risk is paramount.
- Last resort: Physical intervention is only used when necessary to prevent immediate harm.
- Reasonable and proportionate: Any force must be appropriate to the situation.
- Behaviour as communication: Staff respond through understanding and de-escalation.
- Respect and dignity: All interventions uphold the rights and dignity of the individual.

3. Understanding Behaviour

Behaviour that challenges may be due to:

- Sensory overload
- Communication difficulties
- Emotional distress or unmet needs

Staff interpret behaviour as communication and respond with empathy and proactive support.

Each student has a Pupil Profile and Understanding My Behaviour form, co-produced with families and professionals, outlining triggers and effective strategies.

4. Proactive Planning and Prevention

- All activities are risk assessed, including behavioural risks.
- Staff use proactive de-escalation and positive behaviour support techniques.
- Regular trauma-informed and neurodiversity-sensitive training is provided.

- Physical interventions are documented in each student's support plan and reviewed regularly.

5. When Physical Intervention May Be Used

Physical intervention may only be used to prevent:

- Injury to self or others
- A criminal offence
- Serious damage to property
- Behaviour seriously disrupting a safe or orderly environment

All interventions must be:

- In the best interests of the child
- Least restrictive option
- Reasonable and proportionate
- Delivered by trained staff only
- Not used as punishment

Important:

- Avoid any contact that could be misinterpreted as sexual, invasive, or inappropriate.
- Interventions must not escalate harm or humiliation.

6. Incident Reporting and Debrief

Following any use of restraint:

- Complete a written incident report within 24 hours.
- Hold a debrief session with involved staff and, where appropriate, the student.
- Inform parents/carers as soon as reasonably possible.

- Review and update the Understanding My Behaviour form and risk assessments.
- Serious or repeated incidents trigger a review meeting with parents and professionals.

7. Staff Training and Support

- All staff receive OSCB-approved physical intervention training appropriate to their role.
- Mandatory refresher training is provided.
- Support is given through supervision and post-incident reflective practice.
- Staff must never act out of anger or frustration; they should withdraw and seek help if unable to manage safely.

8. Legal and Ethical Framework

- Children Act 1989: Child's welfare is paramount.
- Duty of Care: Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 applies to staff and individuals supported.
- Reasonable force standard: Must meet legal requirements and DfE guidance.
- Actions must be absolutely necessary to prevent significant harm.
- Staff acting in good faith following this policy are legally protected.

9. Whistleblowing and Safeguarding Concerns

- Staff must be aware of the whistleblowing policy.
- Report misuse of physical intervention or safeguarding concerns to DSL, LADO, or OSAB.

Contacts:

- DSL: Michelle Wray | Tel: 07707 764876 | Email: dsl@autismmentors.co.uk
- LADO (Jo Lloyd): Tel: 01865 810603 | Email: LADO.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- OSAB: Tel: 01865 328232 (Mon-Fri) | Email: safeguarding.adults@oxfordshire.gov.uk

10. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

- All records of incidents, risk assessments, and behaviour plans are stored securely in accordance with UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Copies of restraint records are provided to parents/carers upon request, unless doing so would place anyone at risk.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- Relevant legislation or guidance changes
- A serious physical intervention incident occurs
- New guidance from OSCB or OSAB is issued

12. Local Safeguarding Contacts

- OSCB: www.oscb.org.uk | LADO: lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk | Tel: 01865 810603
- OSAB: www.osab.co.uk | Email: safeguarding.adults@oxfordshire.gov.uk | Tel: 01865 328232 (Mon-Fri)
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS):
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

Policy Approval

Signed:



Name: Michelle Wray [Director/DSL]

Date: 01/09/25