

# Hands-Off Policy

Policy Reviewed - March 2026

Date of Next Review - March 2027

## 1. Policy statement, purpose and scope

The Indian Academy Dubai (TIAD) is a hands-off school: no adult or student may use physical contact to punish, intimidate, humiliate or control another person. Physical contact by staff is limited to what is necessary, appropriate, brief and in the child's interest, and physical intervention is a last resort to prevent harm.

### Purpose:

This policy protects students' dignity and safety, protects staff from misunderstanding or allegation, and sets clear, consistent expectations for everyone in the school community.

### Scope:

It applies to:

- All teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers, contractors, coaches, bus drivers and conductors.
- All students from Pre-KG to Grade 12, across the CBSE, ASDAN and Hifz programmes.
- Parents and visitors while on school premises or at school events
- The whole school day, school buses, trips, extracurricular activities and any school-organised event off site

This policy should be read with TIAD's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Inclusion Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and First Aid Policy.

## 2. Legal and regulatory framework

This policy puts the following UAE and Dubai requirements into practice. The school will check them against the latest KHDA and MoE circulars every year.

| Instrument                                                                     | What it requires of the school                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema's Law)                      | Art. 32(3): educational institutions must ban all forms of violence and maintain children's dignity. Art. 42: educators must report anything that threatens a child's physical, psychological, moral or mental integrity to a child protection specialist. Art. 61: fines for hiding the truth about a child's situation. |
| Executive Council Resolution No. 2 of 2017 Regulating Private Schools in Dubai | Art. 24: a clear, KHDA-approved student safety and protection policy; responsibility for student safety on premises, on buses and at school activities off site. Art. 13(36): safeguard student rights. Art. 26: implement the KHDA student code of conduct.                                                              |
| UAE Student Code of Conduct (MoE)                                              | Staff are forbidden from using corporal punishment of any type or form, and from humiliating treatment such as mocking students or denying meals or toilet access.                                                                                                                                                        |
| Ministerial Resolution No. 851 of 2018                                         | Student behaviour code covering school hours, activities, trips and transport, with defined roles for leaders, counsellors, teachers, students and parents.                                                                                                                                                               |
| KHDA Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017)                         | Reasonable adjustments and individual plans for students of determination, including behaviour support.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| KHDA safeguarding and recruitment guidelines (2025)                            | Safer recruitment, staff checks and a named safeguarding structure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

*Corporal punishment has been prohibited in UAE schools since Ministerial Decision No. 454/2 of 1998 (Art. 9).*

### 3. Definitions

| Term                               | Meaning in this policy                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hands-off                          | No physical contact is used to punish, discipline, intimidate or control. Any contact must have a clear, legitimate purpose.                                               |
| Appropriate contact                | Brief, non-intrusive contact that meets a child's need: comfort, guidance, care, instruction or first aid.                                                                 |
| Corporal punishment                | Any physical act meant to cause pain or discomfort as discipline: hitting, slapping, pinching, pulling ears or hair, shaking, pushing, throwing objects, forced positions. |
| Physical intervention              | Using the minimum reasonable force to stop a student hurting themselves or others, or seriously damaging property.                                                         |
| Restraint                          | Holding a student to restrict movement. Only permitted as an emergency last resort, never as punishment.                                                                   |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) | The trained senior leader responsible for child protection and for receiving concerns under this policy.                                                                   |
| Student of determination           | A student with special educational needs or disability, as defined by KHDA.                                                                                                |

### 4. Core principles

Every adult asks one question before touching a student: is this contact necessary, and would I be comfortable if a parent or colleague saw it?

1. **Dignity first.** Students are never touched to shame, frighten or punish them, in line with Wadeema's Law and UAE cultural and religious values.
2. **Words before hands.** Staff de-escalate verbally and use the school's positive behaviour strategies first.
3. **Minimum and brief.** Any contact is the least needed, for the shortest time, on neutral areas such as the hand, forearm, shoulder or upper back.
4. **Consent and choice.** Staff ask or explain before touching ("Can I help you with your zip?") unless it is an emergency.
5. **Visibility.** Contact happens in open view, with another adult present or nearby wherever possible.
6. **Respect for culture.** Staff are sensitive to the cultural and religious expectations of students and families.
7. **Transparency.** Any physical intervention is recorded and parents are told the same day.

### 5. Permitted and prohibited contact

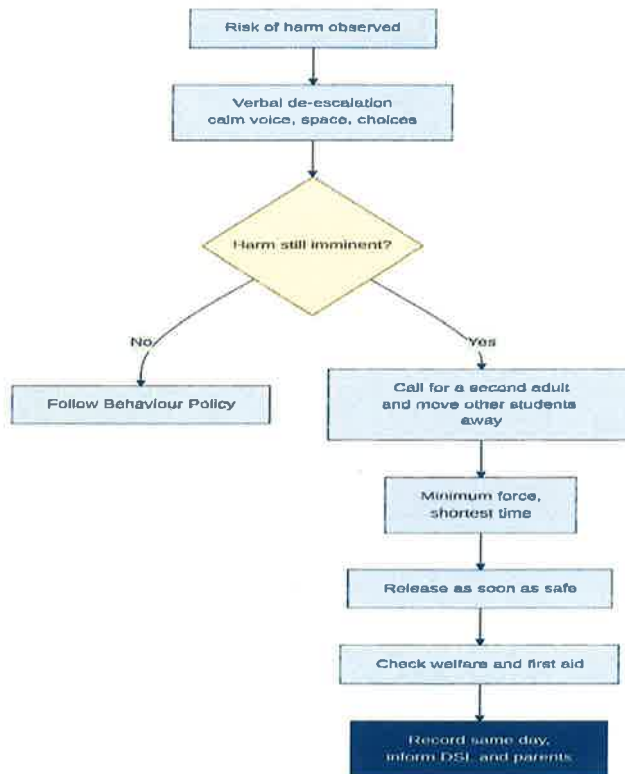
| Permitted (when necessary and brief)                                                                | Never permitted                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Guiding a young child by the hand or shoulder, e.g. lining up or crossing a road                    | Hitting, slapping, smacking, pinching, poking, pulling ears or hair                        |
| Comforting a distressed young child with a side hug or hand on the shoulder                         | Shaking, pushing, dragging, grabbing by the collar or arm                                  |
| Demonstrating a skill in PE, music, art or science, after explaining and asking                     | Throwing objects at students, or using a ruler, pen or other object to strike              |
| Toileting, dressing or medical care in early years or for students of determination, per their plan | Forcing students into painful or humiliating positions, e.g. standing on one leg, kneeling |
| First aid and medical emergencies                                                                   | Restraint as punishment, or locking a student in a room alone                              |
| Congratulating with a handshake or high-five                                                        | Contact on intimate areas, lap sitting, kissing, prolonged hugs                            |
| Physical intervention to prevent imminent harm (Section 6)                                          | Tickling, play-fighting with students                                                      |

Physical punishment by any staff member is gross misconduct. It will lead to disciplinary action, reporting to KHDA and, where the law requires, the police or child protection authorities.

## 6. Physical intervention in emergencies

Staff may use the minimum reasonable force only to prevent a student from injuring themselves or others, or from causing serious damage, when every other option has failed or there is no time.

### *Physical intervention flowchart*



### Steps (stop at the earliest safe point)

1. Risk of harm observed.
2. Verbal de-escalation: calm voice, space, choices. If harm is no longer imminent, follow the Behaviour Policy.
3. If harm is still imminent, call for a second adult and move other students away.
4. Use the minimum force for the shortest time.
5. Release as soon as it is safe.
6. Check the student's welfare and give first aid if needed.
7. Record the incident the same day and inform the DSL and parents.

### Rules for any intervention

- Never hold a student by the neck, chest or head, or in a way that restricts breathing
- Never hold a student on the floor or face down
- Never use intervention to force compliance with an instruction or as a consequence
- Only staff trained in approved de-escalation methods should use holds, except in an unforeseeable emergency
- A senior leader reviews every incident with the staff member and, where appropriate, the student

**7. Special contexts**

| Context                     | Expectations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Early years (Pre-KG to KG2) | Comfort and care are part of good practice. Toileting and changing follow the intimate care procedure: same-gender staff where possible, a second adult aware, door ajar, logged. Children are encouraged to do as much as they can themselves. |
| Students of determination   | An Individual Education Plan or behaviour support plan sets out any agreed contact, handling or care, agreed with parents and the Inclusion Lead in line with the KHDA inclusion framework.                                                     |
| PE, swimming, dance, music  | Staff explain and ask before demonstrating by touch and prefer peer or visual demonstration. Spotting in gymnastics uses approved techniques. Changing rooms are supervised without staff entering cubicles.                                    |
| First aid and medical       | Only trained staff give first aid, with explanation and, where possible, a second adult. Incidents are logged by the clinic and parents informed.                                                                                               |
| Trips and residential       | This policy applies in full. Same-gender supervision for sleeping and changing, staff never alone in a room with one student.                                                                                                                   |
| School buses                | Bus supervisors guide by instruction, not force. Seatbelts are fastened by the child where able, otherwise with explanation.                                                                                                                    |
| One-to-one and online       | Doors stay open or glass-panelled, and the meeting is known to a colleague. Online sessions follow the school's digital safeguarding rules.                                                                                                     |

**8. Student-to-student: "Hands, feet and objects to yourself"**

Students keep their hands, feet and objects to themselves at all times. Play-fighting, pushing, tripping and "just joking" physical contact are not allowed, even between friends.

**What students learn**

- Personal space and body autonomy, taught through UAE Moral Education, Life Skills and wellbeing lessons at an age-appropriate level
- How to say "stop", walk away and tell a trusted adult
- That reporting is not "telling tales" and that they will be supported

**How the school responds**

1. Staff stop the behaviour, separate students and check for injury.
2. The incident is logged and handled under the Behaviour Policy and the MoE student behaviour code.
3. Consequences are restorative and proportionate, and escalate for repeated or serious physical aggression.
4. Parents of all students involved are informed the same day.
5. Any sexualised touching, or a pattern that suggests harm at home, is passed to the DSL as a safeguarding concern.

**9. Recording, reporting and parent communication**

Every physical intervention, and any contact that could be misunderstood, is recorded on the school's incident system before the staff member leaves that day.

**The record includes**

- Date, time, place and names of students, staff and witnesses
- What happened before the incident and the de-escalation tried
- The type and duration of contact, and why it was necessary
- Any injury, first aid given and the student's wellbeing afterwards
- When and how parents were informed

## HANDS OFF POLICY

### Timelines

| Action                                                   | By whom                          | When                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Incident record completed                                | Staff member involved            | Same day                                                                        |
| DSL and Head of Section informed                         | Staff member involved            | Immediately, or within the hour                                                 |
| Parents informed                                         | Head of Section or class teacher | Same day                                                                        |
| Post-incident review                                     | Senior leader                    | Within 2 school days                                                            |
| Referral to Dubai child protection authorities or police | DSL                              | Without delay where there is reasonable concern of harm (Wadeema's Law Art. 42) |
| Notification to KHDA                                     | Principal                        | As required by KHDA for serious incidents                                       |

### 10. Allegations, roles, training and review

#### Allegations against staff:

Any concern that a staff member has used inappropriate contact goes straight to the Principal (or the Chair of the Governing Board if it concerns the Principal). The staff member may be removed from contact with students while the matter is investigated fairly. Staff must never investigate on their own or promise confidentiality to a student.

### Roles

| Role             | Responsibility                                                         |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Governing Board  | Approve the policy and hold leaders to account for it                  |
| Principal        | Ensure the policy is implemented, manage allegations, liaise with KHDA |
| DSL and deputies | Receive concerns, make referrals, keep secure records, spot patterns   |
| Inclusion Lead   | Agree handling plans for students of determination with parents        |
| All staff        | Follow the policy, record and report, attend training                  |
| Students         | Keep hands to themselves and tell an adult if they feel unsafe         |
| Parents          | Support the policy and raise any concern with the school               |

### Training

- All staff complete safeguarding and hands-off training at induction and every year
- Designated staff complete accredited de-escalation and safe-handling training, refreshed as the provider requires
- Bus staff, coaches and contractors receive a briefing before working with students

**Monitoring and review.** The DSL reviews incident records each term and reports trends to leaders and governors. The policy is reviewed every year, or sooner after a serious incident or a change in UAE or KHDA requirements.

Regards,

  
Principal  
The Indian Academy,  
Dubai  
School Code: 90031

  
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Designated Safeguarding Lead