

Positive Handling Policy



Committee Name:	Curriculum
Date of Approval:	May 2016
Validity Date:	2016-2019
Person responsible:	Head Teacher

Purpose

Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with pupils from time to time in the course of their duties. This policy is intended to make staff aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted. As a rights respecting school we believe that all children have a right to an education and that discipline in school must respect their dignity and their rights (Article 28 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Broad aim

There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain a pupil physically, to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing what would be a criminal offence for an older pupil
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself)
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

Why use restraint?

Physical restraint should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him / herself or others. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories.

Staff should always act within the School's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.

Failure to physically restrain a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time

staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

Preventative measures

The school, as far as practically possible, will make staff aware of the relevant characteristics of individuals at greatest risk of needing restrictive physical interventions. The school will put in place de-escalation techniques and maintain staff awareness of situations that are most likely to trigger an incident. These steps will be taken in relation to the school's SEN provision planning. This planning will designate staff to be called if incidents related to particular pupils occur, however this does not mean other school staff having to wait for them to arrive before taking action if the need for action is urgent. At risk pupils should have agreed strategies and communication techniques that staff are familiar with, in place to use in a crisis.

Alternative Strategies

There are some situations in which the need for physical restraint is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (eg is a pupil about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:

- the broken record in which an instruction is repeated until the pupil complies
- use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with the School's policy on behaviour.

Practice

Physical restraint should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. However it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing

him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective physical restraint should be a last resort. When physical restraint becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

DON'T

- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Attempt to reason with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Touch or hold the pupil in sexual areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil
- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)

Where an employee has taken action to physically restrain a pupil they should make a written report of the incident in the form prescribed by the school's policy on restraint (see appendix i) and report this to the Headteacher immediately.

The Headteacher will also interview the child after the incident.

The Headteacher will inform and communicate in the first instance with the child's parent regarding any recorded incidents of physical restraint.

The physical restraint record of incident will form part of the pupil's educational record.

Post incident support will be agreed by the Headteacher in consultation with relevant staff to support both staff and pupils involved in incidents, especially with a view to rebuilding relationships.

The number of incidences of physical restraint will be reported annually to governors.



Physical Restraint Record of Incident

Pupil name:	
Class and Year group:	
Date:	
Location:	
Summary of incident:	
Reason for physical restraint:	
Restrained by:	
Other adults present:	
Date and signature:	
Action taken:	
Parent contacted:	
Headteacher's signature:	