



# STOCKSFIELD AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy



### Principles

- Physical intervention should be avoided **wherever** possible.
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required.
- There are occasions when physical intervention is appropriate.
- Any physical intervention must be **reasonable** and maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents should **always** be recorded and reported to the Headteacher

### Prevention: Avoiding Physical Intervention

- It should be a last resort to use force to restrain or control pupils.
- It is important to try to stay calm and in control, avoid confrontation and de-escalate potential conflict.
- The school's behaviour policy sets out the sorts of strategies and approaches which staff should use to decrease the likelihood of challenging behaviour occurring and to defuse incidents and avoid the need for physical intervention.
- This includes the use of normal incentives and sanctions and agreed approaches with individual pupils who have been involved in incidents causing concern, and it is important for all relevant staff to be aware of any specific arrangements for individual pupils.
- When justifying the use of force, staff will need to show that they first took **reasonable** steps to deal with a difficult situation without using force.
- Any force used should be **reasonable** and the minimum required for the shortest possible time to restore order.
- The use of restrictive physical interventions should be minimised by employing preventive strategies.

## The Power to Use Force

Section 550A of the Education Act 1996, under the heading *Power to Restrain Pupils*, allows teachers and other authorised staff of a school to use **reasonable** force to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- (a) committing any offence;
- (b) injuring themselves or others;
- (c) causing damage to property;
- (d) engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise.

The power to restrain pupils came into force on 1 September 1998. It applies on the school premises or elsewhere, eg on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity.

Under the common law, **reasonable** force can be exercised by any person to prevent someone committing an offence or causing injury or damage to property. This covers the situation where it appears necessary to restrain a pupil at the school or a person other than a pupil at the school.

Staff have a duty of care both to themselves and to others. The duty of care includes taking **reasonable** measures to prevent harm. Wherever possible, more than one member of staff should be involved in the necessary restraint of a pupil, by seeking urgent assistance (for example by shouting or sending a pupil for help). All staff involved will need to explain subsequently what action they took and why. .

There may be rare occasions where it appears necessary to restrain a pupil. In such circumstances physical restraint is a form of control, which is legally defensible, when other alternatives have been employed or considered, or when staff believe it is their duty of care and make the professional decision to intervene, or when the urgency of the situation does not allow for other methods to be employed. It may be appropriate to employ physical intervention to prevent a significant risk of harm,

eg:

- to prevent a pupil running toward a busy road;
- to prevent a pupil self-injuring;
- to prevent a pupil injuring another person;
- to prevent a pupil committing an offence.

This legislation is not intended to encourage the use of inappropriate force and does not make staff immune to complaints or charges that they have acted inappropriately. Staff should be aware that they may need to justify their actions if they have used physical intervention. Any complaint or allegation that

staff or other adults have acted inappropriately towards children will be dealt with through the relevant procedure, eg local child protection procedures or the school's disciplinary procedure.

**There is no legal definition of reasonable force.**

**Reasonableness** can only be judged in accordance with the circumstances.

Relevant factors would include:

- Whether the response matched the circumstances,
- the degree of force used,
- the seriousness of any disciplinary breakdown,
- evidence that less intrusive methods had been attempted initially.

The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to the behaviour of the individual to be controlled and the nature of the harm that person might cause.

The minimum necessary force should be used.

The age, cultural background, gender, stature or medical history of the child, are also relevant.

### **Authorisation of Staff**

Teachers have the power in law to use **reasonable** force to control or restrain pupils.

Other people may also have this power, but this only applies to those who have been authorised by the Head teacher to have lawful control or charge of pupils.

### **Using Force to Prevent Injury to the Pupil and/or Others, or Serious Damage to Property**

As a general rule, physical intervention should be avoided. If physical intervention seems absolutely necessary, staff should follow the guidelines below in order to reduce their own vulnerability to complaint and to ensure the protection of pupils.

(a) Staff should have good grounds for believing that restraint is necessary.

(b) Such physical intervention should only be used after other less intrusive methods have been attempted or considered.

(c) If possible call for urgent assistance, at least to gain the presence of a credible adult witness.

(d) Tell the pupil that you are restraining him/her to avoid the pupil harming him/herself, others or property. Where other potential witnesses are present it is helpful if they hear you give this explanation.

(e) Such physical interventions should be acts of care and control, not punishment. Only **reasonable** force should be used. The duration of such intervention should be the minimum necessary.

(f) Where past experience indicates that such physical intervention will be needed with a particular pupil, for instance because of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or particular emotional or behavioural difficulties, the strategies to be used should be clearly specified and made known to relevant staff. In consultation with parents, and to ensure pupils are kept safe, school will implement a Positive Handling Plan. See copy below. The potential hazards should have been systematically considered, for example through a risk assessment. In such cases it is also important that broader preventive strategies and forms of positive behaviour management are in operation. Such a plan should detail specific strategies and techniques to be used, and, if appropriate, techniques not to be used. Such strategies or approaches should be discussed with parents/guardians and relevant professionals, made clear in writing, and reviewed regularly. They will be implemented under the supervision of an identified member of staff, who will monitor the incidence and method of interventions used. See also section below, Risk Assessment.

(g) Physical interventions can be defined in two broad categories:

- Non-restrictive (associated with a lower level of risk);
- Restrictive (where a higher level of risk is present).

#### **Non-Restrictive**

- Manual guidance to assist a person walking.
- Removal of the cause of distress, eg adjusting temperatures, light or background noise.

#### **Restrictive**

- Holding a person's hands to prevent them hitting someone.
- Forcible seclusion or the use of locked doors.

Restrictive physical interventions can be employed to achieve a number of different outcomes:

- to break away or disengage from dangerous or harmful physical contact;
- to separate the person from a 'trigger', for example, removing one pupil who responds to another with physical aggression;
- to protect someone from a dangerous situation for example, the hazards of a busy road.

Whilst an effective risk assessment process should minimise the need for physical interventions, emergency use of restrictive physical interventions may be required when pupils behave in unforeseen ways. Even in an emergency, the force used must be **reasonable**, in terms of both intensity and duration and the specific circumstances of the situation.

Before using restrictive physical intervention in an emergency, the person concerned should be confident that the possible adverse outcomes, (e.g. injury or distress) will be less severe than the adverse consequences of not intervening.

Staff may need support and/or counselling after such an incident. It may also be equally important to offer the pupil(s) support and the opportunity to discuss the incident.

In general if a person is at immediate risk of injury from a pupil's action, or serious damage is about to occur, then it might be necessary to intervene.

Care **MUST** be taken not to use excessive force and to guard against the possibility of injury or asphyxiation. Adults need to be sensitive to issues of gender and to their own strength and body weight.

### **Action Following an Incident**

Incidents where force has been used to restrain or control pupils are to be reported as soon as practicable to the Head teacher using the Restraint of Pupils Incident Report. See copy below.

The Headteacher may need to be the first to exercise judgement on whether the restraint used was **reasonable**, having made initial enquiries, although other procedures will apply if queries or complaints arise.

The parent/carer/guardian **MUST** be advised of an incident involving their child, either immediately or at the end of the day, according to the seriousness of the incident.

Where a member of staff is assaulted or suffers injury as a consequence of using **reasonable** force or restraint, the member of staff is advised to contact their professional organisation or trade union.

Assaults on staff which result in physical injury will be reported without delay by the Headteacher to the LA and the Health & Safety Executive if appropriate

### **Risk Assessment**

Employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of staff and children. This carries a requirement to assess risks, including the use of physical interventions.

Where it is foreseeable that a child might require a restrictive physical intervention a risk assessment should be carried out which identifies the benefits and risks associated with different intervention techniques. Such a risk assessment should lead to the clear identification of the intervention techniques to be used for the child in question, to be described in the child's record and/or Positive Handling Plan, and made known to the parent and relevant staff.

Reviewed	November 2019
To be reviewed	November 2020
Approved by Governors	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2019



## RESTRAINT OF PUPILS



### STOCKSFIELD AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### INCIDENT REPORT

DATE OF INCIDENT:

TIME:

NAME(S) OF STAFF INVOLVED:

NAME(S) OF PUPIL(S) INVOLVED:

NAME(S) OF OTHER STAFF/PUPILS WHO WITNESSED INCIDENT:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:

**(Record any conversation word verbatim and include a body diagram where necessary highlighting with a cross the location of any injuries)**

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(Please be objective and factual, outlining how incident began and progressed, details of pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, steps taken to defuse/calm situation, degree of force used, how applied, and for how long.) Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

REASON THAT INTERVENTION WAS NECESSARY: -

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DETAILS OF ANY INJURY SUFFERED BY THE PUPIL, ANOTHER PUPIL, OR MEMBER OF STAFF, OR ANY DAMAGE TO PROPERTY:

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**WHAT DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES WERE USED PRIOR TO PHYSICAL CONTROLS:**

[Tick the appropriate box/boxes below]

<input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal advice and support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reassurance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Calm talking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Time out
<input type="checkbox"/>	Choices/limits/consequences
<input type="checkbox"/>	Distraction [likes etc]

**NATURE OF PHYSICAL CONTROLS USED: [include estimate of duration of use of physical controls]**

[Tick the appropriate box/boxes below]

restraint using arms  standing  sitting  duration

RESPONSE AND VIEW OF THE PUPIL:	
DETAILS OF ANY RESULTING INJURY: [ Injury to whom and action taken as a result, e.g. first aid ]	
ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:	
NAME OF SENIOR PERSON NOTIFIED: TIME/DATE:	
HEADTEACHER'S COMMENTS:	
SIGNATURE OF HEADTEACHER:	TIME/DATE:
PARENTS' COMMENTS AND SIGNATURE:	



# POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN



<b>Name of Pupil:</b>		<b>Year</b>			
<b>Date of Plan:</b>					
<b>Health &amp; Safety arrangements (include medical &amp; dietary requirements):</b>					
<b>Staff Involved in Plan:</b>					
<b>Triggers (common situations/behaviour known to result in the need for positive handling):</b>					
<b>Behaviour (description of observable behaviours):</b>					
<b>When child is upset s/he is likely to:</b>					
<b>Step One (Positive handling strategies (preferred strategies/de-escalation to keep the situation calm):</b>					
Verbal advice/support	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeat instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take up Time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time Out offered	<input type="checkbox"/>	Time Out directed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tactical ignoring	<input type="checkbox"/>
Controlled choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	Distraction	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reassurance	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Remind of:</b>					
Rules, rights, responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remind of consequences	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remind of successes	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other:</b>					

**Step Two: Physical intervention strategies** (preferred strategies):

**OTHER CHILDREN WILL BE MOVED AWAY FROM THE AREA TO PROTECT THEM.**

**Step Three: De-escalation strategies** (preferred strategies to be used to de-escalate situation)

Distraction

Safe place

**Step Four: Praise** (appropriate praise & reward can be offered to improve situation):

**Step Five: Consequences** appropriate & agreed consequences to be issued after de-escalation)

Date & time of review of Positive Handling Plan:  
Plan to be shared with appropriate school staff & parent/carer.