



# **Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy**

**Adopted: January 2017**

**Next review date: January 2018**

# Restrictive Physical intervention policy

## 1 Background

We define restrictive physical intervention as follows:

Restrictive physical intervention is when a member of staff uses force intentionally to restrict a student's movement against his or her will.

All staff within this setting aim to help students take responsibility for their own behaviour. We do this through a combination of approaches, which include

- positive role modelling
- teaching an interesting and challenging curriculum
- setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations
- providing supportive feedback.

More details about this and our general approach to promoting positive behaviour can be found in our behaviour policy.

There are times when a student's behaviour presents particular challenges that may require restrictive physical intervention. This policy sets out our expectations for the use of such intervention. It is not intended to refer to the general use of physical contact which might be appropriate in a range of situations, such as:

- giving physical guidance to children (for example in practical activities and PE)
- providing emotional support when a child is distressed
- providing physical care (such as first aid or toileting).

This policy is consistent with our Safeguarding policy, and with national and local guidance for schools on safeguarding children.

## 2 Principals for the use of restrictive physical intervention

### 2.1 In the context of positive approaches

We only use restrictive physical intervention where the risks involved in using force are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force. It is not our preferred way of managing students' behaviour. Restrictive physical intervention may be used only in the context of a well-established and well implemented positive behaviour management framework with the exception of emergency situations. We describe our approach to promoting positive behaviour in our Behaviour Policy. We aim to do all we can in order to avoid using restrictive physical intervention. We would only use restrictive physical intervention where we judge that there is no reasonably practicable less intrusive alternative. However, there may be rare situations of such concern where we judge that we would need to use restrictive physical intervention immediately. We would use restrictive physical intervention at the same time as using other approaches, such as saying, "Stop!" and giving a warning of what might happen next. Safety is always a paramount concern and staff are not advised to use restrictive physical intervention if it is likely to put themselves at risk. We will make parents/guardians aware of our Physical Intervention policy alongside other policies when their child joins our school.

### 2.2 Duty of care

We all have a duty of care towards the students in our setting. This duty of care applies as much to what we *don't* do as what we *do*. When students are in danger of hurting

themselves or others, or of causing significant damage to property, we have a responsibility to intervene. In most cases, this involves an attempt to divert the student to another activity or a simple instruction to “Stop!” along with a warning of what might happen next. However, if we judge that it is necessary, we may use restrictive physical intervention.

### **2.3 Reasonable force**

When we need to use restrictive physical intervention, we use it within the Principal of reasonable force. This means using an amount of force in proportion to the circumstances. We use as little force as is necessary in order to maintain safety, and we use this for as short a period as possible.

### **3 When can restrictive physical intervention be used?**

The use of restrictive physical intervention may be justified where a student is:

1. Committing an offence
2. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the student himself or herself) or
3. Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any students receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Restrictive physical intervention may also be appropriate where, although none of the above have yet happened, they are judged as highly likely to be about to happen.

We are very cautious about using restrictive physical intervention where there are no immediate concerns about possible injury or exceptional damage to property. Restrictive physical intervention would only be used in exceptional circumstances, with staff that know the student well and who are able to make informed judgements about the relative risks of using, or not using, restrictive physical intervention; for example stopping a younger student leaving the school site.

The main aim of restrictive physical intervention is usually to maintain or restore safety. We acknowledge that there may be times when restrictive physical intervention may be justified as a reasonable and proportional response to prevent damage to property or to maintain good order and discipline at the school. However, we would be particularly careful to consider all other options available before using restrictive physical intervention to achieve either of these goals. In all cases, we remember that, even if the aim is to re-establish good order, restrictive physical intervention may actually escalate the difficulty.

If we judge that restrictive physical intervention would make the situation worse, we would not use it, but would do something else (like go to seek help, make the area safe or warn about what might happen next and issue an instruction to stop) consistent with our duty of care.

Our duty of care means that we might use a restrictive physical intervention if a student is trying to leave our site and we judged that they would be at unacceptable risk. This duty of care also extends beyond our site boundaries: there may also be situations where we need to use restrictive physical intervention when we have control or charge of a student off site (e.g. on trips).

We never use restrictive physical intervention out of anger or as a punishment.

#### **4 Who can use restrictive physical intervention**

If the use of restrictive physical intervention is appropriate, and is part of a positive behaviour management framework, a member of staff who knows the child well should be involved, and where possible, trained in the use of restrictive physical intervention. However, in an emergency, any of the following may be able to use reasonable force:

1. Any teacher who works at the school.
2. Any other person whom the Principal has authorised to have control or charge of students, including:
  - (a) support staff whose job normally includes supervising students such as Inclusion Assistants, Pastoral Support Workers, Learning Support Assistants, Learning Mentors and Lunchtime Supervisors; and
  - (b) people to whom the Principal has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of students such as paid members of staff whose job does not normally involve supervising students (for example catering or premises-related staff) and unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits) but not prefects.

#### **5 Planning around an individual and risk assessment**

In an emergency, staff do their best, using reasonable force within their duty of care.

Where an individual student has an individual risk assessment, which includes the use of restrictive physical intervention, we ensure that such staff receive appropriate training and support in behaviour management as well as restrictive physical intervention. We consider staff and the student's physical and emotional health when we make these plans and consult with the student's parents/guardians.

In most situations, our use of restrictive physical intervention is in the context of a prior risk assessment which considers:

What the risks are.

Who is at risk and how.

What we can do to manage the risk (this may include the possible use of restrictive physical intervention).

We use this risk assessment to inform the individual behaviour plan that we develop to support the student. If this behaviour plan includes restrictive physical intervention it will be as just one part of a whole approach to supporting the student's behaviour. The behaviour plan outlines:

Our understanding of what the student is trying to achieve or communicate through his/her behaviour

How we adapt our environment to better meet the student's needs

How we teach and encourage the student to use new, more appropriate behaviours

How we reward the student when he or she makes progress

How we respond when the student's behaviour is challenging (responsive strategies).

We pay particular attention to responsive strategies. We use a range of approaches (including humour, distraction, relocation, and offering choices) as direct alternatives to using restrictive physical intervention. We choose these responsive strategies in the light of our risk assessment.

We draw from as many different viewpoints as possible when we anticipate that an individual student's behaviour may require some form of restrictive physical intervention. In particular, we include the student's perspective. We also involve the student's parents (or those with

parental responsibility), staff from our school who work with the student, and any visiting support staff (such as Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Social Workers and colleagues from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). We record the outcome from these planning meetings and seek parental signature to confirm their knowledge of our planned approach. We review these plans at least once every 4 to 6 months, or more frequently if there are any concerns about the nature or frequency of the use of restrictive physical intervention or where there are any major changes to the student's circumstances.

We recognise that there may be some students within our school who find physical contact in general particularly unwelcome as a consequence of their culture/religious group or disability. There may be others for whom such contact is troubling as a result of their personal history, in particular of abuse. We have systems to alert staff discreetly to such issues so that we can plan accordingly to meet individual student's needs.

## **6 What type of restrictive physical intervention can be used**

Any use of restrictive physical intervention by our staff should be consistent with the Principal of reasonable force. In all cases, staff should be guided in their choices of action by the Principals in section 2 above.

Staff should not act in ways that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a student around the neck or collar or in any other way that might restrict the child's ability to breathe
- Slapping, punching or kicking a student
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping a student
- Holding a student by the hair or ear

Such actions would normally be considered potentially inappropriate.

We do not plan for and do not allow, except in emergency situations, staff to use seclusion. Seclusion is where a student is forced to spend time alone in a confined space against their will. We may, however, use withdrawal or time-out in a planned way. We define these as follows:

**Withdrawal** involves taking a student, with their agreement, away from a situation that has caused anxiety or distress, to a place where they can be observed continuously and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities.

**Time-out** is where a response to a student's inappropriate behaviour includes a specific period of time with no positive reinforcement as part of an overall intervention plan.

We actively work to ensure general training is accessed by our staff in the following areas:

- relating to legal issues policy and risk assessment
- in addition to behaviour management strategies such as positive approaches to behaviour management
- de-escalation techniques and managing

A record of such training is kept and monitored.

## **7 Recording and reporting**

We record any use of restrictive physical intervention using the School Intervention Record Sheet. We do this as soon as possible and in any event within 24 hours of the incident. A copy of of this incident form is sent to the LADO, within one week of the incident to allow for the analysis of the use of restrictive physical intervention across the county. Further, our Priority Support Group ensures that procedures are in place for recording significant incidents and then reporting these incidents as soon as possible to a student's parents.

After using restrictive physical intervention, we ensure that the Principal is informed as soon as possible. We also inform EACH parent by phone (or by letter or note home with the student if this is not possible). A copy of the record form is also available for parents to read.

In rare cases, we might need to inform the police, such as in incidents that involve the possession of weapons. This would be in line with our general practice, informed by the joint DfEE/Home Office (1999) publication *School Security: Dealing with trouble makers – protecting students and staff* and Section 45 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006.

## **8 Supporting and reviewing**

We recognise that it is distressing to be involved in a physical intervention, whether as the student being held, the person doing the holding, or someone observing or hearing about what has happened.

After a restrictive physical intervention, we give support to the student so that they can understand why it was necessary. Where we can, we record how the student felt about this<sup>1</sup>. Where it is appropriate, we have the same sort of conversations with other students who observed what happened. In all cases, we will wait until the student has calmed down enough to be able to talk productively and learn from this conversation. If necessary, the student will be asked whether he or she has been injured so that appropriate first aid can be given. This also gives the student an opportunity to say whether anything inappropriate has happened in connection with the incident.

We also support adults who were involved, either actively or as observers, by giving them the chance to talk through what has happened with the most appropriate person from the staff team.

A key aim of our after-incident support is to repair any potential strain to the relationship between the student and the people that were involved in the restrictive physical intervention.

After a restrictive physical intervention, we consider whether the individual behaviour plan needs to be reviewed so that we can reduce the risk of needing to use restrictive physical intervention again.

## **9 Monitoring**

We monitor the use of restrictive physical intervention in our school. Jon Webb (Vice Principal) and Brenda Hutchinson (Inclusion Manager) are responsible for reviewing the records on a yearly basis, and more often if the need arises, so that appropriate action can be taken. The information is also used by the 'Priority support group' when this policy and related policies are reviewed.

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Our analysis considers equalities issues such as age, gender, disability, culture and religion issues in order to make sure that there is no potential discrimination; we also consider potential child protection issues. We look for any trends in the relative use of restrictive physical intervention across different staff members and across different times of day or settings. Our aims are to protect students, to avoid discrimination and to develop our ability to meet the needs of students without using restrictive physical intervention. We report this analysis back to the priority Support Group so that appropriate further action can be taken and monitored.

## **10 Concerns and complaints**

The use of restrictive physical intervention is distressing to all involved and can lead to concerns, allegations or complaints of inappropriate or excessive use. In particular, a student might complain about the use of restrictive physical intervention in the heat of the moment but on further reflection might better understand why it happened. In other situations, further reflection might lead the student to feel strongly that the use of restrictive physical intervention was inappropriate. This is why we are careful to ensure all students have a chance to review the incident after they have calmed down.

If a student or parent has a concern about the way restrictive physical intervention has been used, our school's complaints procedure explains how to take the matter further and how long we will take to respond to these concerns.

Where there is an allegation of assault or abusive behaviour, we ensure that the Principal is immediately informed. We would also follow our child protection procedures. In the absence of the Principal, in relation to restrictive physical intervention, we ensure that the Vice Principal (Jon Webb) is informed. If the concern, complaint or allegation concerns the Principal, we ensure that the CEO Brian Hooper is informed.

If parents/carers are not satisfied with the way the complaint has been handled, they have the right to take the matter further as set out in our complaints procedure.

The results and procedures used in dealing with complaints are monitored by the Priority Support group

## **11 Reviewing this policy**

We adopted this policy in January 2017. It is next due for review in January 2018.