



Bentfield Primary School

Physical restraint and positive handling policy

This policy sets out the framework for the use of reasonable force, restraint or positive handling. Only in the event of failure of non-physical strategies to bring control to the situation, or of imminent danger to persons, should positive handling be considered. This policy should always be used alongside our school's behaviour policy.

Legislation that came into force on 1.9.98 (Section 550 of the Education Act 1996) together with the DfE document 'Use of reasonable Force in Schools' (July 2013), establishes the power of teachers and other staff to use reasonable force if required. This applies to all occasions when that member of staff is in charge of children both on and off school premises. There is no legal definition of reasonable force; this would depend on the individual circumstances of each case. Only a court may judge what is reasonable in terms of the amount of force used in physical handling and obviously does so retrospectively.

Definition

The definition of restraint is the positive application of force with the intention of calming and overpowering the child. The use of restraint requires judgement and knowledge of non-harmful methods of control. The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Positive Handling should only be used when all other strategies which do not employ force have been tried and found unsuccessful or in an emergency situation.

Use of reasonable force

Reasonable force would not include any of the following:

- Slapping, punching, kicking or tripping a child. Holding or pulling a child by their hair or ear.
- Twisting or forcing limbs against joints
- Indecently touching or holding
- Holding a child face down on the ground
- Lifting a child off the floor in order to intimidate

Types of incident where the use of force may be necessary are given as:

- Action due to imminent risk of injury to pupils and/or staff
- Action due to imminent risk of significant damage to property
- Action where a pupil is compromising good order and discipline

Examples of situations that fall into one of the first two categories are:

- Pupils fighting
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he/she might have or cause an accident likely to injure her/himself or others
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)

Examples of situations that fall into the third category are:

- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom
- A pupil is behaving in such a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

In all cases, the person exercising the restraint must be authorised by the Headteacher. At Bentfield Primary School, all staff have a duty to keep children and adults safe and therefore all staff are deemed authorised. The approach will be to de-escalate situations.

Implementing positive handling

In the event of restraint becoming necessary, before touching the child, the member of staff should advise the child calmly and repeatedly about what they are going to do and why, and how the child might change his/her behaviour, in order that the restraint would become unnecessary. Any other children and adults present should also be warned. Note: this warning must not comprise of any threat of unlawful attack.

A second adult, where possible, should be called to reduce the risk of the member of staff or child suffering bodily harm and as a witness if allegations of assault are made later by the child. While intervening, the member of staff must:

- Employ minimum physical force necessary for the minimum period needed
- Wherever possible keep talking to the child and give choices as to how they could behave in a manner that would avoid the need for restraint
- Avoid committing any act of punitive violence
- Keep his or her temper

Types of restraint which may be appropriate:

- Tactics in which a child is non-physically restrained without injury until he/she calms down (e.g. talking calmly and purposefully to the child, removing other children from the vicinity).
- Physical contact with a young person designed to control the young person's movements, which pose a danger (e.g. holding hands or holding by the arms against the side of the body). Standing by the side of the young person is likely to minimise the risk to the adult and young person.
- The holding of a young person's arms or legs to prevent/restrict striking/kicking.
- The use of sufficient physical force, without causing injury, to remove a weapon/dangerous object from a young person's grasp.
- Physically preventing a young person from exposing themselves to possible danger by leaving the premises.
- Pupils should not be placed face down on the floor. Specialist accredited training is necessary for this procedure. If restraint is required for an extended period (for example, more than five minutes), a senior member of staff must monitor the situation closely with a view to safeguarding the child and the staff concerned.

When not to use physical restraint

Staff must always use their judgement in deciding whether a situation warrants the use of physical restraint. Occasions when physical restraint, by an individual, should not be used include:

- A physically large pupil
- More than one pupil
- When the teacher believes that they or the child may be at risk of injury

In those circumstances where the member of staff has decided that it is not appropriate to restrain the pupil without help they should:

- Remove other pupils who might be at risk
- Summon assistance from colleagues
- Where necessary, telephone the police
- Inform the pupil(s) that help will be arriving
- Until assistance arrives, the member of staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally, and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Recording

After the incident, it is vital that a full report is completed by all concerned and given to the Headteacher, in order to support the child, the members of staff involved, any other children involved and the parents or carers. In the event of an incident when physical restraint is required, a record will be completed within 24 hours. If possible, all staff and

children involved will undertake a de-briefing meeting with the Headteacher within 48 hours. If necessary, the parents, guardians or carers should meet with the Headteacher to discuss the incident as soon as possible.

The Headteacher, Management Team and Governors need to ensure that, as far as possible, preparation and planning has taken place to identify areas where physical restraint might be used. However, the school may also have to intervene in circumstances where preparation and planning have not been possible. When physical restraint takes place, the school will always endeavour to protect children and adults from physical harm, however, there may be cases in which some discomfort and/or bruising may occur, to both staff and children, as a result of the restraint taking place.

If physical restraint is necessary to regularly manage the behaviour of an individual it is necessary to compile an individual risk assessment in discussion with all staff, parents and any relevant outside agencies. In the case of a child with a statement of educational needs, there will be opportunities to address issues of challenging behaviour at annual review meetings and an interim review organised in exceptional circumstances.

Child protection issues

If, after receiving the report of an incident where physical intervention has occurred, the Headteacher considers the school's guidelines have been seriously breached and that further investigation is warranted, then the incident should then be reviewed in accordance with Child Protection issues. In these circumstances, any school internal investigations must cease and no further statements should be taken. If the school's guidelines have been breached, the Headteacher will contact the LADO and advise the staff member to consult his/her professional association.