



Positive Handling of Pupils and Restrictive Physical Interventions Policy

Beccles Primary Academy

Agreed by Headteacher May 2022

Next review May 2024

Signed:

Positive Handling and Use of Physical Interventions Policy

Introduction & Context

The policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Attendance Policies, which are extensively reviewed (annually) and also our Special Educational Needs policy, amongst others.

The use of corporal punishment is not allowed under any circumstances. The law forbids a teacher to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a pupil, or which is primarily intended to cause pain or injury or humiliation (ref sections 548 to 550 of the 1996 Education Act). The ban applies in all circumstances and has applied since 1987. This document categorically discourages the use of any inappropriate physical intervention. It does, however:

- give examples of circumstances in which physical intervention might be appropriate, and
- factors that teachers should bear in mind when deciding whether to intervene
- discuss the meaning of 'reasonable physical intervention'.

Teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Headteacher to have control or charge of pupils should only use such intervention as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility)
- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property)
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere

The provision applies when a teacher, or another authorised person, is on the premises or when he or she has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned elsewhere e.g. on an off-site visit or any authorised out of school activity.

Authorised Staff

The Act allows all teachers at a school to use reasonable physical force to control or restrain pupils. It allows other people to do so in the same way as teachers, provided they have been authorised by the Headteacher to have control or charge of pupils. Those might include learning support assistants, care workers, midday supervisors, specialist support staff, educational welfare officers, escorts, caretakers, or voluntary helpers including people accompanying pupils on visits organised by the school. It is always preferred that only staff who have undergone specific training in the use of physical intervention will restrain pupils, but it is realised that sometimes this is not always practicable.

Action in self-defence or an emergency

Section 550A (of the Education Act 1996) does not cover all the situations in which might be reasonable for someone to use a degree of physical intervention. For example, everyone has the right to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of physical intervention to do so. Similarly, in an emergency, for example, if a pupil was at immediate risk of injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff would be entitled to intervene. The purpose of Section 550A is to make it clear that teachers, and other authorised staff, are also entitled to intervene in other, less extreme, situations.

Types of Incidents

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable physical intervention might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a pupil. They will fall into three broad categories:

- where action is necessary for self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury
- where there is a developing risk of injury or significant damage to property
- where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline

Examples of situations that fall within one of the first two categories:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- pupils are fighting
- a pupil is engaged in or is on the verge of committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave 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 a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

However, all situations must be assessed on their own merits and, when acting to physically intervene, an adult is using their professional judgment to do so. As such any action is based on the discretion of the adult working alongside this policy.

Reasonable Physical intervention

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable physical intervention'. The use of physical intervention will always depend on the circumstances of the case. There are two relevant considerations;

1. The use of physical intervention can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it.
2. The use of any degree of physical intervention is unlawful if particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical intervention.

Therefore, physical intervention could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without physical intervention.

The degree of physical intervention 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 physical intervention used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Whether it is reasonable to use physical intervention, and the degree of physical intervention that could reasonably be employed, might also depend on the age, understanding, and gender of the pupil. It is the adult's responsibility to be aware of any individual personal behaviour plan (example Appendix 2) that may be in place for the pupil before intervening.

Practical considerations

Before intervening physically, a teacher should, wherever practical, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop, and explain calmly and clearly what will happen if he or she does not. The teacher should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraining will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and teachers should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish the pupil.

Before acting, wherever possible, any adult should ensure there is another adult available to witness any intervention being used. Ensure all warnings and ongoing dialogue with the child is audible to the other adult.

Application of Physical Intervention

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- physically interposing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path to prevent harm
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds (only by trained staff)

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

- holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe
- slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- tripping up a pupil
- holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- holding a pupil face down on the ground

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. They should always try to deal with a situation through other strategies before using physical intervention as a final resort. All teachers need developed strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and situations which they should use to defuse and calm a situation. As the key issue is establishing good order, any action which could exacerbate the situation needs to be avoided. The use of physical intervention should never be used as a substitute for good behaviour management and the desire to de-escalate anxiety.

Recording Incidents

There must be a detailed written report of any occasion where physical intervention is used (Appendix 1 – Positive Handling / Incident Form). It may help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident, and where it will be helpful should there be a complaint. Immediately following an incident, the member of staff concerned should tell the Headteacher or a senior member of staff and provide a completed report (Record of Restrictive Physical Intervention and additional sheets of paper and/or photographs) as soon as possible afterwards. This will include;

- the name(s) of the pupil(s) involved, and when and where the incident took place
- the names of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident
- the reason that physical intervention was necessary (e.g. to prevent injury to the pupil, another pupil or member of staff)
- how the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to defuse or calm the situation, the degree of physical intervention used, how that was applied, and for how long
- the pupil's response and the outcome of the incident
- details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil or a member of staff and any damage to property

For a critical incident, support for the young person and member of staff is available from external sources and can be accessed through the school.

Incidents involving the use of physical intervention can cause the parents of the pupil involved great concern. It is always advisable to inform parents of an incident involving their child and allow them to discuss it via the completed report form mentioned above. The Headteacher, or member of staff to whom the incident is

reported, will need to consider whether that should be done straight away or at the end of the school day and whether parents should be told orally or in writing.

If physical restraint has been necessary in any form it will mean an Individual Personal Behaviour Plan will need to be completed or an existing one reviewed to ensure the child's needs are fully accounted for and staff responses are also clear. Lessons can always be learned from any incident that leads to physical restraint being used.

Complaints

A dispute about the use of physical intervention by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and social services department under the safeguarding procedures. DfE Circular 10/95: *Protecting Children From Abuse* gives guidance about the latter, and about procedures for dealing with allegations against teachers as well as *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021*. This is updated in the guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018).

The possibility that a complaint might result in a disciplinary hearing, or criminal prosecution, or in a civil action brought by a pupil or parent, cannot be ruled out. In those circumstances, it would be for the disciplinary panel or the court to decide whether the use and degree of physical intervention was reasonable in all the circumstances. In that event, however, the panel, or court, would have regard to the provisions of section 550A of the Education Act.

Physical contact with pupils in other circumstances

There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some pupils may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background, or because they have been abused. Staff should bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary other than those covered by Section 550A of the 1996 Act. Some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons, sports coaching, or if a member of staff has to give first aid.

Young children and children with special educational needs may need staff to provide physical prompts or help. Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. Teachers will use their professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support. The school does not support a no-touch approach.

Appendix 1

POSITIVE HANDLING/INCIDENT FORM



Positive Handling Incident Form



<i>Form Number (admin):</i>					
Staff member responsible for the positive handling:					
Child involved in Positive Handling:				Class:	
Date of incident:			Time of incident:		
Names of any other adults involved with the incident: <i>(include names of any witnesses)</i>					
Location of Positive Handling Incident:					
Classroom	Corridor	PE hall	Dining Hall	Toilets	Other <i>(please specify)</i>
Playground	Field	Library	Front Office	Offsite	
Reason to Positive Handle:					
Harm to self		Harm to others		Damage to property	
Other: <i>(please specify)</i>					
How would you rate the intensity of risk (to self or others) posed to the child who was positively handled?					
Low		Medium		High	
<p>The use of force must only be used when it is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable in the circumstance, meaning you believed that it was absolutely necessary and proportionate to the seriousness of the situation. <p>Positive handling must only be used as a last resort. All de-escalation techniques must be used first.</p>					
Did anyone sustain an injury during the positive handling (complete where appropriate)					
Yes / No					
If yes, who?					
Member of staff		Child		Other <i>(please specify)</i>	
Please record the nature of the injury:					

Positive Handling Incident Form

Describe the events leading up to the incident, including measures taken to de-escalate the situation before positive handling was required. Brief description of the incident, including a description of the behaviour of the child including if items were used towards staff or other children. Include, as far as possible, what was said during the incident.

Positive Handling Incident Form

Follow up actions taken	✓	Staff to initial when complete
Debrief with Positive Handling Lead <i>(ensure notes are attached)</i>		
Safeguarding Concern? <i>(if yes, report to DSL)</i>		
Parent/Carer Informed <i>(phone call and letter home)</i>		
Parents Reply Slip Returned		
Other Professionals Contacted <i>(e.g. social worker)</i>		
Behaviour Lead notified <i>(incident uploaded on CPOMS)</i>		
Incident report form <u>completed?</u> <i>(for any injuries sustained)</i>		
Health and Safety review needed?		

Capture the views and feelings of the child involved in this incident (within 24 hours of the incident). These views should be recorded below by a relevant adult who was not directly involved in the incident.

Form completed by: <i>(print name)</i>	Signature:
Position:	Date:

Pupil signature:	Date:
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Positive handling lead signature:	Date:
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Head Teacher signature:	Date:
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