



The Alver Valley  
Federation of Schools

Physical Restraint Policy

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This policy is based on the guidance given in DfE guidance 2013, which sets out conditions under which reasonable force might be used in schools. It can be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from:

- hurting themselves or others
- damaging property
- causing disorder

In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

### **What is reasonable force?**

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.

Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them.

Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.

Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

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

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

Where a restrictive physical intervention is considered appropriate, we aim for a member of staff who knows the child well to be involved. This person is most likely to be able to use other methods to support the child and keep them safe without using physical intervention. This would include a range of de-escalation approaches such as humour, distraction, relocation and offering choices, which are direct alternatives to using restrictive physical intervention.

Key staff in school are "team teach" trained. Whenever possible one of these people should be called to deal with the situation. **However, in an emergency, any member of staff may be able to use reasonable force according to the DfE guidance:**

“All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.”  
(DfE guidance ‘*Use of reasonable force*’2013)

Where an individual child’s behaviour means that his/her behaviour is more likely to be managed through restrictive physical intervention, we identify members of staff who are most appropriate to be involved. We also consider staff and children’s physical and emotional health when we make these plans.

**Schools can use reasonable force to:**

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

**School will not:**

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

**Power to search pupils without consent**

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, the Executive headteacher and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited items”:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

**Background**

All staff at Alver Valley Junior School aim to help children take responsibility for their own behaviour.

The behaviour policy is designed to prevent physical incidents from occurring. Our aim of creating a calm, well-ordered and secure atmosphere is the best insurance against incidents of aggressive confrontations.

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
- And providing supportive feedback.

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

However, there are times when children's behaviour presents particular challenges that may require 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 touch, 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).

We recognise that there may be some children within our school who find physical contact particularly unwelcome as a consequence of their personal history, in particular of abuse.

This policy should be read in the context of our related policy on Child Protection and with national and local guidance for schools on safeguarding children.

## **Principles for the use of restrictive physical intervention**

### **In the context of positive approaches**

We only use restrictive physical intervention in extreme circumstances. It is not our preferred way of managing children's behaviour. In fact, we recognise that physical intervention should not be used unless it is in the context of a well-established and well implemented positive framework.

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 extreme concern where we judge that we would need to use physical intervention immediately. In such situations, 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.

When considering the use of reasonable force reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs will be taken into account in accordance with our duty to do so.

Within our duty of care, staff may use physical restrictive handling if a child is trying to leave the setting and would be at risk of harm. This policy extends beyond the setting boundaries when staff have charge of children off site.

This duty of care applies as much to what we *don't* do as what we *do* do. When children 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 child 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 physical intervention.

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.

We do not condone the use of restrictive physical intervention to enforce compliance with instructions where there is no danger to person or property. 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.

We never use restrictive physical intervention:-

- out of anger,
- as a punishment
- as an alternative to measures which are less intrusive and which we judge would be effective.

Our aim is always to use less intrusive responsive strategies where possible.

## **Planning**

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

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.

We use this risk assessment to inform the Individual Behaviour Management Plan that we develop to support the child.

The Individual Behaviour Management Plan outlines:

- Our understanding of what the child is trying to achieve or communicate through his/her behaviour
- How we adapt our environment to better meet the child's needs
- How we teach and encourage the child to use new, more appropriate behaviours
- How we reward the child when he or she makes progress

- How we respond when the child's behaviour is challenging (responsive strategies)

We pay particular attention to responsive strategies. We use a range of approaches 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 from outside agencies as possible when we know that an individual child's behaviour is likely to require some form of restrictive physical intervention.

We review these plans at least monthly 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 child's circumstances.

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

Any use of physical force by our staff should be consistent with the principle of reasonable force.

Before intervening physically a member of staff should wherever possible, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and make clear what will happen if he or she does not stop. The member of staff should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint 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.

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

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

Such action would normally be considered potentially abusive.

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

- Physically imposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pulling or pushing a pupil away from danger
- Leading a pupil by the arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back

### **Recording and reporting**

After using restrictive physical intervention, we ensure that the Executive headteacher or head of Schools is informed as immediately, and preferably during the incident. We also inform the parents by phone (or by letter or note home if this is not possible). A copy of the record form is also available for parents to read.

It is essential that there is a detailed, written report of any occasion where force is used, using the required County form in the Hampshire *Interim Record Forms Booklet* held in the office.

We do this as soon as possible and in any event with **24** hours of the incident

According to the nature of the incident, we may also note it in other records, such as the accident book, violent incident records or behaviour incident folders

### **Supporting and reviewing**

We recognise that it is distressing to be involved in a physical intervention, whether as the child 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 child so that they can understand why they were held. Where we can, we record how the child felt about this. Where it is appropriate we have the same sort of conversations with other children who observed what happened. In all cases, we will wait until the child has calmed down enough to be able to talk productively and learn from this conversation. If necessary, an independent member of staff will ask the child whether he or she has been injured so that appropriate first aid can be given. This also gives the child 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 child and the person/s that held him or her.

After a restrictive physical intervention, we consider whether the Individual Behaviour Management Plan needs to be reviewed so that we can reduce the risk of needing to use restrictive physical intervention again.

### **Monitoring**

We monitor the use of physical intervention in our school. The Headteacher is responsible for reviewing the records on a termly basis, and more often if the need arises, so that appropriate action can be taken. The information is also used by the governing body when this policy and related policies are reviewed.

### **Concerns and Complaints**

The use of physical intervention can be distressing to all involved and can lead to concerns, allegations or complaints of inappropriate or excessive use. In particular, a child might complain about the use of 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 child to feel strongly that the use of physical intervention was inappropriate. This is why we are careful to ensure all children have a chance to review the incident after they have calmed down.

If a child or parent has a concern about the way physical intervention has been used, our school's complaints procedure explains how to take the matter further.

Where a concern, complaint or allegation relates to the improper use of restrictive physical intervention or there is an allegation of assault or abusive behaviour, we ensure that the headteacher is immediately informed. In the absence of the headteacher, we ensure that the deputy headteacher is informed. If the concern, complaint or allegation concerns the headteacher, we ensure that the Chair of Governors is informed.