

The Firs Lower School

Physical Intervention Policy



Introduction

When considering the use of physical intervention in the context set out above, the following principles need to be taken into account:

- The need to safeguard children's wellbeing.
- The need to maintain the safety of staff.
- The need to prevent serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy.

Avoiding the Use of Physical Restraint

The behaviour policy at The Firs Lower School is designed to create a calm working environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require physical intervention. This policy is supported by curriculum programmes in RE and PSHRE (and the intervention work led / supervised by the SEND-co).

It is important, through planning and the provision of appropriate support, to minimise the likelihood of challenging behaviour, and where it does occur, that there is as little use of physical intervention (and for as short a duration) as possible.

In the case where there is a heightened risk of incidents occurring that could trigger the need for physical intervention, staff will work with parents (and outside agencies if appropriate) to develop strategies to positively support the behaviour of the pupil.

If there are frequent incidents which require some form of physical intervention at school, the provision being made will be revised.

The Conditions of Permissible Use of Force

Any teacher (or member of the support staff whose role includes, or sometimes includes, supervision of pupils) is authorised under section 95 of the 2006 Education and Inspections Act to use physical intervention as indicated above.

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. Any use of force will be undertaken only where it is judged that it is in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent. (The use of force will not be used to prevent 'trivial' misbehaviour).

Examples of types of incidents where physical intervention might be used include:

- Pupil attacks another pupil or member of staff
- Pupil misusing dangerous materials or objects in such a way that they may injure themselves or others
- Pupil causing damage to the property of any person including the pupil him/herself
- Pupil is about to try and leave the school site, placing themselves in potential danger.

Using physical intervention is a last resort. Staff will ensure, and be able to demonstrate, that all other means have been exhausted. Physical intervention will never be used as a substitute for behaviour management.

Before physical intervention is used, the following will be considered:

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- Following our ethos and Behaviour Policy / TEAM Teach principles, all efforts will be made to put supportive strategies in place to avoid situations where physical intervention will be needed.
- A clear oral warning will be given to the pupil that physical intervention may have to be used
- Only the minimum physical force needed will be used and for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- No form of restraint (whatever the circumstances) will be used that could constrict breathing.
- No form of physical intervention will be used unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance. (Where possible, staff should try to ensure that a staff member of the same gender as the pupil is present during the incident).
- Staff will avoid touching sensitive areas.
- The presence of other pupils and the effect they may have. (A pupil will never be asked to become involved physically but may be asked to seek assistance).
- The possibilities of securing further assistance
- Spectacles, hearing aids, clothing worn by pupil
- ***Member of staff's capacity to remain calm, continually offering verbal reassurance and explaining what they are doing and why out loud.***
- That clear messages need to be given concerning the conditions under which the restraint will cease
- Location where the physical intervention is taking place and any risks posed by surroundings
- Pupil's previous experience of restraint and their likely reaction
- Presence of any weapons

Staff should always adopt a calm approach. Restraint should never be used to punish, humiliate, inflict pain or out of anger or frustration.

If the school is aware that a pupil has Special Educational Needs that may result in behaviour in which physical intervention may be necessary, then appropriate strategies will be adopted including, staff training, the use of Behaviour Support Plans, close liaison with parents and where appropriate, the involvement of outside agencies.

Any member of staff using physical intervention will take proper account of any particular disability that a pupil might have. (The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 indicates that schools must not treat a disabled pupil less favourably than any other pupil. It also states that schools must take reasonable steps to avoid putting a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage to pupils who are not disabled).

Staff have the right to defend themselves by physical means against attack.

Definitions of 'school staff':

- Any teacher who works at the school; and
- Any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This includes support staff whose job normally includes supervising pupils, such as teaching assistants, Pastoral Care Assistants, Play Workers, and lunchtime supervisors.
- It can also include people to whom the head has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils, such as paid members of staff whose job doesn't normally involve supervising pupils (e.g. catering or premises staff) and unpaid volunteers (e.g. parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits).
- It does NOT include other pupils .

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Follow-up Action

Physical restraint is upsetting for everyone. Once calm, it is important to explain why restraint was used and to defuse this and any potential further situation.

Any incident must be logged by the member of staff on the appropriate form (Appendix A).

Parents / carers should be informed as soon as possible.

The Headteacher and Governors have a duty to monitor logged incidents carefully and take action if restraint incidents give rise to concern.

If, after receiving the report of an incident, the Headteacher considers the school guidelines have been seriously breached and that further investigation is warranted, the incident should NOT be pursued immediately, as action in accordance with Child Protection Procedures must be taken, namely:

- The Headteacher contacting the school LA HR services provider and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Staff member being advised to consult his/her Professional Association

Summary

Physical intervention by staff might involve:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding a child whilst ensuring they step down from an object they have climbed onto unsafely
- Pulling or pushing a pupil away from danger
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand on their back or shoulder
- (in extreme circumstances) Using more restrictive holds

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

- Holding a pupil by the neck or collar
- Slapping, punching, or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a pupil
- Holding or pulling a pupil by hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground
- Touching or holding a pupil in any way that might be considered inappropriate.

Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be

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inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Contact between children and adults might be appropriate for a variety of reasons, including:

- Holding hands with a small child in the playground
- Calming/reassuring/comforting contact with a young child that is upset or injured
- A gentle touch on the arm to refocus attention
- Guiding (without force) a pupil/child away from a situation or location.

Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. (See 'KCSIE' / 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People,' which is available on the school website staff area).

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances will be recorded as soon as possible

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to pupils with SEND). Any such contact must be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and be subject to review.

Proper account must always be taken of any particular special educational need and/or disability that a pupil might have – there are 2 key duties under the Disability Discrimination Act:

1. not to treat a disabled pupil less favourably, for a reason relating to his/her disability, than someone to whom that reason does not apply, without justification; and
2. to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage to pupils who are not disabled (reasonable adjustments).

Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary. Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff being vulnerable to allegations of abuse. It is recognised that some children can look for emotional support more than others and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances, staff should deter the child sensitively by helping them to understand the importance of appropriate personal boundaries.

The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

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Situations where staff should not normally intervene without help:

Help may sometimes be needed in dealing with a situation where it may be unsafe to tackle it alone. For such situations, the school will put in place an agreed system of communication for summoning help quickly. (e.g. using 'walkie talkies'). The member of staff should also take steps to remove other pupils who might be at risk.

Appendix A

Use of force to control or restrain pupil – incident record

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Name / class of pupil(s)
Date / time / location of incident
Details of other pupils involved (including if SEN, disability etc.)
Description of incident (include any attempts to warn / de-escalate situation)
Reason for using force and description of force used
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid/medical attention needed
Follow up including any post incident support
Who was informed following incident e.g. parents, staff, other agencies etc.
Report compiled by: Role: Signature: Date:
Report countersigned by: Name and Role: Signature: Date: