



Physical Intervention and Restraint Policy

Welton Primary School encourages pupils to make positive behaviour choices.

However, pupils sometimes do make the wrong choices. On rare occasions this may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff.

Our Restraint Policy is based upon the following principles:

- Physical intervention is used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Any physical contact is only the minimum required.
Physical intervention is used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents are recorded and reported to the Headteacher.
- Parents are informed of each incident.

1. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 allows 'teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Headteacher who have control or charge of pupils to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- causing injury to his/herself or others
- committing an offence
- damaging property
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order & discipline

This policy has been written reflecting the DFE 'Use of reasonable force' advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013

2. DEFINITION OF REASONABLE FORCE AND RESTRAINT

The DFE guidance (2013) on the 'Use of Reasonable Force' defines and explains these terms in the following way:

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career 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 pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- 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.

All members of staff who can use reasonable force have a legal power to use it. This power applies to any member of staff at the school.

The DFE Guidance 2013 on 'Use of reasonable force' states that schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow and instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, trip or a 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.

Schools cannot:

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

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Headteachers 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 and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

3. OUR APPROACH

We aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in a minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our policy to Promote Positive Attitudes and Behaviour. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate. Staff exercise their own professional judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff act within our school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Once again it is stressed that physical intervention is only used when all other strategies have failed to have the desired effect on a pupil's behaviour.

NB It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- When comforting a distressed pupil
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching □
- To give first aid.

Staff are aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They therefore take reasonable action to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. This being said staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

Before using physical interventions ensure every effort has been made to de-escalate: Why is de-escalation so difficult?

De-escalation techniques go against our natural fight-or-flight reflexes. Remaining calm and professionally detached is not natural and therefore it is a skill that will need to be practised. We need to retrain ourselves to respond in a different way when a challenging situation occurs.

Reasoning with an angry child is not possible but, in our role as caring teachers, this is often our immediate response. Our aim instead should be to reduce the level of agitation so discussion then becomes an option and a better outcome is achieved.

When to de-escalate

De-escalation techniques are most successful when used early, before the child becomes physically aggressive. To do this, it is necessary to be aware of and spot early signs of agitation such as:

- balled fists
- fidgeting
- shaking
- 'eye-balling' another child
- head thrust forward
- clenched jaw
- speech becoming more rapid or high-pitched.

These signs should not be ignored and you should never turn your back on an angry child in the hope that they just calm down.

Pacing

Pacing is a cycle of feeding off someone's emotions and escalating. If the child can make you as angry as them, it gives them permission to become even angrier and the child can justify their own hostility.

You may not always know what you are going to do, but keep in your head what you are not going to do. When the child has least control, it is time for the teacher to have the most control over themselves.

Non-verbal techniques

Calm can be just as contagious as fear and must be communicated to the child. Approximately 55% of what we communicate is through physiology, 38% is through the tone of our voice and just 7% is through the words that we use. It is useful to remember these proportions when you are trying to de-escalate. Ensure you are modelling the behaviour you want the child to emulate.

Techniques include the following.

Appear calm and self-assured

Make sure you are not displaying the same signs of agitation that can be seen in the child: unclench your fists, do not hold eye contact and avoid standing square to the child.

Maintain a neutral facial expression

Even our eyebrows can indicate we are surprised or angry, and similarly our mouths can betray our emotions unwittingly. Another natural reaction we often have when under stress is to smirk or giggle, which must be controlled.

Allow space

Entering a person's personal space can be useful to refocus on a task when the situation is calm, but when a child is agitated this can indicate aggression and escalate the situation. Staying some distance away will also help keep you safe should the child become physically aggressive.

Control your breathing

When we are stressed, angry or tense, our breathing becomes more shallow and rapid. If we take deeper, slower breaths, this will not only help keep us calm, but the child will begin to match our own breathing pattern. It can sometimes help to match the child's breathing initially then gradually slow it down.

Verbal strategies

Lower your voice and keep your tone even.

It is hard to have an argument with someone who is not responding aggressively back to you.

Distraction and diversion are extremely useful.

When a child is aggressive, they are responding with their own fight-or-flight instincts and not thinking about their actions.

Distract them and engage their thinking brain, perhaps by changing the subject or commenting on something that is happening outside the window.

Give choices, repeat these using the broken-record technique if necessary, and do not get drawn into secondary behaviours such as arguing back, which are designed to distract or upset you.

Acknowledging the child's feelings shows that you have listened to them, and can be crucial when diffusing a situation; for example, 'It must be really difficult for you ... thank you for letting me know'.

Use words and phrases that de-escalate, such as:

I wonder if...

let's try...

it seems like...

maybe we can...

tell the child what you want them to do rather than what you do not want them to do; for example, 'I want you to sit down' rather than 'stop arguing with me'.

give the child take-up time following any direction and avoid backing them into a corner, either verbally or physically.

Things to avoid

Do not make threats you cannot carry through, such as threatening to exclude the child.

Do not be defensive or take it personally. What is being said may seem insulting and directed at you, but this level of aggression is not really about you.

Do not use humour unless you are sure it will help and you have a very good relationship with the child.

Do not use sarcasm or humiliate the child.

Sometimes, no matter how carefully and skillfully you try to de-escalate a situation, it may still reach crisis point. Know your school systems for summoning help and moving bystanders to safety.

After any outburst or incident, always make time to debrief, repair and rebuild, or the relationship will flounder and continue to deteriorate. Problem-solve the situation and teach new behaviours where needed.

4. USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OR INTERVENTION

Physical restraint is applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It never takes a form which could be seen as punishment.

In all circumstances, alternative methods are used as appropriate with physical intervention or restraint a last resort.

Although any member of staff may act in line with The DFE Guidance 2013 on 'Use of reasonable force' a member of staff who has completed the Team Teach training should take over as soon as possible.

5. ACTIONS AFTER AN INCIDENT

Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. The Headteacher is informed of any incident as soon as possible and takes responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff debriefs the pupil concerned: the debrief includes consideration of the circumstances that precipitated the incident and exploring ways in which future incidents can be avoided. Any other individuals involved in the incident are offered support.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it will probably be necessary to address the situation through the development or review of an individual support plan (ISP).

All incidents are recorded immediately on a Restraint Recording Form. All sections of the report are completed so that any patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed. In the event of any future complaint or allegation this record provides essential and accurate information. A copy is filed in the child's appropriate file and a central copy is kept by the Headteacher.

A member of the teaching staff contacts parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

6. RISK ASSESSMENTS

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Strategies to be used prior to intervention

- » Ways of avoiding 'triggers' if these are known
- » Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- » Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- » Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- » The school's duty of care to all pupils and staff

This Policy will be reviewed if DfE guidance or Legal Frameworks are updated or changed.