



PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

Version	3
Date of latest version	September 2022
Date to be reviewed	September 2024
Changes:	

All staff at Ropley C E Primary aim to help children take responsibility for their own behaviour. We do this through a combination of approaches:

- positive role modelling
- teaching an interesting and challenging curriculum
- setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations
- providing supportive feedback.

Ropley Primary School's approach to promoting positive behaviour can be found in the behaviour policy.

However, there are times when children's behaviour presents particular challenges that may require physical intervention. This policy sets out how we will deal with any such incidents. 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 exercise appropriate care when using touch; there are some children for whom touch would be inappropriate (such as those with a history of physical or sexual abuse, or those from certain cultural groups).

The term physical intervention is a broad one, and can be used to refer to the use of mechanical and environmental means (such as standing frames, protective helmets and locked doors). These may be appropriate ways of ensuring a child's safety. We define restrictive physical intervention as follows:

Restrictive physical intervention is when a member of staff uses force intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will.

In most cases this will be through the use of the adult's body rather than mechanical or environmental methods.

Principles for the use of restrictive physical intervention

In the context of positive approaches:

We will only use restrictive physical intervention in extreme circumstances. It is not our preferred way of managing children's behaviour. We recognise that physical intervention should not be used unless it is in the context of a well-established and well implemented positive framework. Our approach to promoting positive behaviour is detailed in the school's behaviour policy. We aim to do all we can to avoid using restrictive physical intervention. However, there may be rare situations of such extreme danger 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 explaining to the child what is happening and why.

Duty of care

We have a duty of care towards the children in our setting. 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!” with an explanation of the dangers they might be putting themselves or others in. However, if we judge that it is necessary, we may use physical intervention.

Reasonable force

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.

When can restrictive physical intervention be used?

The use of restrictive physical intervention may be defended where a pupil is:

- injuring themselves or others
- damaging property (including their own)
- committing a criminal offence
- behaving in a manner “prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils”

Restrictive physical intervention may also be defended where, although none of the above have yet happened, they are judged as highly likely to be about to happen.

We are extremely cautious about using restrictive physical intervention under the “prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline” clause; we would do this only in exceptional circumstances, with staff that know the student well and who are able to make informed judgements about the relative risks of using, or not using, restrictive physical intervention. We do not condone the use of restrictive physical intervention to enforce compliance with instructions where there is no danger to person or property. At all times, we are aware 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 try and reach an alternative decision eg: issue an instruction to stop, seek help, or make the area safe, consistent with our duty of care.

Our duty of care means that we might use restrictive physical intervention if a child is trying to leave our site and we judged that they would be at risk. (We do have other protective measures, such as securing the site and adequate staffing levels.) This duty of care also extends beyond our site boundaries: there may be situations where we need to use restrictive physical intervention when we have control or charge of children off site (e.g. on school visits).

Our aim in using restrictive physical intervention is to restore safety, both for the pupil and those around him or her. It is never used out of anger, as a punishment or as an alternative to measures which are less intrusive and which we judge would be effective. Our aim is always to use the least intrusive responsive strategies where 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. However, in an emergency, anyone may be able to use reasonable force through reference to the first three conditions of section 3.1 above.

Teachers may also use reasonable force where a pupil's behaviour is "prejudicial to the maintenance of good order" (the fourth condition in section 3.1). Other people may also be authorised to have control or charge of pupils, and therefore use reasonable force where a pupil's behaviour is "prejudicial to the maintenance of good order". These people are specifically named in Appendix Two to this policy.

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 ensure that such staff receive appropriate training and support in behaviour management as well as physical intervention. We also consider staff and children's physical and emotional health when we make these plans.

Members of staff must try never to deal with a situation likely to require physical intervention on their own. Where possible another member of staff should be always be sought.

Planning

When situations arise 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 are the risks?
- Who is at risk and how?
- What we can do to manage the risk?

We use this risk assessment to inform the individual behaviour plan that we develop to support the child. If this behaviour plan includes restrictive physical intervention it will be as just one part of a whole approach to supporting the child's behaviour. The behaviour plan outlines:

- Our understanding of what the child is trying to achieve or communicate through his/her behaviour.
- How we adapt our environment to more closely 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 (including humour, distraction, relocation, and offering choices) as direct alternatives to using restrictive physical intervention. We choose these responsive strategies in the light of our risk assessment, which considers:

- The risks presented by the child's behaviour
- The potential targets of such risks
- Preventive and responsive strategies to manage these risks

We gather as much information about a child as possible when we know that an individual child's behaviour is likely to require some form of restrictive physical intervention. We involve the child's parents (or those with parental responsibility), staff from our school who work with the child, and any external agencies as may be necessary (Educational Psychologists, Behaviour Support Team workers, Speech and Language Therapists, Social Workers and colleagues from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). We record these planning meetings and seek parental understanding of our planned approach. We review these plans at least termly, or more frequently if there are major changes to the child's circumstances.

We recognise that there may be some children within our school who find physical contact particularly unwelcome as a consequence of their culture. There may be others for whom such contact is troubling as a result of their personal history, in particular of abuse. Staff are made aware of any such issues so that we can plan accordingly to meet individual children's needs.

What type of restrictive physical intervention can and cannot be used?

- Any use of physical force by our staff should be consistent with the principle of reasonable force. We have a set of good practice guidelines that staff should follow (see Appendix One).

Staff should not act in ways that might reasonably be expected to cause injury e.g.:

- 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

In all cases, however, staff should be guided in their choices of action by the principles in section 2 (in the context of positive approaches; duty of care; reasonable force).

We do not plan for and do not allow staff to use seclusion, which is where a young person is forced to spend time alone in a confined space against their will. We may, however, use withdrawal or time-out in a planned way. We define these as follows:

Withdrawal involves taking a young person, either with or without their agreement, away from a situation that has caused anxiety or distress, to a place where they can be observed continuously and supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities.

Time-out is where a response to a young person's inappropriate behaviour includes a specific period of time with no positive reinforcement as part of an overall intervention plan.

Where staff need specific training in the use of restrictive physical intervention, we arrange that they should receive appropriate training, through Hampshire County Council.

Recording and reporting

We record any use of restrictive physical intervention using the record sheet in the Hampshire booklet Planning and recording physical intervention in schools. We do this as soon as possible and at the latest within 24 hours of the incident. A copy of the front page of this incident form is sent to the Local Education Authority at the address shown, so that they can analyse the use of restrictive physical intervention across the county. We also note and date the incident in the child's other records.

After using restrictive physical intervention, we ensure that the Headteacher is informed as soon as possible. We also inform the parents.

In rare cases, we might need to inform the police, such as in incidents that involve the possession of weapons. This would be in line with our general practice, informed by the joint DfEE/Home Office (1999) publication School Security: Dealing with trouble makers – protecting pupils and staff.

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.

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 team. Staff are made aware of the Employee Support Line (esl), a free and confidential counselling/support line on 023 8062 6606 or Teacher Support Line on 08000 562 561.

A key aim of our after-incident support is to repair any potential strain to the relationship between the child and the people that held him or her.

After a restrictive physical intervention, we consider whether the individual behaviour 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 restrictive physical intervention in our school. The Headteacher is responsible for reviewing the records on a half-termly basis, and more often if the need arises, so that appropriate action can be taken. Our aim is to help identify triggers and to help us develop our ability to meet the needs of children without using restrictive physical intervention.

Complaints

The use of physical intervention can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive use. Where anyone (child, carer, staff member or visitor) has a concern, we deal with this through our usual complaints procedure.

Other school policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies, in particular Child Protection, Discipline and Behaviour and Health & Safety.