



# PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

## BRICKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2019

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**PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY**

(This policy should be read in conjunction with the Pupil Discipline and Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy)

**Rationale and purposes**

Children and young people need to stay safe and aware of how they should behave. Some (generally only a few and very occasionally) lose control and need someone else to support them. They need to know we are able to control them safely and confidently. Our pupils nearly always respond well to the school rules and conventions. Situations in which physical intervention may be needed are therefore likely to be relatively few in number.

All our staff need to be safe and confident in how they manage inappropriate behaviour. They have to be clear about the options open to them when all the normal systems have failed or when there is a clear emergency in which, for example, talking calmly to someone in danger is irrelevant. They need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical interventions.

Parents need to know that their child and those who are teaching her or him are safe and free from disruptive influences or danger. They also need to know that they will be properly informed if their child is the subject of physical intervention; and they need to know the nature of the intervention and the rationale for its use.

This policy connects to and is consistent with our other Policies, especially those on Behaviour Management, Health and Safety and Child Protection, to which reference can be made. Those on behaviour management cover the broader scene; this policy is about a small part of that scene.

Our approach: 'Prevention is better than cure'

We always try to avoid using physical interventions and regard them as a last resort for a tiny minority of situations. We provide a properly planned and differentiated curriculum that provides appropriate levels of challenge to all pupils, and maintain an effective school behaviour policy that is known and understood by all staff and pupils.

Physical intervention is then our method of last resort, after all other approaches have been tried or in situations of clear danger or extreme urgency. We utilise only the minimum force required to resolve the situation safely. How we respond always has regard to the circumstances and to the age and understanding of the child or young person.

When there is a foreseeable risk that a pupil could behave in such a way as to require restrictive physical intervention we undertake a risk assessment in order to balance the risks to the pupil and to others of intervening or not. Planning is also undertaken to see if trigger situations can be avoided and other positive strategies employed to lessen the likelihood of such incidents occurring. This is discussed and shared with the parents.

## **Guidelines and Responsibilities**

### **What is physical Intervention/Reasonable Force**

- The terms ‘reasonable force’ and ‘physical Intervention’ cover 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 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.

### **Who may use physical intervention and when**

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. (Use of Reasonable Force DfE July 2016)

In this school the following staff are authorised by the Headteacher to have control of pupils and must be made aware of this policy and its implications:

- Office staff
- Teaching assistants
- Site agent
- Lunchtime Supervisors
- Learning Mentors
- Catering staff
- Supply teachers
- Supply teaching assistants
- Student teachers

In addition the Headteacher may give temporary authorisation, for example, parent helpers on school trips/or within the school, or to centrally employed support staff working with pupils.

School staff are also, like anyone else, allowed to use reasonable force (the minimum necessary) to keep themselves, pupils and colleagues safe.

We take the view that staff are not expected to put themselves in danger, and that removing pupils and themselves from a source of danger is a proper thing to do. We appreciate the integrity of our staff and value their efforts to rectify situations that are difficult and in which

they exercise their duty of care for their pupils. However, we do not require them to go beyond what is reasonable in carrying out that duty.

### **Acceptable Physical Interventions or reasonable force**

Reasonable force is not defined legally in isolation. It must be justified as appropriate by the circumstances. We use only the minimum force that is needed to restore safety or appropriate behaviour; and we take account of the age, understanding, gender, medical or special needs of the pupil.

Acceptable forms of intervention/reasonable force in this school include:

- Leading or guiding a pupil by the hand or arm, or shepherding them with a hand in the centre of the back
- Holding a pupil who has lost control until they are calm and safe
- Physically moving between and separating two pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path (when it is deemed unsafe to let them go)
- Use of reasonable force to remove a weapon or dangerous object from a pupil's grasp
- Where there is immediate risk of injury, any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force' – for example to prevent a pupil running into a busy road or hitting or hurting someone
- Using more restrictive holds in extreme circumstances
- 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.
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

It is unacceptable and likely to be illegal or grounds for disciplinary action for staff to use any physical intervention designed to cause pain or injury including:

- Any form of corporal punishment, slapping, punching or kicking
- Holding by the neck or collar, or otherwise restricting the ability to breathe
- Holding by the hair or an ear
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a pupil or holding an arm out at neck or head height to stop them
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground or sitting on them
- Shutting or locking a pupil in a room, except in extreme situations whilst summoning support.

Staff should also avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Physical interventions are not, in general, used to achieve a search of clothing or property. However, Section 45 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 gives Headteachers and authorised staff the power to search pupils 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.
- Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

### **Using Physical Intervention**

Except in cases where there is immediate danger we would always try other ways of resolving or de-escalating a situation. These could include:

- Calmly re-stating rules and expectations for the situation
- Removing other pupils from the situation and thus from danger or from being an audience
- Use of physical proximity, but not in a threatening way
- Encouraging the pupil to withdraw to a safer and calmer situation
- Calling another adult for support or to take over

If more than minor physical intervention is judged to be necessary, the teacher or adult in charge should:

- Send for assistance of another adult (for support or to take over, and as a witness)
- Remove other pupils from the scene if possible
- Continue to talk calmly to the pupil explaining what will happen, and under what circumstances the physical intervention will cease (but not in a threatening way)
- Use the minimum force necessary and cease the intervention as soon as it is judged safe
- Not act punitively in any way verbally or physically

Following a significant incident of physical intervention, when a pupil has resisted or challenged, and force has been used, the teacher or adult responsible should as soon as possible inform a senior member of staff. We acknowledge that such events are stressful for both pupils and staff and both parties will need time to recover, with the chance of de-briefing and resolving the situation.

A full written account of the incident will be made by the member of staff concerned and recorded on the school pro-forma, copies of which will be held by the Headteacher.

Parent(s)/Carers of any children involved in the incident will be informed as soon as is practicably possible by the Headteacher.

The report will contain:

- Name(s) of pupil(s) concerned, when and where the incident occurred
- Names of staff or pupils who witnessed
- The reason why force was needed
- How the incident began and progressed, who said what, who did what
- What was done to calm things down
- What degree of force was used and what kind of hold, where and for how long
- Pupil's response and the outcome of the incident
- Details of any injury to any person or damage to property.

It must be signed and dated by the member of staff and countersigned that it has been read by a member of the senior management team or a more senior member of staff, who will:

- Discuss the incident with the pupil as soon as possible
- Interview staff involved and any other witnesses
- Inform the pupil's parents/carers
- Record any disagreements expressed by the pupil or adults about the event
- Take any appropriate further action, liaising with LA, governors, or unions as appropriate, and acting within Child Protection Procedures

We formally report incidents to the Health and Safety Team using the Report of Violent Incident form when a member of staff has been threatened, attacked or otherwise harmed. This is also done in any instance where injury has been sustained by staff or a pupil, or first aid administered.

### **Planning for Physical Intervention**

Where we think a pupil might require physical restraint we plan in advance and know who will do what. This planning includes helping pupils to avoid provoking situations, helping them find success and minimise frustration, and develops our own skills. It also helps us see better where we can head off difficulties when we spot them early enough. The plan will include:

- Involving the parents and pupils to gain their views and to ensure that they are clear about what specific action the school might need to take
- A risk assessment that considers carefully the likely outcomes to the pupil and others of undertaking intervention or not
- Managing the pupil (e.g. Reactive strategies to help pupils regain control at what stage and what type of intervention to be used)
- Identifying key staff who should know exactly what action they should be taking. Any member of staff who may have to use a physical intervention should always be fully briefed about the child in question, and it is best if they have a positive relationship with the child.
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned, if appropriate,( via intercom system, walkie talkies or red triangle)
- Identifying training needs and updates.

### **Training:**

We are clear that training of staff is vital in this area if we are to be seen to adopt best practice and maintain a record of safe management of all school situations. We therefore make budgetary allowance for the following kinds of training:

- general training on behaviour management, for all staff (not just teachers)
- training on avoiding and coping with crisis/difficult/physically challenging events

**Complaints:**

We hope that by adopting this policy and keeping relevant parents well informed this should help to avoid the likelihood of complaints. Any disputes that do arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Local Child Protection Procedures, a copy of which is available in school. These could in some circumstances lead to an investigation by police and/or social services.

The school will review this policy annually.

Policy reviewed and updated : ..... signed .....