



Physical Intervention Policy Deanshanger Primary School

At Deanshanger Primary School, we believe that all children, staff and visitors have the right to feel safe, secure and respected.

Introduction

This policy is based on DFE guidance, "Use of Reasonable Force in schools" (Ref: DFE-00295-2013) which was reviewed in July 2015 and NCC document, "Guidance for Schools on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions".

Deanshanger Primary School recognises that there is a need, reflected in common law, to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to its pupils, staff and property. We are committed to a positive behaviour policy which encourages children to make positive behaviour choices. However, in extremely rare circumstances we acknowledge that there may be a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff.

Deanshanger Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour and use physical intervention only as a last resort in line with DFE and NCC advice. If used at all, it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil, and be reasonable and proportional to the circumstances of the incident. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.

This policy applies to all staff who are authorised to use physical intervention and is based upon the following principles:

- Physical intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required.
- Physical intervention must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents must be recorded and reported to the Head teacher as soon as possible.
- Parents will be informed of each incident.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate and staff will need to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the School's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Staff should be 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 must, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure **all** pupils' safety and wellbeing, although staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

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

Objectives

Our key objectives include:

- Maintaining the safety of pupils, staff and visitors
- Preventing serious breach of school discipline
- Preventing serious damage to property

Staff view physical intervention or restraint of pupils as a last resort to maintaining a safe environment. If pupils are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation. De-escalation strategies will be used to help the pupil refocus and calm down.

Staff understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment which is calm and supportive especially when dealing with pupils who may have emotional and behavioural needs which may increase their anxiety or aggression.

All staff understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child which lie beneath the behaviour as well as the behaviour itself.

Positive Behaviour Management

All physical interventions at Deanshanger are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The school's positive behaviour policy is intended to reward effort and application, and encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. Part of our preventative approach to risk reduction involves looking for early warning signs, learning and communicating any factors which may influence behaviour and taking steps to divert behaviours leading to foreseeable risk. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the development of their own Positive Handling Plans by focusing on positive alternatives and choices. Parents/carers are also encouraged to contribute. However, if problems arise, staff have an additional responsibility to support all pupils when they are under pressure and safely manage crises if, and when, they occur.

Alternatives to Physical Controls

Staff should always consider de-escalation strategies before the use of physical intervention. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions to the pupil(s) to stop.
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Give the option to the pupil of moving to somewhere less pressured (use safe spaces around the school).
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

Authorisation of staff to use physical intervention

We recognise that most of the time physical intervention will be used infrequently and as a last resort, to maintain a safe environment. All teachers are, by the nature of their role, authorised to use physical intervention as appropriate but our training extends beyond the teaching team and Learning Support Assistants and Mid-day Supervisors also have Team Teach training.

Governors will be informed of the number of physical interventions annually.

Deciding whether to use restrictive physical intervention

The best practice regarding physical intervention outlined is considered alongside other relevant school policies, specifically those relating to behaviour, bullying and health and safety. In the following situations staff must judge whether or not physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate:

- Risk to safety of staff, pupils, themselves or visitors
- Where there is a serious risk of damage to property
- Where a pupil's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline
- Where a pupil is committing a criminal offence

Any restrictive physical intervention is used as a last resort. Every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent deterioration of the situation.

All staff who engage in restrictive physical interventions should be clear why it is necessary and be able to show it was in the pupil's best interest and that they were reasonable and proportionate. For those pupils assessed as being at risk of restrictive physical intervention, Positive Handling Plans will be developed. These plans outline what techniques should or should not be used, along with de-escalation strategies for each pupil but this does not limit positive handling to other children in the school if required.

Using restrictive physical interventions

The restrictive physical interventions authorised by the school are those techniques that staff have received appropriate training for. The core principles include:

- Minimum of two staff involved
- Last resort minimum force and time
- Techniques that do not rely on pain or locks and allow for verbal communication
- Staff safety and protection addressed
- Planned responses and techniques are written out and included in positive handling plans for individual pupils

Our practice regarding specific incidents

Our whole school belief is that we have a shared responsibility for keeping all pupils safe and helping them to behave in a safe manner.

The following advice may help when considering what action to take.

- Assistance from other members of staff must be sought as early as possible; single-handed intervention increases the risks of injury to both parties and does not provide a witness.
- Other staff who are aware that a member of staff is intervening with a pupil have a responsibility to provide a presence and to offer support and assistance should this be required. Where possible, staff who have not been involved in the initial moments leading up to an incident may be in a better position to intervene with the pupil if this proves necessary.
- A pupil's behaviour may be adversely affected by the presence of an audience. Wherever possible, the audience will be removed, or if this is not possible, the pupil will be removed from the audience. The pupil and members of staff will withdraw to a quiet, but not completely private, place.
- Staff will be aware of the need to tell the pupil, in a calm and gentle manner, the reason for the intervention, i.e. to keep the pupil and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the pupil calms down, the hold will be released.

Procedure

1. Send red card for assistance to a member of SLT.
2. Remove audience if possible.
3. Senior Leader/s take over.
4. Talk to pupil and advise him/her to leave the room and come to a safe space.
5. If absolutely necessary, use physical intervention (following pupil's individual Personal Handling Plan) to hold pupil until calm and/or escort to safe space.
6. When pupil is calm, follow debriefing procedures.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this. What constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. Teachers should apply the training they received in Team Teach to de-escalate where possible then use the appropriate holds as practised in the training. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

Reporting and monitoring incidents

All serious incidents, whether resulting in physical intervention or not, will be recorded in detail. This is of paramount importance for a number of reasons:

- Helps relate the intervention to the PHP and make appropriate changes, if necessary
- Protection for staff and pupils
- Keeps a record of incidents, so times/areas when or where most incidents occur can be tracked
- Helps evaluate the effectiveness of physical intervention

Notes will be written as soon as possible after the event and within 24 hours of the incident's occurrence, by the members of staff involved. (See attached form for details). All staff involved (including witnesses) will sign and date the report. Pupil witnesses may also be asked to provide a written account if appropriate.

A hard back, bound, book with numbered pages is kept in the main school office with a record of physical interventions. Detailed reports are kept in the office in a file named "Physical Interventions". Serious incident reports (which may or may not have required restrictive physical intervention) are kept in the same file and kept for 75 years.

Debriefing Arrangements

The pupil and member of staff will be checked for any sign of injury after an incident. First aid will be administered to anyone who requires it.

The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise her/him. When the pupil regains complete composure, a senior member of staff (or his/her nominee) will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain a reason for its occurrence. The pupil will be given an opportunity to explain things from his/her point of view. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish the relationship between the pupil and the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.

In cases where it is not possible to speak to the pupil on the same day as the incident occurred, the debrief will take place as soon as possible after the pupil returns to school.

All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff (or her/his nominee) will provide support to the member of staff involved.

The Head teacher / SENCo will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity of any incidents where physical intervention or restraint has been used. The Head teacher / SENCo will initiate the recording process if not already underway and review each incident to ensure that the situation for the pupil and the school can move forward.

Arrangements for informing Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be informed of the school's policy regarding physical intervention in the following ways:

- At the outset of the introduction of this policy, all parents/carers will be sent a letter outlining its introduction with information about obtaining a copy for their own information
- Thereafter, a section about the school's legal obligations to maintain a safe environment and the possible use of physical intervention (as a very last resort) with pupils will be included in the school brochure.
- A Positive Handling Plan will be discussed and developed with parents/carers on an individual basis. All interventions will be routinely recorded and available to parents/carers.

When a child has had to have physical intervention by members of staff, the parents/carers of the child will be informed on that day either by telephone, in person or by a letter.

Complaints procedure

If a parent/carer or child is concerned about any aspect of the management of an incident requiring physical intervention, he/she should inform the Head teacher of their concern. Sharing details of the incident and its record should enable the resolution of most complaints but if a parent/carer remains concerned, they should contact an external agency (Police or Social Services) to provide an independent investigation of the circumstances. This will determine the necessity for further action.

Training Needs of Staff

In cases where it is known that a pupil will require physical intervention on occasions, appropriate training will be provided. Staff involved will identify their training needs in this area and speak to senior staff about this.