

Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

The Vyne Community School



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1. Introduction

At The Vyne Community School we believe that pupils need to be safe, know how to make good behaviour choices, and know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. For a very small minority of pupils the use of restrictive physical intervention may be needed, and, on such rare occasions, acceptable forms of intervention will be used.

The majority of pupils behave well and meet the expectations of our school. We have the responsibility to operate an effective behaviour policy that encourages preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviours. All the school staff need to feel able to manage inappropriate risk and behaviour, and to understand what and how challenging behaviours might be communicated. They need to know what options they have, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of restrictive physical intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

2. Definition of “Restrictive Physical Intervention”

The Law allows for teachers and other persons authorised by the Headteacher to use restrictive physical intervention to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:-

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property
- Engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintaining the schools good order

“Restrictive Physical Intervention” is the term used by the DfE to include interventions where bodily contact using force is used. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has to, in specific circumstances, use “reasonable force” to control or restrain pupils.

There are two relevant considerations when looking at “reasonable force”:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it
- The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

The definition of physical force also includes the use of mechanical devices (e.g. splints on the pupil prescribed by medical colleagues to prevent self-injury), forcible seclusion or use of locked doors.

It is important for staff to note that, although no physical contact may be made in the latter situation, this is still regarded as a restrictive physical intervention.

3. When the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention may be appropriate

Restrictive physical intervention will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. However, there are other situations when physical management may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain pupils may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief restrictive physical intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds. The safety and well-being of all staff and pupils are important considerations.

4. Planning for the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour. The principles relating to intervention are as follows:-

- Restrictive physical intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions
- Staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and, in the pupil's, and/or other pupil's best interests
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for restrictive physical intervention through dialogue and diversion and at the level of understanding of the child or young person
- Only the minimum force necessary will be used to prevent severe distress, injury, or damage
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was in keeping with the incident
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses
- As soon as it is safe, the restrictive physical intervention will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control.
- A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy
- Escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual pupil will always be considered
- In developing Individual Education/ Behaviour plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident of restrictive physical intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

5. Acceptable forms of intervention

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons, for example:

- To gently direct a pupil

- For curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc)
- In an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils
- In rare circumstance, when restrictive physical intervention is warranted

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff in the following appropriate actions:

- **Shepherding or Guiding;** using body positioning and positive gestures to move a student away from harm. This may include the placing of a hand on the back (between the shoulder blades) and using reasonable force to actively move them from one place to another.
- **Blocking or Interposing;** placing yourself between the student and their objective (e.g exit, another student) thereby preventing the potential injury damage or prejudice to good order.
- **Holding and Leading;** gripping the student appropriately (e.g by the upper arm) to prevent them from injury, damage, etc. In cases of resistance from a student, it may be necessary to employ holding to effectively achieve shepherding and, hence you are actively leading them away.
- **Restraining;** used only in the most extreme cases, restraining may require a significant amount of force in order to prevent significant injury (as described in the policy). Essentially, restraining is a more extreme version of holding, may require more than one adult and may last significantly longer than other strategies. However, the same care must be taken to restrain a student appropriately.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must consider the following:

- The pupil's age and level of understanding
- The pupil's individual characteristics and history
- The location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)

6. Inappropriate Use of Physical Intervention

Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participants neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular pupil. The purpose of physical intervention is essentially to maintain good order and ensure the safety of all individuals, therefore it is never appropriate to employ a physical intervention strategy if you are not in control of your own emotions.

Physical interventions must never be employed in anger or frustration. If you find yourself angry or frustrated by the situation at hand you must step back and allow someone else to manage the issue. Just as there are a number of acceptable intervention strategies, there are also a number of actions it is completely inappropriate to take. Inappropriate actions include;

- **Hitting or striking;** while it is entirely possible that in the course of an intervention (e.g. breaking up a fight) you may be hit yourself, you must not strike a student.

- Deliberately inflicting pain; it is not okay to twist limbs or put pressure on joints (e.g. arm up a student's back), pull or hold hair, pinch or hold a student in a pain inducing way (e.g. by the ear).
- Making contact with sexually sensitive areas of the body; where at all possible contact should be restricted to arms, shoulders and the back as previously described.
- Restricting breathing; by holding round the throat or for a prolonged period around the chest. It is also never appropriate to sit on/straddle a student or hold them face down to the floor.

7. Developing a Positive Handling Plan

If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that restrictive physical intervention is likely, then a support plan will be completed. This plan will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing. The plan will include:

- Involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- A risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- A record needs to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- Managing the pupil, strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a restrictive physical intervention is to be used
- Identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil
- Ensuring a system to summon additional support is in place (Use of On Call)
- Identifying training needs

8. Guidance & Training for Staff

Guidance and training is essential in this area to ensure school uses the best possible practice. The guidance and training are arranged at a number of levels including:

- Awareness of governors, staff and parents
- Behaviour management for all staff
- Managing and de-escalating conflict in challenging situations – all staff
- Specific training on restrictive physical intervention techniques – specific staff (including year teams and pastoral support staff)

9. Reporting and Recording

If physical intervention occurs the incident must be recorded using a "Physical Intervention Report" using the appropriate category in CPOMS. Details recorded must include:

- what form of physical intervention was required
- why staff felt physical intervention was required and what strategies had been used to prevent the need for physical intervention
- how was physical intervention applied, and by whom
- details of any other staff who supported/witnessed the incident

- when and where the physical intervention happened

The school does not require parental consent to use reasonable force on a student, however the parents/guardians of the student will be informed of the incident as soon as possible after the event. We recognise that there may be some children within our school who find physical contact in general particularly unwelcome as a consequence of their culture/religious group or disability. There may be others for whom such contact is troubling as a result of their personal history, in particular of abuse. A risk assessment may be carried out by a senior member of staff where there is cause for concern about a student.

10. Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we aim to avoid the situation where there are complaints. All disputes that arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to Hampshire's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.

Appendix 1

A summary of helpful strategies and/or responses from staff:

DO:	DO NOT:
Remain controlled	Do Not - use confrontational body language
Talk clearly giving clear instructions	Do Not engage in prolonged and exaggerated eye contact
Keep talking calmly	Do Not use confrontational language
If a student needs to be removed, move WITH the student towards the appropriate exit	Do Not use physical intervention unless all other methods of calming have been used
Request help and tell the student you are requesting help	Do Not use restraint to prevent the student leaving the scene if it is apparent that he/she does not represent a threat to others or his or herself
Remove any audience to maintain a calm atmosphere	Do Not hold a student around the neck or collar or in any other way that might restrict the his/her ability to breathe
Remove other people if they are in danger	Do Not slap, punch, trip or kick a student
Remove potential weapons	Do Not twist or force limbs against a joint
Assume the student is going to calm down	Do Not hold a student by the hair or ear
Only ever use reasonable force relevant to the circumstance	Do Not make contact with the person's neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area or other sensitive body parts
	Do Not use more force than is required