

St Martin's C of E Primary School

Physical Intervention Policy



Philosophy

St Martin's C of E Primary is committed to ensuring that pupils and staff are able to work in a safe, supportive and caring environment, free from violence and disruption, where every pupil has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. St Martin's C of E Primary does not advocate the use of physical restraint of pupils but recognises that there are rare circumstances where its use may be necessary.

We understand that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupil is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, we take a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members are required to use physical intervention in order to handle pupils' emotions or aggressive behaviour when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that physical intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010

This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force in schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- HM Government (2019) 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention'

The use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

Under the Education Act of 1996, the Headteacher authorises all members of staff employed by the school, representatives from outside agencies, voluntary helpers, to use reasonable physical force only 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 (including the pupil's own property).
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere. Many situations which fall into this category, for example a pupil who decides to leave a lesson or school (not considered to be at risk) or a pupil who refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom or who is disrupting a lesson, are best dealt with through other school procedures.

School staff have received Emotional coaching training, which focuses on de-escalation of the child or situation before physical restraint is warranted. In circumstances where a child requires regular physical intervention, due to having a behavioural special educational need for example, then the child may only be restrained by trained members of staff, unless the situation becomes dangerous to both member of staff and pupil.

All staff in school who work with children who may require physical intervention have taken part in certified Crisis Prevention Institute – Safety Intervention training (CPI-SI) and will also receive yearly refresher training. This training is accredited by the Care Quality Commission, British Institute of Learning Difficulties and the Restraint Reduction Network. The principles of CPI-SI are also predominantly about de-escalation and physical intervention / restraint should only be used as a last resort.

This provision applies when a member of staff, or other authorised person, is on the school premises or on an educational visit.

Section 550A of the Education Act of 1996 does not cover all situations in which it might be permissible to use a degree of force. For example, everyone has the right to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so.

When restrictive physical intervention is used it will be:

- As an act of care and not punishment
- As a last resort when all other reasonable strategies have proved ineffective or impracticable
- With the minimum force necessary and such that the degree and duration of force is proportionate to the circumstances.
- Conducted in a manner that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned.

Legal Considerations

The definition of 'reasonable force' is crucial however there is no legal definition of 'reasonable force'. It is therefore not possible to set out comprehensively the forms of physical force that may be used. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the case.

Physical intervention may take several forms including:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of their back

Any technique used must be conducted in a manner consistent with the points set out under Philosophy and the Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention.

Physical interventions that are not considered reasonable:

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in a way that might restrict the student's ability to breathe.
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil.
- Tripping up a pupil, holding or pulling a pupil by the hair.

Physical intervention should be used as a last resort.

Staff should be able to justify that means other than force have been attempted and proved ineffective or would have been impracticable. In order to prevent or defuse a difficult situation, staff may find it useful to:

- Summon the assistance of another authorised member of staff (third wheel scenario).
- Continue speaking and listening to the pupil.
- Divert, distract, cajole or humour.
- Employ appropriate levels of eye contact during any dialogue.
- Reason with the pupil and offer him appropriate choices.

Consideration of these strategies should be maintained during and after the need for physical contact. As soon as it is safe, any hold or restraint should be gradually relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control. The pupil should be informed about what will happen next and be offered reassurance and encouragement to remain calm. In this way the pupil will be more likely to see the restraint as an act of care.

Positive Handling

Positive physical contact involving staff and pupils can contribute to the development of a safe, supportive and inclusive school culture. There may be circumstances in which contact with pupils is likely, unavoidable or necessary.

Examples occur when members of staff are working with pupils with special educational needs who may require physical prompts or help, children requiring first aid, pupils receiving coaching in sport, as part of a curriculum activity and with pupils in distress. Staff will need to make professional judgements about the nature and extent of their physical contact with pupils, to ensure innocent and well - intentioned actions are not misconstrued. Staff will need to have particular regard for cultural sensitivities, to the developing awareness of adolescent pupils and in particular, to children who have previously experienced physical or sexual abuse.

Recording Incidents

It is important that there is a detailed, written record of any occasion where force is used; it may help prevent any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the incident; it will be helpful should there be a complaint. Members of staff who use physical intervention must use the 'Record of Physical Intervention' sheet to record:

- The name(s) of pupils involved.
- Where and when the incident took place.
- The name(s) of any members of staff or pupils who witnessed the incident.
- The reason why physical intervention was necessary.
- The type of physical intervention used
- The degree of force and for how long.
- Details of how the incident began; developed and was resolved.
- Details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil, or a member of staff and of any damage to property.

Incidents involving the use of force can cause parents of the pupil(s) involved great concern. Parents / carers need to be informed of the incident and given an opportunity to discuss it. It is recommended that staff involved in incidents discuss with a senior member of staff, how to communicate with parents/carers. **Parents/carers must be informed on the day of the incident.**

Staff should ensure that a copy of the "Record of Physical Intervention" is given to the Headteacher, to be stored securely within the Physical Intervention file.

Post-incident support

Following an incident of reasonable force, all pupils and staff members involved will be given any necessary first aid to treat injuries as soon as possible, and emotional support.

Wherever reasonable force is used, staff members and pupils involved in incidents will be given separate opportunities to reflect on what happened.

It will be explained to the pupil involved the reason that such intervention was used, and reassured that the use of the intervention was not a punishment for their behaviour, but rather a method of defusing the situation and preventing them from harming themselves or others. The pupil will be asked about the reasons for their behaviour, including:

- Why their environment was causing such distress for them, e.g. in an instance of sensory overstimulation leading to a meltdown.
- Whether they feel there was anything that could have been done to meet their needs before the situation escalated.
- Whether, and how, staff actions were helpful or unhelpful.

Staff will be encouraged to reflect on their actions and how they handled the situation, and will be reassured, where appropriate, that they have done nothing wrong and acted in what they perceived to be the best interests of pupils.

Monitoring Incidents Where Physical Restraint Is Used

The Headteacher will monitor records of any incidents in order to:

- Identify any patterns of behaviour resulting in the use of physical intervention.
- Review the levels of staff awareness of and compliance with the school policy.
- Inform staff training needs.
- Explore the relationship between the use of physical intervention and behaviour in school.

Complaints

Complaints following a dispute about the use of force by an adult should, in the first instance, be referred to the Headteacher. This will generally result in an investigation, which will take account of the written or verbal reports that have been collected. Where disputes cannot be resolved informally within the school, complaints will be pursued in accordance with the school complaints procedures.