

St Laurence C E Primary School
Physical Intervention Policy

We are committed to ensuring that all our pupils and staff are able to live and work in a supportive and caring environment, demonstrating a mutual respect, so that teaching and learning can take place in order to maximise pupils' potential and achievement. In the rare circumstances that it becomes appropriate to use physical intervention, it will be used as an act of care and not punishment and staff will follow the guidelines outlined below.

Staff are required while taking any of the action detailed in this policy to ensure that the pupil understands that this is a last resort and the security of the pupil themselves is continually maintained.

This document is informed by the DFE Guidance: Use of Reasonable Force July 2013

WHENEVER A SERIOUS INCIDENT OCCURS THE HEADTEACHER (OR DEPUTY HEADTEACHER) SHOULD BE INFORMED IMMEDIATELY.

Circumstances when Physical Intervention might be Appropriate

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury to persons or of significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil attacks another pupil or a member of staff.
- Where a pupil absconds from class or tries to leave the school, in circumstances where that pupil could be at risk if not kept in a classroom or school.

It may be necessary to forcibly move a child in the following situations, but only when all other practicable strategies have been tried:

- when a pupil persistently refuses to obey instructions to leave a classroom;
- when a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

A member of our staff will sometimes need to rely on their professional judgement about whether or not to physically intervene by placing her/himself in a hazardous situation or standing back and thereby allowing a pupil or colleague to face a potential hazard. Staff must balance the level and duration of their intervention against the seriousness and likely consequences of the incident.

What Staff will do Before and During any Physical Intervention

Before physically intervening, staff will:

- remain calm and attempt to engender calm;
- tell the pupil to stop and explain to them what will happen if they do not;
- use a range of non-physical interventions aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation. These might include:
- continuing to speak and listen to the pupil(s)
- employing an appropriate level of eye contact during any dialogue;

- diverting, distracting, cajoling or humouring, where appropriate;
- reasoning with and offering appropriate choices to the pupil(s).

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Sometimes a teacher should not intervene in an incident without help. For example, when dealing with physically large pupils or with groups of pupils, or if the teacher believes s/he may be at risk or injury, the teacher should remove other pupils who may be at risk and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues, or where necessary, telephone the Police.

The teacher should inform the pupils that s/he has sent for help. Until assistance arrives, the teacher should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Whilst physically intervening, staff will:

- use the minimum amount of force required to achieve the desired outcome;
- tell the pupil that physical restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary;
- continue to use a range of non-physical interventions aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation, as above.

Ways in which Staff may use Reasonable Force

Whilst there is no legal definition of reasonable force, DfES Circular 06/13(Use of Reasonable Force) advises that "Reasonable in the circumstance, means no more force than is needed".

A potentially dangerous situation may involve staff in:

- physically interposing between pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- holding;
- pushing;
- pulling;
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back;
- using more restrictive holds (in more extreme circumstances only).

Staff are not permitted to act in a way that might cause injury, for example, by:

- holding a pupil round the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe;
- slapping, punching or kicking a pupil;
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- tripping up a pupil;
- holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear;
- holding a pupil face down on the ground.

The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Physical force cannot be justified in a situation that could clearly be resolved without force, for example, to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour.

Planning for the Needs of Individual Pupils

Our school aims to identify, in consultation with parents/carers, any pupil(s) whose behaviour is considered potentially to require a physical or restraining intervention or response, and to consider the needs of those pupils in relation to:

- any individual medical, social, behavioural or learning factors;
- any Individual Education Plans which support the pupil.

If a member of staff considers that a particular pupil may at some time need such intervention, the circumstances and needs will be presented for discussion to the headteacher and SENCo.

Other Physical Contact with Pupils

Our school believes that some use of appropriate, positive, physical contact with pupils can contribute to its development as a safe and friendly school. Some physical contact may be necessary or unavoidable when staff are working with:

- pupils requiring First Aid;
- pupils receiving coaching in sport or as part of another curriculum activity;
- pupils in distress.

Our staff will make professional and sensitive judgements about the nature and extent of their physical contact with pupils. We will have particular regard for cultural sensitivities and gender differences, for the needs of those who may be particularly vulnerable following previous trauma or abuse.

Complaints

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

Policy date: June 2015

Review date: June 2016

