

Edale Rise Primary and Nursery School

Positive Handling Policy

Introduction

At Edale Rise School we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for our students to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them to maximise their potential. Ensuring the safety of our students and staff is taken very seriously. We believe that all students and staff have the right to feel safe whilst at school or on school run activities. It is understood that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required. Edale Rise School acknowledges that physical techniques are only a small part of a whole school approach to behaviour management. This policy should be read in conjunction with the behaviour and safeguarding policies.

The Governing Body and staff of this school recognise the implications for all concerned when the use of physical intervention becomes necessary. The aim of this policy and guidance is to ensure that everyone at our school has a positive and safe way to respond to the use of physical intervention.

Acceptable forms of physical intervention in school

“Physical intervention” (PI) is the term used to describe contact between staff and pupils where no force is involved. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have contact or physical intervention (PI) with children; however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil’s individual needs. There are occasions when staff may have cause to have physical intervention (PI) with pupils:

- To comfort a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age)
- To gently direct a pupil
- To support physical management e.g. positioning in to standers or pieces of equipment as part of therapy programmes
- For curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama, etc)
- First aid and medical treatment
- In an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils
- In rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted

Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the pupil. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one pupil, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. 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 duration of contact
- The location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)

“Restrictive Physical Intervention” (RPI) is the term used 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 Head teacher has to, in specific circumstances, use “reasonable force” to control or restrain pupils. There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. However, there are two relevant considerations:

- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident make it necessary to intervene.
- 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, 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 situations, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

Physical contact must never be used as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact shall not be made with the pupil’s neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, or any other sensitive body areas, or to put pressure on joints. It must not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular pupil. Physical intervention should be in the pupil’s best interest and should only be used with an awareness of the need to differentiate the attachment to staff from the attachment to key adults such as parents and siblings.

Minimising the need to use force

As a school we are firmly committed and constantly strive to create a calm and safe environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force. In addition to this, students who present with challenging behaviour may have an individual behaviour management plan, and students with conditions that result in increased anxiety levels, and therefore an increased risk of presenting with challenging behaviour may have individualised support or programmes to help them manage this. The school incorporates curriculum sessions that explore and help students to learn about their feelings and managing conflict. The curriculum also promotes independence, choice and inclusion and students are given the maximum opportunity for personal growth and emotional well-being. Staff at the school will only use restrictive physical intervention as a last resort and will use all skills available to them to de-escalate and diffuse incidents as they arise to prevent them from reaching a crisis point. Staff will only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force.

Who may use (restrictive) physical intervention

The staff who have been trained in the use of restrictive physical intervention are authorised by the Head teacher to have control of pupils, and must be aware of this Policy and its implications. We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger, and that removing pupils and themselves is the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the pupils.

Training

Key staff are trained to use appropriate methods of holding and restraint.

Key aspects of the training are:

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- an insight in to recent legislation and guidance that could impact on policy and practice
- Clear and unequivocal emphasis on the rights of children to be kept safe at all times
- Physical intervention should only be used when all else has been tried and the situation is likely to become dangerous for children or staff
- All actions must be conducted in the context of this policy
- Clear and accurate records of interventions must be maintained.

Context

Positive handling plans are written for any student who it is felt may require the use of physical intervention to help manage their challenging behaviour.

It is expected that children and parents or carers will be appropriately involved in formulating any plans that are made to meet their individual needs.

Such plans will detail how specific behaviours will be managed and the use of holding and restraint will be detailed as an integral element of the plan.

Planned and emergency physical interventions

Planned interventions are ones that are described in a student's positive handling plan. This should cover most scenarios and will include the use of specified Approach techniques for the individual. An emergency intervention is one where a situation arises that was unforeseen or is uncharacteristic of the student. Members of staff retain their duty of care to the students and their response even in an emergency should be reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances. Following any such incident a positive handling plan will be drawn up (or existing plans updated) to support effective responses to any future situations that may arise.

Principles

We recognise that good behaviour must be acknowledged and celebrated as a matter of course and that this in itself is a primary tool in managing behaviour.

A fundamental issue to be considered is a child's absolute right to be both "touched" and "not touched". Judgments that all adults must make before touching any young person are as follows:

- Is the physical contact truly in the best interests of the child?
- How do I feel about this level of contact?
- Is this age appropriate given my knowledge of the young person?
- What would be the consequence of not making physical contact?

Wherever possible, strategies for physical contact or intervention should be detailed within a plan, formulated with the young person, his or her family and the Inclusion Leader.

Definitions

For the purposes of this document the terms holding, escorting and restraint will be defined by the outcome, which is intended when the physical intervention is applied.

- Escorting – the intention to move a child away from a particular area, the degree of force will determine when this becomes a restraint i.e. when the child has no choice but to move under the directions of staff.
- Holding – the intention is to keep the child in a particular place (see below) for when this becomes restraint).
- Restraint – the intention is to overpower the child because they have lost all control and are a danger to

themselves and or others or property.

It is important that at all times, the young person is made aware of what is expected of them and that as soon as there is a genuine attempt to comply with such expectations the hold be ceased. The amount of force that is used should be the minimum necessary to successfully achieve the desired outcome as defined above.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint should only be used when all other strategies have been tried and found to be unsuccessful. In the first instance staff should always attempt to diffuse the situation by;

- appropriate use of voice in terms of pace, volume and tone
- adjustment of body position to ensure minimum threat to the young person and maximum safety for staff - generally a sideways stance
- facial expression eye contact is positive and calming
- appropriate use of humour
- making clear the expectations of all concerned in the incident and the likely consequences if behaviour deteriorates further
- seeking help from other staff to diffuse the situation

Using Force

No legal definition of reasonable force exist. However, for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in Edale Rise School:

- Positive handling uses the minimum degree of force necessary, for the shortest period of time to prevent a student from harming themselves, others or property.
- The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour and the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause.
- Staff would be expected to follow the student's behaviour management plan in the first instance to manage an incident/challenging behaviour.
- If this was unsuccessful and the situation continued to escalate and was deemed to require it then staff would be expected to employ other Approach techniques that they have been trained in.

All the techniques should take in to account the students

- Age
- Size
- Gender
- Level of physical, emotional and intellectual development.
- Special needs
- Social context.

The Approach techniques allow for an individual response to each student. Where records identify a need for a planned approach, behaviour plans and positive handling plans are drawn up. Where possible these are completed through multi-agency collaboration and with parental consent, shared with other agencies supporting the students so to try and facilitate consistency in the approaches used where practicably possible. It is important to state that every incident of the use of reasonable force carries risks, and that even when

carrying out approved techniques there is the potential for injury to both the student and the members of staff involved. Approach techniques seek to avoid injury, but it is still possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of the technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the student remains safe. Any such injury will be reported on the physical intervention monitoring form.

Reporting, recording and monitoring incidents

Where physical control or restraint has been used a record of the incident will be completed and kept. Appropriate documentation (restrictive physical intervention monitoring form, found in the Inclusion folder on the network, or see copy of a template in appendix) should be completed as soon as possible after the incident (and as a maximum within 24 hours). This will then be signed by the staff completing it and handed to the Headteacher. Significant incidents will be recorded in the school's incident records.

Support for Staff

Key staff are trained in the methods of holding and restraint as per the Local Authority guidance. It is essential that staff make a judgment quickly about the safety of using a hold or restraint. They should only proceed if they have determined that all else has been tried and failed, that there is likely to be serious harm to persons or property if nothing is done or that the good order of the environment will be severely disrupted. Finally, they must be sure that they can apply the hold or restraint safely for the young person and themselves.

In circumstances where staff judge that they are unable to apply restraint satisfying the above conditions of safety, they should involve a member of the Leadership Team and do what they can to contain the situation.

Staff who have had to use physical intervention will be offered the opportunity to discuss their feelings soon after an incident or completion of the recording pro-forma, as appropriate. It is an expectation that all staff acknowledge the importance of discussing the issues raised with a member of the Leadership Team.

The Governors and Leadership Team of the school will support the actions of staff in the use of physical intervention provided that they have been conducted in the context of this policy and the methods drawn from LA guidance have been used.

Monitoring

It is the responsibility of all staff and the Governing body to be aware of the contents of this policy. It will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Signed:

Date:

Reviewed: October 2021

Date of next review: October 2022

Appendices attached: -

- Record of physical intervention
- Parental Agreement for Positive Handling

Appendix 1 – Record of physical intervention used at Edale Rise Primary and Nursery School
Edale Rise Primary and Nursery School

RECORD of PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Date	
Name of Pupil	
Year group	
Date of Birth	
Staff members involved	
Witnesses	
Where and when the incident occurred	
Antecedents	
Details of incident	
Reasons why positive handling was used	
Pupil response	
Outcome of incident	
Details of any injuries	
Details of any damage to property	
SLT member informed	
Discussion with parents /outcomes	
Signed and dated (staff and parents)	



Appendix 2:



Parental Agreement for Positive Handling

Name of child:..... Year:.....

Staff involved in supporting this child:

We agree that in the following situations, staff should be allowed to intervene physically to manage the behaviour of my child:

- if there is a risk of physical harm to another child or adult
- if there is a risk of damage to property
- if my child risks harming him or herself

I understand that:

- key staff at school are trained in strategies for physical intervention
- staff will only use these strategies as a last resort
- staff will record any incidents and will keep the family informed
- this agreement will be reviewed as part of the provision map review programme

Signed: (person with parental responsibility)

..... (school representative)

Date:

Notes