



Reach Schools

Restraint, Physical Intervention and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

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Schools to note: This is a Reach Schools Policy and should not be modified.	



This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with students who may need to be positively handled. This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies relating to interaction between adults and students, specifically the school's Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding policy. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of trustees.

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1. Introduction

Reach Schools recognises the right of every person to be protected from harm and, for that reason, seeks to protect all children and young people against any form of physical intervention which is either unnecessary, inappropriate (either to the individual or in the prevailing circumstances) excessive or unlawful. This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and students, specifically the school's Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding policy.

2. Purpose of the policy

Good professional relationships between staff and students are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of students in school respond positively to the discipline practiced by the staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all students and staff. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required. Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff clearly:

- 1) understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- 2) are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations should they occur.

The application of any form of physical control places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.



Restraint and reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when students, staff or property are at risk.

3. Definitions

- (a) **Physical Contact** : Situations are those in which proper physical contact takes place between staff and students, e.g. in sports/PE, first aid or to comfort distressed pupils or greeting them with a handshake.
- b) **Reasonable force**: Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention and may or may not involve the use of restraint.
- c) **Restrictive interventions**: Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. Restrictive interventions may include use of equipment, medication or seclusion.
- D) **Restraint**: A form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force where the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. Restraint may or may not involve the use of force.

These terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories. For example, depending on the circumstances, if two members of staff briefly physically pull apart two pupils who are fighting, all three definitions could be relevant.

4. Underpinning Values

Everyone attending or working at Reach Schools has the right to:



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- a recognition of their unique identity;
- be treated with respect and dignity;
- learn and work in a safe environment and ;
- be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse

Students attending this school and their families have a right to:

- individual consideration of students' needs by staff that has responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all students and staff working in the school and;
- be informed about the school's complaint procedure

Reach Schools will ensure that all students understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits which govern behaviour in the school. Families should have committed themselves through the Home-School Agreement to ensure the good behaviour of their child and that the child understands and follows the school's Behaviour Policy.

5. Training

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. However, wherever possible we will use staff who have had appropriate training. Training (Team teach) will be made available to designated staff and will be the responsibility of the co-headteachers. SLT, Safeguarding Team and some specific individual authorised staff will undergo training as appropriate. No member of staff will be expected to



undertake the use of reasonable force or restraint without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of ongoing staff development.

6. Strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour

Staff consistently must use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment.

Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and provokes intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

- Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with request for the pupil to refrain;
- Further verbal reprimand stating that this is the second request for compliance; an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable; an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues;
- Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible summon assistance;
- Physical intervention. Reasonable force uses the minimum degree of force to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.

De-escalation techniques

1. The use of your voice and words
2. Distraction techniques
3. Removing all objects/implements that are currently making the situation unsafe



4. Seek out support from other members of staff, staff who have a good relationship with that child/or simply are a fresh face

Non-verbal strategies

The largest part of what we communicate is through body language, much is through the tone of our voice. Professor Mehrabian estimates that just 7% of our communication is through the words that we use (Mehrabian, 1972). It is useful to remember this when you are trying to de-escalate. Ensure you are modelling the behaviour you want the child to emulate, relaxed and open body language can be helpful.

1. Appear calm and self-assured. Make sure you are not displaying the same signs of agitation that can be seen in the child;
2. Maintain a neutral facial expression; and
3. Allow space. Entering a person's personal space can be useful to refocus on a task when the situation is calm, but when a child is agitated this can indicate aggression and escalate the situation. Staying some distance away will also help keep you safe should the child become physically aggressive.

Verbal strategies

1. Lower your voice and keep your tone even. It is hard to have an argument with someone who is not responding aggressively back to you;
2. Distraction and diversion are extremely useful. When a child is aggressive, they are responding with their own fight-or-flight instincts and not thinking about their actions;
3. Distract them and engage their thinking brain, perhaps by changing the subject or commenting on something that is happening outside the window;



4. Give choices, repeat these using the broken-record technique if necessary, and do not get drawn into secondary behaviours such as arguing back, which are designed to distract or upset you;
5. Acknowledging the child's feelings shows that you have listened to them, and can be crucial when diffusing a situation; for example, 'It must be really difficult for you ... thank you for letting me know';
6. Use words and phrases that de-escalate, such as: I wonder if... Let's try... It seems like... Maybe we can...; and
7. Tell the child what you want them to do rather than what you do not want them to do; for example, 'I want you to sit down' rather than 'stop arguing with me';

Staff should remember their great relationships with students within the school and use their knowledge on the children to support the de-escalation of situations. For example, if you know a child really well and their behaviour patterns and think a student is about to be aggressive or cause damage, then you can use the strategies in this policy to remove them from the classroom before the situation escalates.

Using reasonable force or restraint techniques on a pupil should only be used when all the other reasonable methods of managing the above situations have been tried.

Escalating situations

The 1996 Education Act (Section 550A) stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do any of the following;

- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its students; whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom, during a teaching session or elsewhere (this includes authorised out-of-school activities);



- self-injuring or placing himself or herself at risk;
- injuring others ;
- causing damage to property, including that of the student himself or herself ;and
- committing a criminal offence (even if the student is below the age of criminal responsibility)

Before the use of a physical force or restraint the staff members will consider:

Is it necessary?

Are there reasonable alternative ways to manage the situation and get the desired outcome?

Is it proportionate?

Staff should use the least amount of restrictive intervention for the least amount of time. And will ensure that they consider medical conditions, other vulnerabilities, age and size of the child.

Has the pupil's welfare been considered?

Staff should consider the impact on the pupil's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken. We will always seek to maintain respect for a pupil's dignity

Types of incidents

Incidents described above fall into 3 broad categories:

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property; and



- Where a student is behaving in a way that is compromising good order or discipline

Examples of situations which fall within one of the first two categories are:

- a student attacks a member of staff or another student;
- students are fighting;
- a student is causing, or at risk of causing injury, damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of materials or objects;
- a student is running in a corridor or in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself ; and
- a student absconds from a class or tries to leave the school

Examples of behaviour which fall into the third category are:

- a student persistently refusing to do as requested; and
- a student is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

7. Acceptable measures of physical Intervention

The use of any degree of force can only be deemed reasonable if:

- it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident ;
- it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent ;
- it is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result ;



- the age, understanding and the gender of the student are taken into account ; and
- it is likely to achieve the desired result.

Wherever possible, assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervention. Physical intervention uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property.

The form of physical intervention may involve staff doing the following:

- physically interposing themselves between students if there is potential fight ;
- blocking a student's path to stop them from harming another student;
- escorting a student away from a dangerous situation ; and
- shepherding a student away

In extreme circumstances, trained staff may need to use more restrictive holds, all of which are recognised Team Teach techniques.

Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of Reach Schools, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

Whenever reasonable force is used, staff will keep talking to the student.

8.Unacceptable uses of force

Staff will never use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils will not be deliberately restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example by covering the mouth and/or nose or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. Staff are aware that the use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the



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ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff will release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible.

SEN and Disabilities:

Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. In particular, pupils who find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. We will always seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that we can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment.

We will utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur, and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions being used. We will also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies

When applying measures such as reasonable force and restraint in response to incidents involving children with SEN and disabilities, Reach Schools considers the risks carefully, given the additional vulnerability of the group. To safeguard a student or others, it may be necessary to use a hold even though it is likely to impact on the well-being of the child.

Reach School plans positive and proactive behaviour support plans for certain students which detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. This is discussed in conjunction with the relevant persons, such as parents, staff and health professionals, and parameters around its use stated clearly in the plan. Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use



reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, we will have a risk assessment in place and where possible, mitigate risks such as through prevention strategies.

Whether the use of reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, irrespective of whether it has been considered as part of a behaviour support plan

9. Recording

Where physical intervention has been used to manage a pupil a record of the incident always needs to be kept. A contemporaneous record (i.e. written as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours after the incident's occurrence) should be made by the staff member involved in the incident on the school's information management system CPOMS.

The record will contain the following information:

- The name(s) and the job title(s) of the member(s) of staff who used reasonable force;
- The name(s) of the child(ren) involved;
- When and where the incident took place;
- Names of staff and child(ren) who witnessed the incident
- The reason that force was necessary;
- Behaviour of the child(ren) which led up to the incident including any triggers;
- Any attempt to resolve the situation;
- The degree of force used;
- How it was applied/ How long it was used for;



- The child's/children's response and the eventual outcome;
- Details of any injuries suffered by either staff or child(ren);
- Details of any damage to property;
- Details of any medical treatment required (an accident form will be completed where medical treatment is needed);
- Details of follow-up including contact with the families of the child(ren) involved;

It is a legal requirement that all incidents of physical force or holding that has been used is recorded appropriately on CPOMS as soon as possible or within 24 hours.

Section 93A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 does not require schools to record and report instances of restrictive interventions where force was not used. However, as best practice we apply the same recording and reporting policy to restrictive interventions where force is not used.

10. Action after an Incident

The Co-headteacher or Designated Safeguarding lead will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a student, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedure:

- Safeguarding and Child protection procedure including, safeguarding staff against allegations of abuse
- School Behaviour policy
- Exclusions Procedure



Members of staff will be kept informed of any action taken. In case of any action concerning a member of staff, they will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

When an incident happens we follow an internal procedure to ensure that we are meeting the safety and wellbeing of both our students and staff members involved. Please see below:

Incident happens

1. The child who was involved in the incident is checked on during the school day to ensure they are okay and not hurt - Head of Phase/Year organises.
2. Families of that child are called on that day and updated - Person who was leading the restraint to do this unless they are a TA or a support member of staff then Head of Phase to do.
3. All staff are debriefed and we reflect on the incident within 48 hours - Head of phase to organise with all staff involved including the DSL and the relevant co-head teacher.
4. Everybody involved in the incident logs their account on CPOMS under the Physical intervention tab, all logs will include the justification of having to use reasonable force/restraint on a child - see section 7.

11. Complaints

The availability of a clear policy regarding physical intervention and early involvement of families should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under Reach School's Complaints Policy.



12. Monitoring of incidents

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use reasonable force/restraint, this will always be recorded and documented. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Co-headteachers to the needs of any student(s) whose behaviour can only be contained using reasonable force. This process will address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.

13. Children with Additional Educational Needs and Positive touch

Consent to use touch will be recorded in the student's behaviour support plans and their risk assessments. Positive touch will only be used on children who have completed risk assessments.

Some children with SEN find communication difficult and the use of touch enables adults to reinforce positive communicative exchanges or as the main form of communication in itself. It enables staff to respond non-verbally to a student's own use of physical contact during interactions. These forms of contact are most likely to occur during interaction and routine, social exchanges.

Touch also enables staff to offer students reassurance, security and comfort. In context it can be used to help them understand their emotions and feelings.

In most circumstances staff should only ever be making physical contact with the upper part of the body and this primarily should be the hands, arms and shoulder area, unless being positively handled as stated in this policy.



Types of positive touch

- Hugging: members of staff that are using touch for comfort must use a 'school hug'. This is a sideways hug, with the adult putting their hands on the child's shoulders. This discourages 'front on' hugging, and the adult's hands on the shoulders limit the ability of the child to turn themselves into the adult. This can be done either standing or sitting.
- Hand-Holding: children sometimes enjoy being able to hold hands with adults around them. This is acceptable when the hand holding is consensual.
- Head, back and shoulder rub: sometimes children need a rub on the head, back or shoulder to support them in calming down. The use of the touch can be the communication to the child that the staff member is there to support them.

It is very important that, as far as possible, the students give consent to any touch. All staff should be sensitive to any verbal or non-verbal communication from students indicating they do not want to be touched. It must always be considered that for touch to be positive it should be consensual; therefore it is important that you verbalise what you are going to do. For example 'I am going to rub your back to make you feel better, is this okay for me to do this?'.

Where a young person indicates that touch from an adult is not welcome, perhaps by moving away or flinching to avoid, the staff member should apologise to demonstrate a respect for personal boundaries. Staff should be aware of any changes in a student's behaviour which may indicate the need to reduce or withdraw touch. All changes in behaviour in response to touch should be recorded on CPOMs and the student's support plans.

Reach Schools will seek consent from families if we feel positive touch will be a necessary and supportive measure in school for their child. We will discuss and record the type of touch intended to use.



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