

Bratton Primary School



Positive Handling Information

September 2022

Introduction

Every school should be committed to using positive behaviour management strategies to help young people learn how to behave appropriately. As a general rule, these strategies are sufficient, but there may be occasions when further interventions are required.

For the purpose of this guidance, physical restraint is defined as an incident when a staff member prevents or restricts a child's movement against their will. A staff member can include any member of school staff, a volunteer, or any other person who is temporarily in charge with the authorisation of the headteacher.

If physical intervention or restraint of any form is required, a school should adhere to the following principles:

- Restraint is only ever used as a last resort when every other approach has been tried
- Restraint will only be used when a pupil poses a danger to themselves or to others, or they are damaging property on or off site
- Minimal force required will be used
- Staff are trained in the correct use of physical restraint by an LA-approved provider

Duty of care

When considering the use of physical restraint, staff members must take adequate measures to protect all pupils in their care from risk of harm or injury where there is a foreseeable risk. Staff members have a duty to provide the same standard of care as is expected of a parent. A staff member should decide at the time of the incident whether they should physically intervene.

What is physical restraint?

Physical restraint may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Guiding a pupil by the arm to remove them from the room
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Standing between pupils to prevent movement
- Physically holding a pupil to prevent a fight
- Holding a pupil on the floor – a pupil must only be held on the floor in extreme circumstances

A pupil must not be restrained in a locked room where they cannot leave of their own free will. When physical restraint may be used Physical restraint may be used:

- When there is good reason to believe a pupil is putting themselves or others in a position of danger.
- To prevent a pupil from leaving the classroom if there is a risk of danger if they do so.
- To prevent an attack on a member of staff or another pupil.
- To stop a fight between pupils.

There may be cause to use physical restraint on any pupil, of any gender or age.

Record keeping

The school should inform parents if restraint of any kind has been used on their child and the circumstances leading up to the physical restraint.

Records should be kept on the pupil's file if restraint has been used. The records should give details of the de-escalation methods attempted and the subsequent amount of physical restraint used.

If a pupil is known to require physical interventions, this will be planned for in consultation with the parents where possible.

When physical restraint must not be used

Physical restraint must not be used:

- To enforce the school's own rules.
- To search for prohibited items, such as weapons and knives, unless there is good reason to assume the pupil is carrying such items.
- To prevent a pupil from leaving the classroom if they are not at risk by doing so
- As a punishment.

What is considered 'reasonable force'?

The DfE's explanation of what is considered 'reasonable' force, is that which is proportionate to the circumstances, i.e. no more force is used than is needed to achieve the particular result relating to the circumstances. This means that what is considered reasonable will depend upon the circumstances of the case.

Communicating the school's approach to the use of physical restraint

Schools should include the guidelines for physical restraint within their Behavioural Policy, and these guidelines should be communicated to all staff, parents and pupils. The governing body should approve the use of physical restraint, as set out in these guidelines, and ensure the Behavioural Policy covers the use of reasonable force should it become necessary.

Parental permission for the use of physical restraint is not required as the staff member has a legal power to use reasonable force, as well as a duty of care to all children.

Other forms of contact

At times, it may be necessary to have physical contact with pupils – this might include:

- Holding the hand of a pupil at the front or back of a queue.
- Giving comfort to a pupil in distress.
- Demonstrating a PE position
- Administering first aid.
- Demonstrating actions during drama lessons.
- Demonstrating the playing of a musical instrument.

Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy, as this would put staff members at a high risk of breaching their duty of care to pupils.

Protection for staff members

It is for the headteacher to determine whether staff members require any additional training in order to effectively carry out their responsibilities, considering pupils' needs in the process.

In the case of a complaint, the responsibility is on the pupil to show that the staff member used unreasonable force. The staff member is usually not required to show that they acted reasonably and staff members should not be automatically suspended pending the investigation.

There should be a thorough investigation with confidential, independent written statements from all those present, including other children. If the staff member is suspended as a result of the investigation, a named contact should be provided to support them.

The governing body will determine if the staff member acted in accordance with the school's guidelines.

The DfE makes it clear that schools may use force if necessary for the safety of the pupils and they will be defended if they face subsequent legal action.

The senior leadership team and the governing body should convey this to all staff members through the positive handling policy.