

Lemington Riverside Primary School

Appropriate Physical Contact Policy

Some pupils require a physical contact as part of the normal programme of work in school. It would be expected that the use of physical prompts e.g. hand over hand, would be part of a support plan, and as such would be agreed with parents and signed by them.

Staff may have cause to have physical contact with children for a variety of reasons:-

- To comfort a child in distress
- To gently direct a child (age –appropriate has to be considered)
- For curricular reasons (e.g. in PE, Drama, Art, Science, DT etc)
- In an emergency to avert danger to the child
- In rare situations where physical restraint is warranted

In all situations when physical contact between staff and children takes place, staff must consider the following:-

- The child's age and level of understanding as to why physical contact is made
- The child's individual characteristics (e.g. whether the physical contact might be misinterpreted or resented, this includes issues of the relative gender of staff and child)
- The location where the contact takes place e.g. it should not take place in private without other witnesses present
- It should not become an habitual act between a particular member of staff and an individual child
- Physical contact should never be made as a punishment or in order to inflict pain
- Physical contact should not be made with either participant's neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts or to put pressure on joints

Lifting and handling young children

Lifting a small child should be considered in situations where:

- there is a risk of injury to the child and/or others
- there is risk of significant damage to property
- the child is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline

However, it should only be considered as an option when the following judgements have been made:

- not lifting the child is likely to result in more dangerous consequences than lifting the child in terms of injury to the child and/or staff
- this response is in the paramount interest of the pupil

Restrictive physical intervention

Restrictive physical interventions should only be considered as a last resort to support pupils in times of crisis and should only be used:

- i) where there is risk of injury to self and/or others
- ii) where there is risk of significant damage to property
- iii) where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline

However, it should only be considered as an option when the following judgements have been made:

- a) not intervening is likely to result in more dangerous consequences than intervening
- b) alternative calming and defusing strategies have failed to de-escalate this situation or it is not reasonably practicable to attempt alternative strategies due to the imminent risk of injury
- c) this response is in the paramount interest of the pupil

Definition and context for restrictive physical intervention

Restrictive physical interventions/physical restraint occurs when a member of staff uses force with the intention of restricting a pupil's movement against their will. The use of barriers to restrict movement would also be considered to be a restrictive physical intervention.

Physical prompts or manual guidance from which a pupil can release him/herself without difficulty does not fall within this definition.

Guidelines for physical intervention

The use of physical restraint should be used as the last resort. All other methods of managing the behaviour should be used first, including listening to the child, talking to the child, asking for others to withdraw, using calming strategies and negotiating.

Physical restraint must only involve the minimum force necessary to maintain good order and safety. It should be applied only until the pupil is calm. Supportive calming techniques should be used in conjunction with the hold/containment in

order to encourage the pupil to calm as quickly as possible, e.g. talking rationally and calmly to the pupil and explaining what is happening, why, and when it will end.

Physical intervention should be used to de-escalate a potentially dangerous situation. It should not be used as a threat or a punishment.

Where pupils have exhibited challenging behaviour, it will be expected that they will have a positive behaviour management programme (IBP) in place which has been prepared in consultation with parents/carers. This programme will identify

- the triggers leading to / causing the challenging behaviour
- teaching targets for more effective behaviours
- how to adapt the environment to optimise the probability of effective behaviour
- a programme of positive reinforcement and appropriate sanctions
- the early warning signs of challenging behaviours
- defusing and calming strategies to employ when the early warning signs are exhibited

It is expected that a positive behaviour programme will be in place for every pupil whose behaviour has required physical intervention or restraint. This programme should include a description of the method of physical intervention that will be used and will be subject to a termly review.

Parents/carers must be informed if physical restraint has been employed and should be consulted with, and involved in, the development of the behaviour management programme.

It is important that a multi-agency approach to supporting pupils with challenging behaviour should be adopted wherever possible, with other agencies involved in the care and/or support of pupils, informed, and involved in management programmes and/or planning.

The Social Services Department should be involved if the pupil is in the Public Care of the Local Authority (i.e. looked after).

Self Defence/Emergencies

An effective risk assessment procedure together with well-planned preventative strategies will help to keep emergency use of restrictive physical interventions to an absolute minimum. However, staff should be aware that, in an emergency, everyone has a right to defend themselves against attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so. Similarly, in an emergency, for example, if a pupil was at immediate risk of injury, or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff would be entitled to intervene.

Reporting and Recording

In all incidents where physical intervention/restraint has been used the following actions must be taken:

- 1) The Head Teacher must be informed as soon as possible.
- 2) Parents/carers must be informed.
- 3) The staff involved must complete a written record (Appendix 1 –Incident Form) as soon as practically possible. This should be completed within 3 working days and should take note of any other people present who may act as witnesses if required.
- 4) In circumstances where the restraint has caused significant concern it is recommended that the school notify the appropriate Officer in the LA (e.g. Principal Educational Psychologist, Child Protection Officer etc.)
- 5) Schools to keep two copies of the record forms, one in a Critical Incident file and one in the pupil's file.

All record sheets and the log book will be kept in the head's locked filing cabinet.

Review and Monitoring

The following procedures should be considered on a regular basis

- health and safety procedures
- reporting and recording procedures
- school policy on behaviour, discipline and physical restraint
- individual pupil's behaviour programme
- staff training needs, including induction
- monitoring the effects of the incidents on pupils and staff and provide support where necessary
- obtaining support from outside agencies as appropriate

The Head Teacher should be satisfied that the course of action taken during the incident complied with the school's policy and the Local Authority guidelines.

Post-Incident Management

Following an incident in which restrictive physical interventions are used, both staff and pupil should be given separate opportunities to talk about what happened in a calm and safe environment. Staff need to ensure that the pupil is comfortable and offered a drink if needed. Post incident interview should be designed to discover exactly what happened and the effects on participants. They should not be used to apportion blame or punish those involved. If there is any reason to suspect that a pupil or staff member has experienced injury or severe distress, they should receive prompt medical attention.

Authorised staff

The 1996 Education Act allows all teachers at a school to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. It also allows other people to do so, in the same way as teachers, provided they have been authorised to do so by the Head Teacher to have control or charge of pupils. All staff will have a copy of the policy and guidelines for behaviour management/physical intervention and will be aware of and understand what this authorisation means.

All sections of the behaviour management policy should be reviewed on an annual basis.

References and further information

DfEE circular 10/98: Section 550A of the Education Act 1996: The use of force to control or restrain children

Guidance on the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for staff working with Children and Adults who Display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders: DfES/DH Guidance, Jan 02

Physical Interventions: A Policy Framework (BILD)

The Team Teach Approach – course information

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