



BEECHEN CLIFF

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION IN SCHOOLS

A) Introduction :

Children and young people need to be safe. They also need to be aware of how they should behave. Some very occasionally lose control. They need to know we are able to control them safely and confidently. Our pupils always respond well to the School Rules and conventions. Situations in which physical intervention may be needed are, therefore, very few in number.

All our staff need to be safe and confident in how they manage inappropriate behaviour. They have to be clear about the options open to them when all the normal systems have failed, or when there is a clear emergency in which they need to use reasonable restraint. They need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. They need to know that the School, and the LA, will offer support if they are challenged.

Parents need to know that their children, and those who teach them, are safe and free from disruptive influences or danger. They also need to know that they will be properly informed if their child is the subject of physical intervention; and they need to know the nature of the intervention and the rationale for its use.

This Policy is related to other Policies, especially those on Behaviour Management, Health & Safety and Child Protection, to which reference can be made. The policy on Behaviour Management covers broader issues; this Policy focuses on the use of physical restraint.

The guidance outlined in this Policy is based upon "Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties" DCSF 2006; The Education Act 1996 – Section 550A; "The use of force to control or restrain pupils DCSF 2006 : Policy and Guidance to Mainstream and Special Schools on the use of Physical Restraint" LA 2008.

B) Rationale :

Physical intervention is a last resort. Beechen Cliff School offers a properly planned and differentiated curriculum that provides appropriate levels of challenge to all pupils. The School maintains an effective Behaviour Policy that is known and understood by all staff, students and pupils.

Physical intervention is then our method of last resort after all other approaches have been tried, or in situations of clear danger or extreme urgency. We utilise only the minimum force required to resolve the situation safely. How we respond always has regard to the circumstances and to the age and understanding of the child or young person.

Where there is a foreseeable risk that a pupil could behave in such a way as to require restrictive physical intervention, a risk assessment is planned. Planning is also undertaken to see if trigger situations can be avoided and other positive strategies employed to lessen the likelihood of such incidents occurring.

C) Who may use physical intervention and when :

The law allows “teachers, and other persons who are authorised by the Headmaster to have control or charge of pupils, to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following -

- committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility);
- injuring themselves or others;
- causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property);
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the School or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or otherwise”. (Education Act 1996, Section 550A)

All teachers employed at Beechen Cliff School are authorised by the Headmaster to use physical restraint if necessary. In addition, the following staff are also authorised to use physical restraint - *regularly visiting teachers and Supply Staff, Classroom Supervisors, Teaching Assistants, Administrative Staff, Lunchtime Supervisors, Caretakers, Technicians and Dining Hall Staff.*

The power may be used where the pupil (including a pupil from another school) is on school premises or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff (e.g. on a school visit). School staff are also, like anyone else, allowed to use reasonable force (the minimum necessary) to defend themselves.

We take the view that staff are not expected to put themselves in danger, and that removing pupils and themselves from a source of danger is a proper thing to do. We appreciate the integrity of our staff and value their efforts to rectify situations that are difficult and in which they exercise their duty of care for their pupils. However, we do not require them to go beyond what is reasonable. In particular, it is acceptable for any member of staff to decide that they will not use physical intervention for personal reasons.

All staff will be made aware of this Policy and its implications.

D) Acceptable Physical Interventions :

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. That will always depend on the precise circumstance of individual cases. Physical intervention must be justified as appropriate by the circumstances. We will only use the minimum force that is needed to restore safety or appropriate behaviour; and we take account of the age, understanding and gender of the pupil. Those exercising the power to use force must also take proper account of any particular special educational need (SEN) and/or disability.

Acceptable forms of intervention in this School include –

- leading or guiding a pupil by the hand or arm, or shepherding them with a hand in the centre of the back;
- holding a pupil who has lost control until they are calm and safe;
- physically moving between and separating two pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- use of reasonable force to remove a weapon or dangerous object from a pupil's grasp;
- where there is immediate risk of injury, any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force' – for example to prevent a pupil running into a busy road or hitting or hurting someone;
- using more restrictive holds in extreme circumstances.

It is also acceptable for external doors to be locked for security purposes, if a member of staff is always with the pupils in such circumstances.

Staff may move, defend themselves, lead, restrain or block someone, bearing in mind the whole time their own safety, as well as that of others, and of the child who is the subject of any restraint or other intervention.

It is **unacceptable** and likely to be illegal, or constitute grounds for disciplinary action, for staff to use any physical intervention designed to cause pain or injury including :

- any form of corporal punishment, slapping, punching or kicking;
- holding by the neck or collar, or otherwise restricting the ability to breathe;
- holding by the hair or an ear;
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- tripping up a pupil or holding an arm out at neck or head height to stop them;
- holding a pupil face down on the ground or sitting on them;
- shutting or locking a pupil in a room, except in extreme situations whilst summoning support.

Staff should also avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

E) Using Physical Intervention :

On occasions, staff may find themselves in unforeseen or emergency situations when they have no option but to use reasonable force to manage a crisis. Except in cases where there is immediate danger we would normally try other ways of resolving or de-escalating a situation. These could include -

- calmly re-stating the rules and expectations for the situation;
- removing other pupils from the situation and thus from danger or from being an audience;
- use of physical proximity, but not in a threatening way;
- encouraging the pupil to withdraw to a safer and calmer situation;
- calling another adult for support or to take over.

If more than minor physical intervention is judged to be necessary, the teacher or adult in charge should :

- send for the assistance of another adult (for support or to take over, and as a witness);
- remove other pupils from the scene if possible;
- continue to talk calmly to the pupil explaining what will happen, and under what circumstances the physical intervention will cease (but not in a threatening way);
- use the minimum force necessary and cease the intervention as soon as it is judged safe;
- not act punitively in any physical way.

In some circumstances we may consider it appropriate to call the Police.

Following an incident of physical intervention, when a pupil has resisted or challenged and force has been used, the teacher or adult responsible should, as soon as possible, inform the Pastoral Team Line Manager. A full written account of the incident will be made by the member of staff concerned and recorded.

The report will contain :

- name(s) of pupil(s) concerned, when and where the incident occurred;
- names of staff or pupils who witnessed the incident;
- the reason why force was needed;
- how the incident began and progressed, who said what, who did what;
- what was done to calm things down;
- what degree of force was used; what kind of hold, where and for how long;
- pupil's response and the outcome of the incident;
- details of any injury to any person or damage to property.

The report must be signed and dated by the member of staff, and countersigned that it has been read by the Pastoral Team Line Manager who will :

- discuss the incident with the pupil as soon as possible;
- interview staff involved and any other witnesses;
- inform the pupil's parents/carers;
- inform social worker if relevant;
- record any disagreements expressed by the pupil or adults about the event;
- take any appropriate further action, liaising with the LA, Governors or Professional Associations as appropriate, and acting within the LA's Child Protection Procedures.

F) Planning for Physical Intervention :

Some pupils behave in ways that make it necessary to consider the use of restrictive physical intervention as part of a Behaviour Management Plan. The plan will include :

- involving the parents and the pupil to obtain their views and to ensure that they are clear about what specific action the School might need to take;
- a risk assessment that considers carefully the likely outcomes to the pupil and others of undertaking intervention or not;
- managing the pupil (e.g. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, at what stage and what type of holds to be used);
- identifying key staff who should know exactly what action they should be taking. Any member of staff who may have to use physical intervention should always be fully briefed about the child in question, and it is best if they are well known to the child.
- ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate;
- identifying training needs and updates.

In some cases, particularly in SEN settings, the School may also need to take medical advice about the safest way to hold pupils with specific health needs.

G) Training :

We are clear that training of staff is vital in this area if we are seen to adopt the best practice and maintain a record of safe management of all school situations. Therefore, we will provide general training on behaviour management for all staff every three years. The DSL and members of the SMT will undertake Restraint training on a rolling basis.

H) Who needs to know?

Everyone connected with the School should know of the existence of the Policy. However, not everyone needs to know about specific incidents. The chart below sets out the information.

	About the Policy	About a specific incident
Governors	Yes	Not generally and never all Governors
Parents	Yes	About incidents relating to their own child
Staff	Yes	About any incidents involving pupils they may have charge of
Pupils	Yes	Only those they witness
LA Health & Safety Team	Yes	Normally annual report
Professional Associations	Yes	If informed by members

J) Complaints :

The use of physical intervention can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive restraint. In the event of a complaint being received by the School, in relation to use of force by staff, the matter should be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff.

KSM

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