

Staff responsible	Sarah Lynch
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Governing body ratified	19/09/2018
Chair of Governors – Liz Bailey	
Review cycle	1 year
Next review	19/09/2024

## 1. CONTEXT

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- 1.1 Central to this policy is the understanding that any physical intervention used by staff must be in accordance with the principle of 'reasonable force' and used only as a last resort once all other strategies have been exhausted.
- 1.2 There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The use of force can only be regarded as reasonable if it is a reasonable, proportionate and absolutely necessary response to a pupil's behaviour or circumstances. Maintaining safety should always be a paramount consideration in determining staff's response.
- 1.3 It is essential that any discussion of Physical Intervention is set in the wider context of education and behaviour management: it should not be seen as an isolated technique. 95% of the time there will be no need for physical intervention and other de-escalation and diversion strategies can be used.
- 1.4 Staff implementing this policy should be aware of and have access to:
  - London Borough of Lewisham Policy on Physical Intervention
  - The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils: Guidance for Schools in England (2010)
  - DCSF Guidance on the Use of Force (November 2007)
  - The Children Act 1989
  - Guidance for Restrictive Physical Interventions/Department for Education and Skills (July 2002)
  - DfEE Circular 'The Use of Physical Interventions to Control or Restrain Pupils in SEN Settings'
  - Team Teach Training Manual
- 1.5 This policy must be read in conjunction with the schools' Behaviour for Learning Policy

## 2. ETHOS

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- 2.1 Work with pupils is done within an atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect.
- 2.2 Boundaries and behaviour expectations are clear and appropriate (see Behaviour Management Policy). Pupils and their carers and staff are aware of the system of rewards and sanctions and positive behaviour is encouraged.
- 2.3 The needs of the individual will be acknowledged and respected, taking into account the diversity of experience, race, culture, disability, language, community, sex and gender.

### 3. EXPECTATIONS

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- 3.1 The school will provide a safe, positive environment.
- 3.2 Pupils are encouraged to manage their own behaviour appropriately.
- 3.3 If a pupil is displaying difficult and challenging behaviour, the aim is to de-escalate the situation and maintain the safety of all the staff and pupils.
- 3.4 Physical intervention will only be used rarely and as a last resort.
- 3.5 Parents/carers, pupils and staff will be familiarised with the situations where physical intervention might be necessary.
- 3.6 Pupils for whom physical intervention has been necessary will have a Positive Handling Plan which all staff are familiar with.
- 3.7 All staff will be trained in the Team Teach method of positive handling as a risk reduction strategy.
- 3.8 All incidents will be recorded on the appropriate forms and logged in the bound and numbered incident book.
- 3.9 Pupils will be given the opportunity to reflect on the incident when they are ready. This may sometimes need to be done the following day. This will be recorded.
- 3.10 Staff will be given the opportunity to discuss the incident and be debriefed.
- 3.11 Parents/carers will be informed as necessary. It is good practice to inform parents/carers as soon as possible after the incident, usually by phone on the same day.

### 4. PHYSICAL CONTACT

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- 4.1 Staff should always maintain appropriate relationships with children/young people.
- 4.2 Physical contact can describe a range of behaviours including appropriate demonstrations of affection, staff should not be deterred from consoling and comforting a pupil in distress. Staff need to be aware of personal boundaries for themselves and the pupils.

### 5. PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

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- 5.1 Physical intervention should be an act of care and control, not a punishment or form of discipline.
- 5.2 Physical restraint is the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering the child in order to protect a child from harming themselves or others or seriously damaging property.
- 5.3 It must be emphasised that physical restraint must always be seen as the last resort.

### 6. PROHIBITED MEASURES

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Staff should never take any action (physical or verbal) that is likely to cause pain or humiliation to a pupil.

- 6.1 Corporal Punishment  
Any application of force as punishment, including slapping, throwing objects, rough handling, pushing or punching is not acceptable.
- 6.2 Deprivation of Food and Drink  
Any application to force a pupil to eat foods that they dislike, or deny them food of their choice as a form of punishment.
- 6.3 Intimate Physical Searches  
Intimate physical searches of children are totally unacceptable.  
Occasionally, and not as a punishment, a search of a pupil's clothing may be necessary e.g. dangerous object.

### 7.1 Physical intervention is defined as:

Any form of physical contact with the intention of containing the behaviour of a child/young person. Physical intervention includes a range of actions from an arm around a shoulder to restraint.

### 7.2 Physical intervention should only be used as a measure of control when there is a situation that involves:

- Risk of serious harm to the child/young person or other persons present.
- Serious damage to property is likely to occur such as breaking of glass, doors or furniture.
- Action where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline such as throwing furniture or uncontrolled physical behaviour.

### 7.3 The principles relating to the use of physical intervention may be summarised as follows:

- Staff should have very good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary to prevent a child/young person from significantly injuring themselves or others, or causing serious damage to property. Staff should be confident that the risks associated with NOT using a physical intervention are greater than the risks of using a physical intervention.
- Staff should take steps in advance to avoid the need for physical intervention e.g. through dialogue and diversion and the pupil should be warned verbally that physical intervention would be used unless he/she desists.
- A dialogue should be maintained with the pupil.
- Whenever possible a member of staff should be available who has an established relationship with the pupil so they can explain what they are doing and why.
- A pupil may be successfully diverted from destructive or disruptive behaviour by being led away by the hand, arm, or by an arm around the shoulder.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied, physical restraint should only be attempted when there are sufficient staff.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before using physical intervention. These staff can act as assistants and witnesses.
- As soon as it is safe to do so physical intervention should be gradually relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control.
- Physical intervention should be an act of care and control not a punishment.
- Physical intervention should not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate risk to people or property.
- It is important that issues of age, sex, size, personal history and background and the relationship between the child/young person and the staff involved are considered wherever possible.
- There must be care about the way in which a child/young person is held to avoid any contact with intimate parts of the body.
- When physical intervention is being used a staff member of the same gender should be used wherever possible.
- If staff are not confident about their ability to contain a particular situation or behaviour, consideration should be given to involving the police.
- In some cases medical advice may need to be taken about holding pupils with specific medical needs.
- The use of force is only reasonable if the circumstances of a particular incident warrant it. It is illegal to use force if the circumstances do not warrant it. The degree of force should always be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident.
- The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a restraint/restrictive physical intervention. Restraint is defined by Team Teach as the positive application of force by staff, in order to overcome rigorous resistance: completely directing, deciding and controlling a person's free movement.

## 8. TIME OUT, WITHDRAWAL AND SAFE SPACE

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### 8.1 Time Out

This involves restricting a pupil's movement to a particular area or room, where they may freely leave, e.g. 'thinking chair' in the classroom. It is a specific management technique and does not necessarily involve time out of the classroom, but withdrawal of attention and/or motivators. It does not require a Positive Handling Plan to be implemented.

### 8.2 Withdrawal

This involves removing the pupil to a location where they can be continuously observed or supported until they are ready to resume their usual activities. This may be time away from staff and pupils, either on their own or in another class in order to reduce anxiety. This could be in the playground, an office or the Blue Chairs. It is considered good practice to include this in a Positive Handling Plan but only in the context of a range of other physical interventions

### 8.3 Safe Space

In rare circumstances where pupils are either actively seeking isolation from others to a low arousal environment or where a range of time out options and physical interventions prove to be ineffective in reducing risk to pupils and staff, a pupil may need to use the designated Safe Space.

This option would form an extension of existing physical interventions for a whole range of needs and operates with the best interests of the pupil as its principle to safeguard individuals and respect the 'Duty of Care'. Since the use of the Safe Space represents a form of Restrictive Physical Intervention this option for pupils in crisis should form part of their Positive Handling Plan and be in accordance with the Brent Knoll Protocol for Use of the Safe Space. Decisions relating to the Safe Space can only be made by staff who are Team Teach accredited and received the appropriate in-school training on the use of the Safe Space. Pupils using the Safe Space would be continually monitored by a member of staff either by remaining in the room or via the viewing point. Details of exact requirements can be found in the Brent Knoll Protocol for Use of the Safe Space. While risk can never be eliminated, the Safe Space aims to significantly reduce risk, the number of potential injuries, exclusions, holding and number of staff required.

### 8.4 NB:

Some pupils may routinely be offered access to the Safe Space as an integral part of their Sensory Diet, in these circumstances its use would not represent a Restrictive Physical Intervention and as such would not be governed by this policy or the aforementioned protocol.

## 9. RECORDING AND REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

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9.1 Staff must record all incidents of physical intervention. These forms and records are held centrally and signed by staff and management.

9.2 Significant incidents must be recorded and reported in line with local procedures.

9.3 Significant incidents should be reported to parents/carers as soon as possible after the event, always on the same day.

9.4 Any injuries must be recorded in the Accident Book on reception

9.5 Where staff are aware that the reporting of such incidents to the parents/carers would compromise the best interests of the child or young person, information should be reported to a designated officer within Lewisham Service for Children and Young People.

## 10. MONITORING

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- 10.1 Staff should be clear about the expectations for informing management, parents and reporting and recording incidents.
- 10.2 The headteacher should regularly check the records to ensure that they comply with policy and procedures and to monitor trends and practices.
- 10.3 The headteacher should regularly review practices and staff training needs.
- 10.4 The headteacher should hold an authorisation list of all staff authorised to use physical intervention.
- 10.5 All cases of physical intervention should be reported recorded and evaluated.
- 10.6 All young people involved in a physical intervention should have access to a debrief session (a discussion about strategies that the young person could use in the future) and a complaints procedure.
- 10.7 This policy will be reviewed every 12 months.