

**COTTESBROOKE INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL**  
**POLICY ON THE USE OF FORCE BY STAFF TO CONTROL OR**  
**RESTRAIN PUPILS**

**1. Objectives**

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- committing any offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

**2. Staff authorised to use physical restraint**

The staff to which this power applies are defined in section 95 of the Act. They are:

- a. any teacher who works at the school, and
- b. any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. This includes support staff whose job normally includes supervising pupils such as teaching assistants, learning support assistants, learning mentors and lunchtime supervisors.
- c. at Cottesbrooke Infant School, wherever possible this should be a member of staff trained in restraint techniques. (See Appendix i– list of staff trained in restraint)

**3. What is Physical Restraint?**

The Local Authority describes physical restraint as any method of responding to the challenging behaviour of pupils that threatens their personal safety, or the safety of others, where some degree of physical force is applied against the pupil's resistance to controlling his or her own behaviour by limiting or restricting his or her movement or mobility.

At Cottesbrooke Infant School physical restraint may take the form of:

- physically interposing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path
- holding or leading the pupil by the arm
- using more restrictive holds in extreme cases eg. using both arms to hold the child still or carrying the child  
(See Team Teach Notes)

In all instances staff should enlist the help of another adult wherever possible.

**4. Deciding whether to use physical restraint**

Decisions on whether precise circumstances of an incident justify the use of significant force must be reasonable. Typically such decisions have to be made quickly, with little time for reflection. Nevertheless, staff need to make the clearest possible judgements about:

- the potential consequences of not intervening were sufficiently serious to justify considering use of force;
- the chances of achieving the desired result by other means were low; and
- the risk associated with not using force outweighed those of using force.

Wherever possible, these judgements should take account of the particular characteristics of the pupil, including his or her age, understanding and any SEN or disability that he or she may have. This would include the outcomes of any risk assessment and, as appropriate, any specific strategies and techniques set out in the pupil's positive handling plan. (See Appendix ii – Risk Assessment and Appendix iii – Positive Handling Plan)

## 5. When to use Physical Restraint

Examples of situations that particularly call for judgments of this kind include:

- a. pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
  - b. pupils are at risk of causing injury to themselves or others eg. fighting, rough play, misuse of objects
  - c. a pupil is committing, or on the verge of committing, deliberate damage to property;
  - d. a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school other than at an authorised time if this would
- I. entail serious risks to the pupil's safety (taking into account age and understanding), to the safety of other pupils or staff, or of damage to property; or
  - II. lead to behaviour that prejudices good order and discipline, such as disrupting other classes;
    - e. a pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave a classroom;
    - f. a pupil is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson; or
    - g. a pupil is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school visit or on off site event eg. theatre, swimming
    - h. a pupil is distressed and reluctant to leave a parent or carer or to enter school and needs guiding to the classroom

In these examples use of force would be reasonable (and therefore lawful) if it was clear that the behaviour was sufficiently dangerous or disruptive to warrant physical restraint of the degree applied and could not realistically be dealt with by any other means.

## 6. Before Using Physical Restraint

Before using force staff should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil to stop misbehaving and communicate in a calm and measured manner throughout the incident.

Although preventative measures will not always work, there are a number of steps which can be taken to help reduce the likelihood of situations arising where the power to use force may need to be exercised:

- a. maintain a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind.
- b. develop effective relationships with pupils which support the maintenance of good order;
- c. develop pupil's social and emotional skills in order to support pupil's ability to manage strong feelings.
- d. adopt positive behaviour management in line with the school's policy on Behaviour Management.
- e. maintain up to date staff training on the management conflict (Team Teach)
- f. recognising that challenging behaviours are often foreseeable
- g. maintain a comfortable space around the child to avoid further conflict/distress
- h. recognise the importance of tone, pace and volume of voice as well as the words used
- i. offer limited choices that lead to the desired result
- j. where possible avoid physical pursuit (chasing) of the pupil in order to avoid feelings of persecution
- k. begin sentences with 'I' to avoid implying blame eg. 'I feel sad when you do x.' rather than 'You make me sad.'
- l. begin and finish with a word of praise
- m. communicate calmly with the pupil, using non-threatening verbal and body language and ensuring the pupil can see a way out of a situation. Strategies might include, for example, going with the staff member to a quiet room, away from bystanders or other pupils, so that the staff member can listen to concerns; or being joined by a particular member of staff well known to the pupil
- n. make adaptations the physical environment eg. high handles on doors, locks on doors
- o. use of space to create a time out area or an individual work station
- p. body language should be non-threatening eg. no pointing, no aggressive facial expressions

## 7. Use of Physical Restraint

- Staff should not give the impression of acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish a pupil, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

- Wherever practicable, warn a pupil that physical restraint may have to be used before using it.

The types of force used could include:

- a. passive physical contact resulting from standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path;
- b. active physical contact such as:
  - I. where there is little if any active resistance, leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
  - II. ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of back
  - III. removing shoes or other objects
  - IV. lifting a pupil in order to remove them from the situation
  - V. in more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive holds, which may require specific expertise or training.eg. holding the legs to prevent kicking, bear hug or wrap to control movements which pose a danger (See Team Teach)
  - VI. If possible summon a second carer or adult:
    - a. help reduce any risk of harm to either party
    - b. act as a witness should allegations of assault be made

While intervening the member of staff must:

- a. employ the minimum force necessary to restrain the pupil
- b. employ minimum physical force necessary for the minimum period needed to restrain the pupil
- c. keep talking to the pupil for example "If you stop kicking, I will release my hold"
- d. avoid committing any act of punitive violence
- e. keep his/her temper under control
- f. ensure there is a record of the incident

## 8. Recording and Reporting Incidents

Any incident of assertive physical restraint should be recorded by the member of staff involved using the Serious Incident Report form. (Appendix iv – example form) This should be completed as soon as possible following the incident, and in any event within 24 hours of the incident, and filed in the Head Teacher's office together with completion of the Serious Incidents Log.

Whenever possible parents and carers should be notified as soon as possible following the incident, at least by the end of that school day. All injuries should be recorded in accordance with school procedures. Where appropriate copies should be given to the SENCO to be added to children's files.

## 9. Pupils with SEN/Disabilities

A risk assessment will be completed where it is known that physical restraint is more likely to be necessary to restrain a particular pupil such as a pupil whose SEN and/or disability is associated with extreme behaviour. An individual risk assessment is also essential for pupils whose SEN/disabilities are associated with:

- a. communication impairments that make them less responsive to verbal communication
- b. physical disabilities and/or sensory impairment
- c. conditions that make them fragile, such as haemophilia, brittle bone syndrome or epilepsy
- d. dependence on equipment such as wheelchairs, feeding or breathing tubes

(See Appendix ii – risk assessment)

The following advice is particularly relevant to pupils with SEN and/or disabilities:

Involve the SEN Coordinator or other named member of staff and parents in developing the school's policy and practice on the use of physical restraint. This will help ensure that appropriate account is taken of the needs of individual pupils with SEN and/or disabilities including "fragile" pupils.

- a. A positive handling plan will be completed for individual pupils assessed as being at greatest risk of needing restrictive physical interventions in consultation with the pupil and his or her parents.
- b. Positive handling plans set out the techniques that should be used and those that should not

normally be used. Any planned use of physical intervention should be compatible with a pupil's statement and properly documented in school records.

- c. As far as practically possible, make staff who come into contact with such pupils aware of the relevant characteristics of those individuals, particularly: situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventive strategies and what de-escalation techniques are most likely to work
  - I. what is most likely to trigger a violent reaction, including relevant information relating to any previous incident requiring use of force; and
  - II. if physical intervention is likely to be needed, any specific strategies and techniques that have been agreed by staff, parents and the pupil concerned.

Information from parents may be as valuable as information held by the school. Some of this information may be sensitive. Schools should seek express (preferably written) consent from the parent to inform appropriate staff. However, where consent is unreasonably withheld the information may still be made available to staff who need it where minimising the chances of force being required would be in the vital interests of the pupil concerned. The importance of providing such information will be a factor in decisions about giving temporary authorisation to parent volunteers and others to supervise pupils.

- d. Designate staff to be called if incidents related to particular pupils occur. This does not necessarily mean waiting for them to arrive before taking action if the need for action is urgent. However they should always be involved in post-incident follow-up.
- e. Teach pupils who are at risk how to communicate in times of crisis and strategies to use in a crisis (such as using personal communication passports and non-verbal signals to indicate the need to use a designated quiet area or cool-off base) and ensure staff are familiar with these strategies.

## **10. Post-incident Support**

- a. For pupils
  - a decision will need to be made regarding whether multi-agency partners need to be involved and, if so, which partners. This could include local authority children's service or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
  - help the pupil develop strategies to avoid such crisis points in future and inform relevant staff about these strategies and their roles;
  - give the pupil the opportunity to repair the relationships with staff and pupils affected by the incident and/or to develop their social and emotional skills.
  - In some cases, an incident might lead to a decision to exclude a pupil. In these circumstances head teachers must have regard to the DCSF statutory guidance on exclusions.
- b. For staff
  - An opportunity to recover from the incident
  - An opportunity to discuss the incident in a non-blaming and supportive manner
  - To explore how the member of staff felt before, during and after the incident
  - The opportunity to discuss underlying causes and issues that led to the incident
  - To examine what techniques were used and learn from the outcomes
  - To review/develop Positive Handling Plans and record any strategies or alternatives for next time

## **11. Staff Training**

Team Teach training is provided for staff and updated on a three year cycle. Additional training is offered to relevant staff who are in more frequent contact with pupils who have behavioural/emotional difficulties, e.g. ADHD, ASD, ODD, EBD as appropriate.

## **12. Complaints**

Any complaints arising from the use of physical restraint will be dealt with according to the school's Policy on Grievances and Complaints.

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's arrangements for monitoring policies.