



Avonmouth CE Primary School

Physical Intervention Policy

Date of Policy : April 2017

Updated: March 2018

- **Updated names of staff qualified to engage in physical intervention**
- **Updated policies that this should be read in conjunction with**

Introduction

We believe that every member of our school community should feel valued, respected and safe at school and that learning should be an enjoyable and fulfilling experience as stated in our school vision:

“Inspired Happy Children, Learning for Life.”

Central to this aim is the expectation that the children of Avonmouth CE Primary School will display high standards of behaviour and treat other people as they would wish to be treated themselves, demonstrating a firm understanding of the Christian Values that underpin everything we do in school.

Our school behaviour policy is designed to support the way in which all members of our school community can live and work together. It is a whole school approach and all members of staff have a responsibility to maintain positive behaviour throughout the school. The behaviour policy aims to promote an environment which helps children develop into confident, well-motivated and hardworking pupils who enjoy school and have a high self-esteem and go on to achieve their full potential.

However, at Avonmouth CE Primary School, we recognise that, at times, children may be dysregulated that their behaviour requires managing to ensure everyone’s safety.

The overriding principle relating to positive handling is that the best interests of the child take precedence over every other consideration.

The first line of paragraph of the Children Act 1989 in the UK stated that the welfare of the child shall be the paramount consideration. Therefore when physical intervention is considered, it is regarded as a last resort and should only be used in exceptional circumstances.

We also recognise that the use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant such force. It is unlawful for a member of staff to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a pupil, or which is primarily intended to cause pain or humiliation.

Definition of restraint

Physical restraint is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property.

General policy aims

Staff at Avonmouth CE Primary School recognise that the use of physical intervention is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety / well-being and also to maintain good behaviour and discipline. Our policy on physical intervention should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Child Protection policies.

Specific aims of the physical intervention policy

- To protect every person in the school community from harm
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations

Why use physical intervention?

Physical intervention should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child’s action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him / herself or others. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical intervention would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise

their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. However situations in which physical intervention may be used as a last resort include:

- Children purposefully injuring themselves and/or other people eg. Fighting
- Children causing serious damage to personal property, including their own
- Preventing a child from absconding from School
- Self-harming

Staff should always act within the School's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Failure to physically restrain a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

Alternative strategies

There are some situations in which the need for physical intervention is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (eg is a pupil about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as:

- the broken record in which an instruction is repeated until the pupil complies
- use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high)
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with the School's policy on behaviour.

Use of physical intervention

Physical intervention should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re- establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain regulation. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

Only those staff who have had appropriate training ever use physical intervention. Those staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical intervention, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. In general, it is better to defuse a situation than intervene through physical intervention.

There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective physical intervention should be a last resort.

When physical intervention becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your intervention in response to the pupil's compliance

DON'T

- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Attempt to reason with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint

- Touch or hold the pupil in intimate areas
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil
- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)

Where physical intervention is required the following procedures must be adhered to:

- Ensure that the adult responding to the situation has the necessary training and is aware of procedures. If not, send for assistance. If possible additional adults should be called for as soon as possible.
- Ensure all adults and children are a safe distance away, i.e, an arm's distance from the troubled child;
- The pupil concerned needs to be informed in a clear way that if the behaviour continues, the member of staff will intervene;
- Approach the child from the front or side if possible and explain to the child what is happening. Keep at least an arm's distance away unless intervention is required;
- Throughout the incident, the member of staff should continue to talk with the child in a calm way, making it clear that physical contact or intervention will stop as soon as the risk of harm is reduced to an acceptable degree
- A member of the Senior Management Team needs to be informed immediately of the situation, the issues that escalated the situation and the de-escalation techniques used;
- A member of the Senior Management team or the Learning Mentor will then inform the parents of the incident and ensure that a Physical Intervention Record is completed.
- If not already informed, the Headteacher should be told of the incident;
- A period of time is needed for the member of staff to talk through the incident with the child. This needs to be carried out once all parties are calm. The child involved will be talked through the incident and strategies will be suggested for him/her to manage his behaviour if he/she finds himself in this position again. An agreed solution needs to be found in order to prevent this situation arising again in the future.
- Risk assessments for children who are vulnerable to dysregulation and dangerous behaviour must be completed before any School Trip.

Actions after an incident

Physical intervention often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil.

The Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher (in her absence) must be informed of any incident as soon as possible.

Parents should always be notified and the Physical intervention form completed and given to the Head Teacher.

There should also be an opportunity for the child to discuss the incident and this should be recorded on the Physical intervention Form.

Staff who are trained to in physical intervention:

James Barlow – Lead Learning Mentor

Jeoff Land – Deputy Head Teacher

Trudi Webb – Higher Level Teaching Assistant KS2

Janine Sweet – LSA

Claire George – LSA

Karen Ryan – EY practitioner

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- School Behaviour Policy