



The Diocese of Ely

ACT Multi Academy Trust
Agapé, Courage
Thankfulness



St. Michael's
Church School

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Introduction

St. Michael's Church School is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive behaviour, and will use physical intervention as a last resort in line with the policy set out below which is based on advice from the LA and DfE. Where physical intervention is necessary, it will be applied in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil. In applying restraint, staff will always ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.

This positive management of behaviour is embedded in the strong positive ethos of the school. Staff understand the importance of listening to and respecting children. They understand that their practice will help to create an environment, which is generally calm and supportive.

The formal policy will be set within the context of the school's overall positive strategies for behaviour management contained within the policies on Behaviour and Anti-bullying. It is compatible with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Preventative Planning

Whilst it is recognised that incidents requiring physical intervention cannot usually be anticipated, where staff consider that there may be cause for concern, detailed planning is required in consultation with an appropriate senior colleague.

- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used).
- Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about what specific action the school might need to take.
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate.
- In some cases, we may need to take medical advice about the safest way to hold pupils with specific health needs.

Authorisation of Staff

Provided it is used as a last resort, and in the circumstances set out below, staff will be supported in their use of physical restraint. Adult volunteers are not authorised to use restraint. Such force is reasonable in 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.
- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil.
- Pupils are fighting and do not stop when verbally asked.
- A pupil is engaged in or is on the verge of committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- A pupil is causing or at risk of causing injury or damage by accident by rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others.
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school.
- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom.
- A pupil behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.
- 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 elsewhere.

The provision applies when a teacher, or other authorised person, is on the school premises, and when he or she has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned elsewhere, e.g. on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity.

Reasonable force

Restraint should be exercised in such a way as to exert the least amount of physical force necessary to bring the situation under control. Wherever possible, restraint should be carried out according to approved techniques e.g. Team Teach or Steps.

There are two relevant considerations

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful in the particular circumstances that do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore, physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force.
- The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Whether it is reasonable to use force, and the degree of force that could be reasonably be employed, might also depend on the age, understanding and sex of the pupil.



Application of Force

Before intervening physically, a teacher should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if he or she does not. The teacher should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and teachers should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish the pupil.

Sometimes a teacher should not intervene in an incident without help (unless it is an emergency). For example, when dealing with an older pupil, or a physically large pupil, or more than one pupil, or if the teacher believes he or she may be at risk of injury. In those circumstances the teacher should remove other pupils who might be at risk, and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues, or where necessary phone the Police. The teacher should inform the pupil(s) that he or she has sent for help. Until assistance arrives the teacher should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve Staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back

Or in extreme circumstances

- using more restrictive holds.
- Lifting/carrying the pupil to a safe space.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force' for example to prevent a young pupil running off a pavement onto a busy road, or to prevent a pupil hitting someone, or throwing something.

In other circumstances staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by

- Holding a pupil around the neck or by the collar or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe.
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil



- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a pupil
- Holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground.

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

Where the risk is not so urgent the teacher should consider carefully whether and if so when physical intervention is right. Teachers should always try to deal with a situation through other strategies before using force. All teachers need developed strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and situation, which they should use to defuse and calm a situation. In a non-urgent situation, force should only be used when other methods have failed.

That consideration is particularly appropriate in situations where the aim is to maintain good order and discipline, and there is no direct risk to people or property. As the key issue is establishing good order, any action, which could exacerbate the situation, needs to be avoided. The possible consequences of intervening physically including the risk of increasing the disruption or actually provoking an attack need to be carefully evaluated.

The age and level of understanding of the pupil is also very relevant in those circumstances. Physical intervention to enforce compliance with staff instructions is likely to be increasingly inappropriate with older pupils. It should never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management.

Contact with Parents and other Agencies

The school will ensure that parents are contacted:

- At planning stage as a preventative measure where it is considered that a pupil presents a significant risk of requiring some physical restraint.
- Following any incident where physical intervention has been required in order to resolve any issues relating to the incident itself.
- Subsequently, as appropriate, as part of an ongoing behaviour management strategy.

The school will contact other agencies as necessary e.g. Social Services, Behaviour panel, medical advice where it is appropriate for the school to seek further advice which will inform an individual behaviour management plan.

Recording Incidents

It is important that there is a detailed, written report of any occasion (except minor or trivial incidents) where force is used. It may help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident and it will be helpful should there be a complaint.



St. Michael's Church School keeps an up-to-date record of all such incidents in an incident book that is kept in the Headteacher's office. Immediately following any such incident, the member of staff concerned completes a written report. This includes:

- The name of the pupil involved and when and where the incident took place.
- The names of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident.
- The reason that force was necessary (e.g. to prevent injury to the pupil, another pupil or member of staff)
- How the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to defuse or claim the situation, the degree of force used, how that was applied and for how long.
- The pupil's response and the outcome of the incident.
- Details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil, or a member of staff and of any damage to property.

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a senior colleague or a representative of their professional association when compiling a report. They should also keep a copy of the report.

Incidents involving the use of force can cause the parents of the pupil involved great concern. It is always advisable to inform parents of an incident involving their child and give them an opportunity to discuss it. The Headteacher, or member of staff to whom the incident was reported, will need to consider whether that should be done straight away or at the end of the school day, and whether parents should be told orally or in writing. A copy of the report should be made available to parents.

Dealing with Complaints

Involving parents when an incident occurs with their child, plus a clear policy about physical contact with pupils that staff adhere to, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It will not prevent all complaints and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures of the Police and social services department under child protection procedures. DFES Circular 10/95 Protecting Children From Abuse gives guidance about the latter, and about procedures for dealing with allegations against teachers.

The possibility that a complaint might result in a disciplinary hearing or a criminal prosecution or in a civil action brought by a pupil or parent cannot be ruled out. In those circumstances it would be for the disciplinary panel or the court to decide whether the use and degree of force was reasonable in all the circumstances. It would also be likely to take account of this policy on restraint and whether that had been followed and the need to prevent injury damage or disruption in considering all the circumstances of the case.



Physical Contact with Pupils in Other Circumstances

There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary other than those covered by Section 550A of the 1996 Act. Some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons, sports coaching or if a member of staff has to give first aid or intimate care (Please see separate intimate care policy). Young children and children with special educational needs may need staff to provide physical prompts or help. Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. Teachers will use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support.

There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some pupils may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background or because they have been abused. It is important that all staff receive information on these children having due regard of Child Protection confidentiality. In addition, the school will need to develop clear common practice towards particular groups of children and events. There should be a common approach where staff and pupils are of different sexes. Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence and staff should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

Support for Staff

In addition to the employee's professional association the school is committed to providing support to staff who have been involved in physical intervention. This may relate to:

- The trauma of the incident itself, or
- The distress of an allegation having been made against them, or
- Both

The LA will endeavour to provide some external support as appropriate if required.



Appendix 1:

Photographs to support holds utilised by staff when required. Please also note- holds NOT to use.

Open Mitten Escort – Paired

- Hip in
- Head away
- Open mitten hands above the elbows
- Safe shape, (penguin shape)
- Arm resting across shoulders
- Communicate intention
- Move assertively (prevent kicking/dropping)
- **The hand should remain in a mitten to avoid the possibility of gripping. Gripping hands can result in bruising consistent with poor practice.**



Supportive hug (to support, guide or escort)

To communicate comfort or reward:

- Hip in
- Head away
- Sideways stance
- Closed mittens contain each shoulder
- Communicate intention
- Use 'de-escalation script' if needed



Offering an arm

- Hip in
- Head away
- Sideways stance
- Arm if offered
- Child accepts the invite
- Draw elbow in for extra security

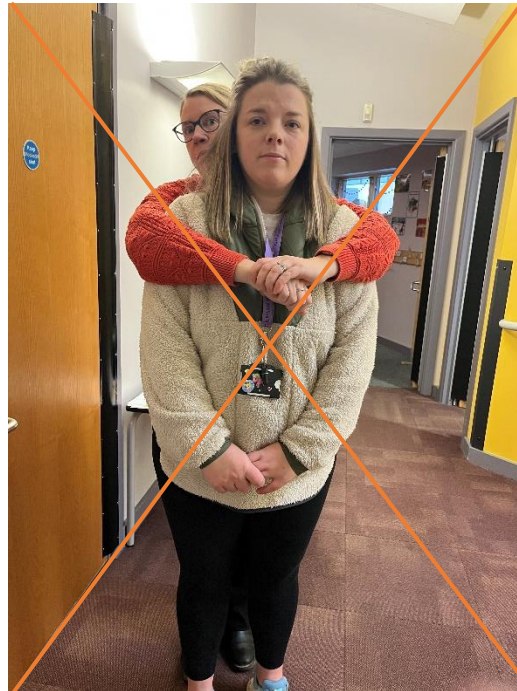


Open Mitten Guide (To protect or turn)



Restricted Breathing

Restricted breathing could occur where adult arms, the students own arms or their clothing is held in a way that could restrict the free movement of the abdomen, diaphragm and chest.



DO NOT USE THESE METHODS

