



Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions Policy

This policy is based on guidance issued jointly by the DfE Use of Reasonable Force (Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies, July 2013), Department of Health and Keeping Children Safe in Education. (currently under consultation by the government, to end on 11th May 2023).

Ethical and Legal Considerations

The decision to use a restrictive physical intervention must take account of the circumstances and be based upon an assessment of the risks associated with the intervention compared with the risks of not employing a restrictive physical intervention.

A restrictive physical intervention must also only employ a reasonable amount of force - that is the minimum force needed to avert injury or damage to property or to prevent a breakdown of discipline - applied for the shortest period of time.

Team Teach is good practice. However, we have a duty of care and as such, it is not a requirement that any staff member must have this training.

When can reasonable force be used?

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.
- The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;

- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm he or she might cause.

The techniques deployed should be those which the staff involved are familiar with and able to use safely and are described in the individual pupil's Positive Handling Plan, although at times, the staff member/s who might be handling this situation may not be familiar with the child's plan. In such a situation, it is not always the techniques set out in the plan that will be used. Staff have a duty of care and as such, will just have to intervene and support the situation no matter the technique/s applied.

The use of force is likely to be legally defensible when it is required to prevent:

- self-harming;
- injury to other pupils, staff or others;
- damage to property;
- an offence being committed;
- any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school or among any of its pupils.

Restrictive physical interventions should always be designed to achieve outcomes that reflect the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern and others affected by the behaviour requiring intervention.

Where planned physical intervention strategies are in place, they should be one component of a broader approach to behaviour management as set out in an individual behaviour passport and, in general terms, in the school policy on Behaviour.

Prevention and De-escalation

The use of restrictive physical interventions should be minimised by the adoption of preventative strategies.

Preventative and de-escalation strategies include:

- ensuring that the number of staff deployed and their level of competence corresponds to the needs of the pupils and the likelihood that physical interventions will be needed;
- helping pupils to avoid situations which are known to provoke violent or aggressive behaviour;
- Individual Behaviour Passports, which are responsive to individual needs and include current information on their Individual Risk Assessment;

- creating opportunities for pupils to engage in meaningful activities which include opportunities for choice and a sense of achievement;
- developing staff expertise in working with pupils who present challenging behaviours;
- talking to pupils and those with parental responsibility about the way in which they prefer to be managed when they pose a significant risk to themselves or others;
- recognising the early stages of a behavioural sequence that is likely to develop into violence or aggression;
- employing 'de-escalation' techniques to avert any further escalation.

Proactive use of restrictive physical interventions

In most circumstances, restrictive physical interventions will be used reactively.

Where there is clear documented evidence that particular sequences of behaviour rapidly escalate into serious violence, the use of a restrictive physical intervention at an early stage in the sequence may, potentially, be justified.

It is important to establish in a written Individual Behaviour Passport and Positive Handling Plan a clear rationale for the use of the restrictive physical intervention and to have this endorsed by at a meeting which includes the school team and, wherever possible, those with parental responsibility.

Possible injury or injuries

The Team Teach information states this:

The skills and techniques taught on a Team Teach course are as a result of an on-going dynamic risk assessment in an effort to safeguard everyone involved in a violent incident where physical interventions are necessary.

Team Teach techniques seeks to avoid injury, but whilst some physical injury potential can be reduced there remains some risk, with potential for possible bruising or scratching that may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that pupils remain safe.

Whatever the technique used at this school, whether Team Teach or not, the above statement applies.

All staff members at this school work extremely hard on a daily basis; they come to work to do the best they can in the various circumstances presented to them. They certainly do not come to work with any intention of having to restrain any pupil and certainly never to hurt a pupil. However, as stated above, in some situations, injury resulting from having to physically handle a pupil may be unavoidable as per the Team Teach statement.

Emergency Use of Strategies

It is recognised that unplanned or emergency intervention may be necessary when a pupil behaves in an unexpected way. In an emergency, the use of force can be justified if it is reasonable to use to prevent injury or serious damage to property and, to prevent a pupil engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline in the school or among any of its pupils.

In such circumstances, members of staff retain their duty of care to the pupil and any response must be proportionate to the circumstances. Staff should use the minimum force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety.

It is the school's aim to use effective risk assessment together with well-planned preventative strategies, to help keep emergency use of restrictive physical interventions to a minimum.

Liaison with parents/carers and other agencies

Communication with parents/carers is essential when a pupil's behaviour requires consistent management. The standard home/school planner is not the best medium to raise concerns or report incidents. Although in some cases, this may be unavoidable and the only option the staff deems right to communicate through at that moment in time. Staff will try to communicate by telephone or at the end of the day to the person charged to collect the pupil. Whatever the avenue used, parents/carers will be informed, at some point, following the use of any physical restraint on a pupil. A record will be completed and recorded on CPOMs.

Staff Training

All staff require induction training before being required to work with people who present challenging behaviours. All staff will be given additional, more specialised Team-Teach training in a 6-hour course.

The nature and extent of the training will depend upon the characteristics of the pupils who may require a physical intervention, the behaviours they present and the responsibilities of individual members of staff.

Staff will normally only use Team-Teach methods of restrictive physical intervention for which they have received training. Specific techniques will be closely matched to the characteristics of individual pupils.

All staff will receive updates and refresher courses at least once every three years.

In an emergency, the use of force by any person (trained or untrained) can be justified if it is the only way to prevent injury or to prevent an offence being committed.

Reviewed: May 2023