



Physical Contact Policy

(Please also see Behaviour Policy and Intimate Care Policy)

Reviewed and updated December 2018

Aims

1. To protect all children in school against any form of physical restraint which is unnecessary or inappropriate.
2. To assist staff to provide a safe and secure environment in school so that learning can take place.
3. To protect staff against any accusation of improper conduct.
4. To ensure that physical contact, as part of a child's personal curriculum, is planned.

Principles of Physical Restraint

The general principle is that the use of physical restraint should, wherever possible, be avoided. Before using physical restraint, staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion to manage the situation. However the Education Act 1996 allows all teachers to use *reasonable force* to prevent a child from:

- Acting in a way that is counter to maintaining good order and discipline at the school;
- Injuring another child or adult;
- Injuring themselves;
- Exposing themselves to danger, including attempting to run out of school;
- Damaging property;
- Committing a criminal offence.

If physical restraint is deemed to be necessary then:

- It should be an exceptional circumstance.
- It must be used in ways that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- It should be both reasonable and proportional to the circumstances and be the minimum necessary to avert injury or damage to property. In all cases there should be the minimum use of physical restraint. There should be no unnecessarily rough handling or shaking of the child.
- It should be sensitive to the cultural expectations of children and their attitude towards physical contact.
- It should avoid any contact that might be misinterpreted as sexual.
- It should be applied for the shortest period of time.

Examples of acceptable forms of physical restraint are:

- A safe holding tactic by which a child is restrained until he/she calms down.
- Physical removal of a child from one place to another.
- Removing a weapon or dangerous object from a child.

Using Physical Restraint

Physical restraint will always be used as a last resort. It can be applied immediately if:

1. The child is assaulting or injuring another person.
2. The child is injuring himself/herself.
3. The child is putting himself/herself into danger (e.g. attempting to run away).
4. The child is damaging property.

Where a child is not following instructions then the teacher or member of staff should:

1. Repeat clear instructions to the child as to what is required of them.
2. Present the child with the choices and consequences.
3. Give the child time to reconsider and make a choice.
4. Keep calm and remain in control of the situation.
5. Send another adult or responsible child to bring an appropriate member of staff. This could be the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher, the SENDCo or the person named in the child's risk assessment. This member of staff will go through these steps again, when they arrive, and attempt to persuade the child to accompany them to leave the room.

If the child still does not follow instructions then the staff members should make an assessment as to whether physical restraint is necessary. If an older child is involved then he or she may be physically bigger and stronger than the adults and physical restraint would be very difficult. The senior member of staff should make an assessment of the situation and decide whether to physically intervene or follow another course of action.

This could be:

1. Remaining by the child and giving him/her further time to calm down and reflect on the situation.
2. Remaining by the child and arranging for the child's parents to be contacted and asked to come to school to deal with the incident.
3. Removing the other children to another room while the child calms down, if they are felt to be in danger. In this case, two members of staff should remain with the child.

Parental Involvement

If a member of staff deems it necessary to use physical restraint with a child then the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher must be informed immediately. The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will decide if the parents should be asked to come to school and take the child home. In all cases of physical restraint the parents must be informed on the day of the incident and given an explanation of the incident.

Recording Instances of Physical Restraint

Often, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher or SENDCo will have been involved at an early stage in dealing with an incident and will have sanctioned the use of physical restraint. If not, a member of staff who has used physical restraint must immediately report the incident to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will ask the member of staff to make a written report on the incident. This should include:

- The name of the child and the date of the incident;

- The location and time of the incident;
- The circumstances and significant factors leading up to the incident;
- A description of the child's behaviour;
- Strategies used during the incident.;
- The reason for using physical restraint;
- A description of the physical restraint used;
- Whether the child, or another child, or staff experienced any injury.

Responsibilities

Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to regularly review this policy and monitor incidents of physical restraint.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to regularly review the Behaviour Policy in order to promote the expected behaviour in school and to ensure that there are clear guidelines for managing behaviour.

The Headteacher must inform governors of policy reviews and the monitoring of the Physical Contact and Behaviour Policies.

Class Teachers

It is the responsibility of the class teachers to inform the Headteacher if there is a child in their class who is displaying behaviour which could require a risk assessment. The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify the potential hazards and detail the action which needs to be taken. The aim is to keep the use of restrictive physical contact with the child to a minimum.

Parents/carers are informed and involved with the development of the risk assessment.

It is the responsibility of class teachers to monitor the risk assessment and arrange with the Headteacher for a review when necessary.

Class teachers and the Headteacher will be responsible for informing teacher assistants and other staff who work in the school of the child's risk assessment.

Training

A number of staff will be trained in positive handling and restraint. This training will be updated with the recruitment of new staff.

Physical Contact as part of a child's personal curriculum

- Physical contact will be part of some children's personal learning pathway as part of a recognised programme or strategy. e.g. Intensive interaction, heavy pressure work.
- In some circumstances physical contact may be necessary as the best approach to support a child's emotional regulation. e.g Helping younger children to settle. Supporting a distressed child.

Staff know that this type of physical contact must be appropriate and necessary. Staff must also be mindful of their physical contact so that it is not misinterpreted. Staff behaviour is open to scrutiny and staff at William Davies School work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed.