Policy: Physical Restraint & Use of Reasonable Force

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Contents

Policy: Physical Restraint & Use of Reasonable Force 1
Contents 1
Mission Statement 1
Our Core Values 1
Statutory Policies 2
Rationale 2
Definitions 2
Who can use Reasonable Force? 2
When can Reasonable Force be used? 3
When can Reasonable Force NOT be used? 3
Guidelines for the Use of Physical Restraint 3
Methods of Restraint 3
Recording and Reporting Incidents 4
Useful contacts 5
Use of Physical Restraint Form 6

Mission Statement

At Abbey School our aim is to teach to inspire, motivate and nurture the next generation of creative and critical thinkers. We work in partnership with parents and the community to achieve the highest standards. Our main goal is to encourage our children to be resilient, respectful, responsible independent learners, equipped for lifelong learning. Through stimulating, safe learning environments and excellent opportunities to succeed in and out of the classroom, we encourage children's progress and achievements.

Our Core Values

RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, RESILIENCE

These 3 core values underpin the ethos of Abbey School. Our young pupils are encouraged to understand these values and how they develop, initially, at the micro level around themselves, their friendships, their families and our school. Later, our older pupils begin to understand how these self-same values affect our lives on the macro level, with all this means for their lives as they grow into adults and their environment of Devon, the United Kingdom, and also the planet in which we live.

Statutory Policies

This policy has been written using advice taken from Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies (DfE, 2013). The policy is also in due regard to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, 2021).

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

The Education Act 2011
The Children Act 1989
The Equality Act 2010
SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years 2015

Rationale

Abbey School recognises the responsibility it has under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This policy is a whole school policy and applies to all pupils including those in the EYFS. This policy should be read in conjunction with Abbey School's behaviour, anti-bullying and safeguarding policies.

Care and consideration will be given each individual child when following the guidance in this policy, including knowledge of trauma, SEND and age.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the school. The school acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND).

Some key members of Abbey School staff have had additional training from 'Team Teach' (level 1) in de-escalation strategies and use of physical restraint.

Abbey School is firmly committed to creating a calm and safe environment which minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force. Staff use the PSHE curriculum to explore and strengthen emotional responses to situations. Staff will only use reasonable force as a last resort and strongly believe in de-escalating any incidents as they arise to prevent them from reaching a crisis point. Staff will be skilled in promoting and rewarding positive behaviour and will utilise various appropriate techniques in the management of a class environment. Staff will only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved by not using force.

Definitions

For the purposes of this document:
Reasonable force is defined as using no more force than is needed in the circumstances.
Physical restraint is defined as the positive application of force in order to protect/prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others or seriously damaging property. It is necessary in more extreme cases, for example to stop a physical fight.
Injury means 'significant injury'; this would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others, by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self - poisoning.

Who can use Reasonable Force?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

It can also apply to people whom the Head has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

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.

When can Reasonable Force be used?

Reasonable force can be used:

- to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, from committing an offence, or from causing disorder;
- to control pupils or to restrain them;
- to remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- to 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;
- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight.
- to restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

When can Reasonable Force NOT be used?

Reasonable force can never be used as a form of punishment.

Guidelines for the Use of Physical Restraint

Professional judgement should be used in circumstances where the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed.

- Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency provided they follow the guidelines in this policy.
- Staff should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues.
- In any application of physical restraint, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation.
- Help should be summoned from colleagues; pupils should never be involved in restraint.

Whenever staff use physical restraint, they should be clear about why it is **NECESSARY**. The best legal defence would be to show that any actions were in the child's **BEST INTEREST** and that they were **REASONABLE AND PROPORTIONATE**, along with being for the **LEAST AMOUNT of TIME**, and using the **LEAST AMOUNT OF FORCE**.

What to do in circumstances when the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed

- Approach the pupil calmly but firmly.
- Where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour should be explained and it should be communicated to the pupil that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
- A calm and measured approach is required by staff throughout.

Methods of Restraint

The method of restraint employed must observe the following:

Restraint must not:

- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil or hurting them
- Restrict the pupil's breathing
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas
- Involve locking the pupil in a room

During any incident the person restraining should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury
- Cease the restraint if there are any signs of physical distress in the pupil such as sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting

Physical restraint can be:

- Partial – restricting and preventing particular movements
- Total – as in the case of immobilisation

Physical intervention can take several forms and may involve staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- In extreme circumstances, using more restrictive holds.

Do:

- Summon help immediately. A pupil can be sent to get another adult.
- Ensure a free passage of air through airways
- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Provide a soft surface if possible
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil that could cause injury
- Monitor the pupil's respiration, circulation and state of consciousness

Don't:

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking, even if the pupil does not reply
- Straddle the pupil
- Push their arms up their back
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints or on arterial pressure points (inside of upper arm, groin, neck) Use facedown holds

Recording and Reporting Incidents

Minor or everyday use of reasonable force does not need to be recorded. For example, very young children running off in the playground and being guided back to the line by the teacher or assistant.

All more serious incidents involving the use of physical restraint must be reported to the Head Teacher as soon as possible after the incident.

These must be recorded on 'Use of Physical Restraint' form.

A copy of this form will be provided to parents/carers after any serious incidents where physical restraint has been used with their child. The Headteacher will also be informed.

Telling parents when force has been used on their child

Staff need to use their professional judgement on whether to inform a parent, depending on the seriousness of the incident.

In a serious incident where a member of staff has had to physically restrain a pupil, the parent will be informed on the day and the conversation must be followed up in writing to the parent.

What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?

- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the ***Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*** will be followed.

Useful contacts

Internal Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Headteacher	Proprietor/ Principal
Miss Anna Payne	**Miss Bryony Dorrans**	**Miss Sophie Hunt**	**Miss Fleur Greinig**	**Mrs Sylvia Greinig**
safeguardingteam@Abbeyschool.co.uk			headteacher@ abbeyschool.co.uk	principal@ abbeyschool.co.uk

External Contacts

Our local **LADO** is: **Ivan Sullivan** (01803) 208 541 07929 247310
Out of Hours (if urgent): 0300 456 4876 (ask for the on-duty LADO)

Sarah Morrison (Team Teach)

Can advise and provide support/supervision for staff relating to de-escalation and incidents where physical restraint has been necessary.
sarah@elementa.org.uk

Use of Physical Restraint Form

Parent/ Carer Information:

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. Staff will use de-escalation strategies where possible with children before using physical restraint. In extreme circumstances (e.g. risk of injury), this may not always be possible.

Reasonable force means that staff will use the minimum level of force required in the circumstance.

Further information can be found in our school's Physical Restraint and Reasonable Force' and 'Safeguarding' policies, which are available on the school website or from the school office.

Date of incident:		**Time of incident:**	
Name of Child:		**Year group/Class:**	
Name of Adult(s) using Physical Restraint:			
Name of Adult completing the form:			
Details of incident, including de-escalation strategies used (if appropriate); reason for using physical restraint and type of restraint used:			
What happened following the incident? e.g. returned to classroom / parent collected.			
Name of adults witnessing use of physical restraint:			

Date and time **parent/carer** informed verbally:	Date and time **Headteacher** informed (in her absence, please inform EYFS Lead):	Date and time **class teacher** informed:

Signatures of adults completing the form and adults witnessing incident:	

A copy of this form must be given to parents/carers and the Headteacher once completed.