



School Policy for the Use of Positive Physical Intervention

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1. Introduction

At the Brook Special Primary School, we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for learning, for all our pupils to allow them to improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential.

Responding to the needs of pupils who present with behaviour that challenges is achieved within a whole school context of supporting pupils' emotional wellbeing to ensure greater access to teaching and learning. Please see our school's "Policy on Wellbeing" for further details surrounding the proactive and reactive measures we adopt to ensure the needs of our pupils are met.

At times there may be need to use positive physical intervention or even the use of reasonable force to ensure the pupils remain safe and able to learn effectively. This policy is written to ensure this is carried out safely and in the best interests of the pupils.

This policy has been written in conjunction with the DfE guidance on the use of Reasonable Force in Schools. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools> and following any advice given from external agencies who train our staff about these practices.

2. Aims:

The aims of this policy are

- To define what positive physical intervention is and the distinction between positive handling and restrictive physical intervention (restraint).
- To outline the school's practice and procedures when using positive physical intervention.
- Develop and sustain the school vision and ethos, which seeks to protect the dignity of both staff and pupils.
- Create a safe, secure and predictable learning environment.
- To be part of a graded and gradual response to elevated risk in a pupil's behaviour
- Assist staff to maintain high standards in their relationships with pupils.
- Provide a clear framework within which physical intervention may be used to ensure the protection of all members of the school community from harm.

- Provide a supportive framework to ensure the staff know when and where they can support the pupils using physical intervention and restraint and how to do this safely and can act in confidence.
- Help staff to minimise the risk of being accused of any improper conduct towards pupils.

3. Definitions

There exists a difference between ‘touching,’ ‘escorting,’ ‘holding’ and ‘restraining’ which relates to the manner of the intervention, the degree of force applied, the motivation behind the intervention and the impact upon the pupil. The underlying aim must be to act in the best interests of the pupil.

Contingent touch

This may be used **appropriately** e.g., pat on shoulder in a public place, in the appropriate context. Many of our pupils, in order to feel safe will need support in the form of physical touch from their trusted staff.

Holding or guiding

These may be used **appropriately**; this is when we provide physical direction similar to contingent touch but more directive in nature, e.g., the child or young person is led away by hand/arm/around shoulder (using taught practices) or for very young children it may mean more direct physical support – cradling or hugging. Children with complex needs may also request squeezing or deep pressure. This will be documented in sensory profiles.

Restraint or Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)

This is the positive application of sufficient *force* to ensure, by physical means alone, that a child or young person does no injury either to him/herself, a member of staff, another child or young person, or property.

4. Practices and Procedures for the use of positive physical intervention

Positive physical interventions are actions taken with the best intentions for the child. RPI is no different and will be carried out to prevent a child from, committing a criminal offence; harming himself/herself or others; from causing serious danger to property; and in the case of schools for the maintenance of good order and discipline.

In this context ‘harm’ means significant risk of injury e.g. actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of or injury to self or others.

In some situations, staff may use a blend of touching, guiding or escorting and for very short periods of time, RPI, to assist a pupil to complete an activity. However, in such circumstances, if RPI were to be sustained, against resistance, for more than short periods the fundamental character of the activity will have changed from teaching or therapy and the intervention would probably not be considered the most appropriate response.

RPI is **never to be used as a punishment** or simply as a means to force compliance with staff instructions.

The underlying message in the use of physical intervention should be

‘I care enough about you not to let you be out of control.’

As a general rule, nobody has the right to touch, move, hold or contain another person. However, people with a duty of care operate in exceptional circumstances where it is sometimes necessary to do so.

Key principles when using RPI:

- Restraint should only ever be used if it is **Reasonable, Proportionate and Necessary**.
- To ensure it is considered **necessary**, restraint should rarely be used, and only after all other interventions have been exhausted,
- To ensure it is **proportionate**, restraint should only be used if the child or young person is putting themselves or others in danger and where failure to intervene would constitute neglect. You should always use the least restrictive intervention first and then escalate the level as is proportionate to the context.
- It should only be used by staff who have had the recognised training, and this is up-to-date;
- Staff must always approach the situation in a non-confrontational manner and remain calm, using non-threatening verbal and body language.
- The underlying aim is as always to act in the best interests of the pupil in enabling them to access the curriculum – promoting choice, independence and inclusion.
- Whatever intervention is applied a pupil should be treated fairly and with courtesy and respect as outlined in the Pupils Charter, Equalities Policy, Guidelines for good practice in intimate care and Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.

When is RPI appropriate?

The latest guidance from the DfE on the use of reasonable force (2013) references “Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006”

This gives all school staff (or other people authorised by the Head Teacher) the power to use such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence.
- Causing injury to others
- Causing injury to themselves
- Causing damage to the property of the school (or personal)
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline in the school or among pupils receiving education in the school, whether during lessons or elsewhere.

There is a distinction between **emergency** and **planned** interventions.

Emergency interventions

This is an unplanned response to a one-off situation and under the obligations of a 'duty of care' requires staff to respond as best they can to a recognised risk but would not be considered the normal response to predictable or recurring behaviour. It may not be acceptable as a repeated response but should remain within the framework of the law and within acceptable levels of intervention.

Planned Interventions

A planned intervention should be arrived at through a discussion and consultation process of a Wellbeing Plan, with all appropriate persons who have a responsibility for working with the pupil or have a responsibility for planning interventions with specific behaviours which are of concern to the class staff.

Planned physical interventions should:

- Be the result of recorded observation
- Be agreed in advance by the class team
- Be recorded so that the method of physical intervention and the circumstances when it is sanctioned for use are clearly understood
- Have parental involvement
- Have pupil involvement, where appropriate
- Be included as part of an Individual Wellbeing Plan
- Be only one component of a broader approach of strategies including therapeutic intervention.
- Be implemented with the support of the PBS Wellbeing team.

Who can apply RPI?

The Education Act allows all teachers at a school to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils. It also allows those authorised by the Head teacher to have control or charge of pupils. These include SNAs (special needs assistants), SMSAs (school meal

supervisory assistants), education welfare officers, escorts, caretakers, or voluntary helpers including people accompanying pupils on visits, exchanges, holidays or events organised by the school.

Dynamic Risk Assessment:

It is the responsibility of each member of staff to make a dynamic risk assessment of the particular situation and circumstances where they will need to take account of:

- The potential risk to themselves
- The potential risk to the pupil
- The particular behaviour of the pupil
- The emotional state of the pupil
- The pupil's age and level of understanding
- The pupil's perception of the situation
- The pupil's personal history
- What took place just before the behaviour
- The special needs the pupil has
- The health of the pupil
- Their relationship with the pupil
- Their own health
- Their own skills and expertise
- The availability of other staff
- The likely consequences of not intervening
- The possible need to remove other pupils from harm if they are at risk

During the use of restraint staff must always adopt our **"Help Protocol"** and support each other as a team

- Staff will say, ***"help's available"*** and wait a response before supporting the person engaging the pupil. And then respond according to their response.
- If the response is a "no" but the approaching staff feels they know more about the pupil's needs or the situation they can say, ***"more help's available"***. The staff member engaging the pupil must then accept this support.

After RPI has been applied staff:

- **Must record** the event on **Sleuth** with 24hours.
 - It should be recorded in terms of the reason for and nature of the intervention and the frequency of occurrence.
- **Must inform the parents/carers** via phone call *before* the child arrives home.
- **Must record any injuries** to other pupils or staff appropriately.
- Need to complete an Individual Risk Assessment and Wellbeing Support Plan (Positive Handling Plan). It may be that at the present time the pupil's needs are such that he/she requires physical intervention to keep them and or other safe. This will need to be detailed in their Wellbeing Support Plan and agreed with their

parents and SLT / PBS team. This plan will need to be reviewed regularly.

- Must be able to establish the possible consequences of using a particular method or methods of physical intervention when difficult behaviour occurs.
- Must seek first aid for any injured pupils or staff. Families of any injured pupils must be informed and logged
- Must make a referral to MDT if appropriate.
- Should have a debrief at the end of the day with SMT / PBS team and the staff involved.
- Must debrief with the student after the incident. How this is managed will depend on the child communication needs and level of understanding.
- Should review the pupils “My Needs Profile” and or “Wellbeing Support Plan”
- Will inform the PBS team and SLT through SLEUTH and they will respond.

Restricting Liberties

At the school, children and young people may **never** be

- Locked in a room alone, without support and supervision
- Deprived of food/drink
- Denied access to a toilet
- Isolated in ways in which they are not able to communicate their needs, including non-verbal cues.
- Prevented from leaving spaces or rooms unless it is for their own protection or to prevent harm to others.

Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be secluded in a safe space to reduce overall risk to him/ herself or others. There must always be at least two adults present, and a senior member of staff must be notified immediately.

If a pupil is secluded the incident must be fully recorded, and it must be shared with parents/carers, notified to the Local Education Authority and Safeguarding and Social Care, or a consultation call with the Haringey MASH team (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) if the pupil is not known to the Disabled Children’s Team.

A multi-agency planning and strategy meeting must be arranged at the earliest opportunity following an incident of seclusion. The child’s risk assessment must be updated to reflect the exceptional use of seclusion.

Any incidents of seclusion must also be shared with appropriate members of the governing body.

Corporal punishment is illegal and is never used at the school.

In addition:

Any intervention that may be attempted must be within the spirit of the UN declaration of human rights of the child paragraph 2, which states;

'...Parties shall respect and ensure the rights...to each child within their..[care]...without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status... [and]... shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment...'

(UN Convention on the rights of the child, 1989) The rights of which are represented within both criminal and civil law.

It may be deemed appropriate for the school to consult and gain advice and guidance from other professional agencies such as CAMHS or our Education Psychology Service. Any support given can be outlined in the pupil's Wellbeing Plan.

Support for Staff

High quality training, including updates and refresher courses, will be provided to ensure that staff knowledge, skills and values are appropriate to their roles and responsibilities. It will be tailored to meet the needs and abilities of;

- The course participants (age, strength and gender)
- Those who are likely to require physical intervention
- The range of school policies as outlined in the Pupils Charter, Equal Opportunities Policy, Guidelines for good practice in intimate care and the Child Protection Procedures.
- Psychological support services and strategies will also be made available to staff.

At least two members of the PBS team will be qualified to be able to train the school staff with Positive Physical Intervention including the Use of Reasonable Force.

5. Risk assessments

Among the main risks to pupils are that a physical intervention will:

- Be used unnecessarily
- Cause pain, distress or psychological trauma
- Become routine, rather than exceptional methods of management
- Increase the risk of abuse

- Undermine the dignity of the staff, pupils or otherwise humiliate or degrade those involved
- Create distrust and undermine personal relationships

The main risks to staff:

- Applying RPI results in injury
- Applying RPI results in distress or psychological trauma
- The legal justification for its use is challenged in court
- Disciplinary action

The risks of not intervening include:

- Staff will be in breach of their duty of care
- Pupils, staff or other people will be injured or abused
- Serious damage to property will occur
- The possibility of litigation as a result of not intervening

6. Complaints procedure

The planning and use of physical intervention is one of open consultation and any concerns from staff, other professionals, parents/carers and individual pupils, where appropriate, will be considered. Where appropriate these will be referred to the Headteacher and governing body and they will respond in line with the whole school policy on complaints.

7. Links with other Policies

The policies below all relate to issues surrounding the use of Positive Physical Intervention and should be referred to, when necessary, in relation to this policy.

- Wellbeing (and positive behaviour support) Policy
- The Use of Quiet Rooms
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Child protection Policy

This policy is due for review in September 2024