

Physical Intervention Policy

Written: October 2015

Reviewed: February 2024

Date for review February 2026



WATERGATE SCHOOL

'I Can, You Can, Together We Will'

Watergate School

Physical Intervention Policy

This policy should be read with reference to the LEA's 'Policy and Guidelines for Schools on the Use of the Physical Restraint of Pupils', The 'Use of reasonable force' DfE, July 2013 (reviewed 2015), Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention – June 2019 DfE and to the school's own policies on Behaviour, Special Educational Needs and Child Protection and Safeguarding.

Mission & Ethos Statement

At Watergate, in line with our Mission Statement, we prioritise learning, well-being and achievement and value individuality and diversity. Positive, child-centred relationships are at the heart of everything we do and we treat our children with dignity and respect at all times.

We recognise that, because of their disabilities, many of our children face significant challenges in processing information and understanding the world around them. Additionally, their difficulties with understanding and being able to use effective communication can lead to high levels of stress and anxiety, which can sometimes result in behaviours that challenge. As a school we are committed to understanding the functions of behaviours and therefore to teaching children to use alternative ways of communicating and functionally equivalent skills. We also aim to teach children coping and self-regulation skills.

We subscribe to the Sherwood Training and have low arousal approach to understanding and supporting behaviour and any associated physical intervention strategies.

Our underpinning principles, when using physical intervention are that:

- Physical intervention is only ever used as a last resort, when all other strategies have failed, to prevent someone hurting themselves or others or causing significant property damage.
- Children with learning disabilities have a right to be treated with respect, care and dignity especially when they are behaving in ways which might be harmful to themselves or others

- Any physical intervention will always be sensitive to, and show respect for, the expectations and attitudes of children's cultural background.
- Planned physical interventions will only be used as part of a holistic strategy when the risks of employing an intervention are judged to be lower than the risks of not doing so. If a child has a behaviour support plan that includes the use of a planned physical intervention, this plan will be agreed by parents and all relevant professionals and regularly reviewed.
- Physical intervention is only ever used as an act of care, never as punishment.
- It is acknowledged that, in rare and exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of 'reasonable force' is required.
- We recognise that staff have a duty to intervene in extreme circumstances to prevent the child hurting themselves or others or putting themselves or others at risk of harm. Choosing not to intervene could be seen as an act of negligence.

When using physical intervention, staff will only use 'reasonable force' as explained below.

REASONABLE FORCE

The 'Use of reasonable force' DfE, July 2013 (reviewed 2015) gives the following guidelines on the term 'reasonable force':

- Reasonable Force is defined as 'the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property'.
- It covers a range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils
- Force is usually used to either control or restrain.
- 'Control' means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- 'Restraint' means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in extreme circumstances, for example to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed
- Staff should always try to behave in a way that is least likely to cause injury.

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WHO CAN USE REASONABLE FORCE?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 93).

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

WHEN PHYSICAL INTERVENTION MAY BE USED:

- To prevent or stop pupils from hurting themselves
- To prevent or stop pupils from hurting or attacking others or to stop a fight
- *To prevent a pupil leaving the class or school, where allowing the pupils to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others*
- To prevent significant damage to property
- *To prevent pupils causing disorder*

It may be necessary to forcibly move a child in the following situations, but only when all other practicable strategies outlined in our behaviour policy have been tried:

- *when a pupil persistently refuses to obey instructions to leave a classroom*
- *when a pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson, a school event, trip or visit*

The above guidance is generic guidance for all schools, including mainstream schools. Items marked in italics would not usually apply to pupils at Watergate School.

A member of our staff will sometimes need to rely on their professional judgement about whether or not to physically intervene by placing her/himself in a hazardous situation or standing back and thereby allowing a pupil or colleague to face a potential hazard. Staff must balance the level and duration of their intervention against the seriousness and likely consequences of the incident.

WHEN PHYSICAL INTERVENTION MAY NOT BE USED:

As a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

At Watergate school, the following actions are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment in any form, to include deliberate acts that cause pain or injury
- Manhandling of pupils
- Shouting at pupils, other than in an emergency in order to ensure the safety of the pupil, another child or member of staff

Before resorting to the use of physical intervention staff will:

- remain calm and attempt to engender calm
- use de-escalation techniques (how this is done will depend on the individual child and will be outlined in their Relational Support Plan) as outlined below:
 - reducing language to only that which is essential
 - listen to the pupil(s)
 - use an appropriate level of eye contact
 - use con-frontational, asocial body language
 - divert, distract, cajole or humour, where appropriate
 - reason with and offer appropriate choices to the pupil(s).
- use firm but non-confrontational language assisted by alternative communication strategies as appropriate
- remove other children, and if appropriate staff, from the environment
- where possible, remove items that could pose a risk to the child or others
- where possible, explain what is happening and the consequences of non-compliance

If the staff member believes he or she may be at risk of injury, they should remove other pupils who may be at risk and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues. Until assistance arrives the teacher should continue to attempt to defuse the situation and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

If a physical intervention is deemed necessary, staff will

- use the minimum amount of force required to achieve safety
- reassure the pupil that physical restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary
- continue to use a range of non-physical interventions aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation, as above.
- have the most appropriate and up-to-date training provided by Watergate and Brent Knoll trainers.

TRAINING

At Watergate we are committed to identifying, addressing and reviewing the training needs of school staff, with a view to developing a shared awareness of:

- how to understand the needs of our children and the functions of behaviour that challenges.
- how to adopt a low-arousal approach
- how to teach children to recognise and communicate their need in a socially appropriate manner
- how to teach children coping skills
- how to teach alternative and functionally equivalent behaviours
- how to use active listening skills

- how to prevent, defuse and/or resolve difficult situations, including the appropriate use of anger management, de-escalation and conflict resolution skills and techniques.

- how and when to intervene

PLANNING FOR THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL PUPILS

We will identify, in consultation with parents/carers, any pupils whose behaviour is considered to potentially require a physical intervention or response, and to consider the needs of those pupils in relation to:

- any individual medical, social, behavioural, learning, communication or cultural factors
- any Individual Education Plans, Relational Support Plans

If a member of staff considers that a particular pupil may at some time need such intervention, the circumstances and needs will be presented for discussion to an appropriate meeting of relevant staff and be discussed with parents.

OTHER PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS

Watergate School believes that appropriate, positive physical contact with pupils can contribute to our development as a safe and friendly school. Some physical contact may be necessary or unavoidable when staff are working with:

- children who need encouraging or guiding
- pupils who may need physical prompts or help
- pupils requiring first aid

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- pupils receiving coaching in sport or as part of another curriculum activity
- pupils in distress who need comfort
- pupils who need help with their personal and intimate care
- children who are being congratulated or praised

Our staff will make professional and sensitive judgements about the nature and extent of their physical contact with pupils. We will have particular regard for cultural sensitivities and gender differences, for the needs of adolescent pupils and of those who may be particularly vulnerable following previous trauma or abuse.

RECORDING PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

- All incidents where physical intervention has been used will be recorded in the bound and numbered book which is located in the Headteacher's office at Bellingham and the DHT office at Ladywell.
- A report must also be made on CPOMS
- The Headteacher or nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) must be informed as soon as possible after the use of physical intervention
- The Headteacher or member of the SLT will decide how and when to inform a pupil's parent/carer (this should be done no later than the end of the school day)

We will keep all reports and physical intervention logs. We will review regularly the number and type of incidents in which force has been deemed necessary. This will be used to ensure that there is adherence to this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the school.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints following a dispute about the use of force by an adult should, in the first instance, be referred to the Headteacher or the school's nominated person. This will generally result in an investigation, which will take account of the written or verbal reports which have been collected. Where disputes cannot be resolved informally within

school, complaints should be pursued in accordance with the school's complaints procedures.

This policy will be reviewed every year or sooner to keep up to date with current guidance/ legislation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Policy
- Policy on Intimate Care
- Guidance on Safer Working Practice
- Keeping Children Safe In Education