

## **Seghill First School**

### **Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force policy March 2023**

#### **Introduction**

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school. The policy is intended to explain the school's arrangements for physical intervention. Its contents are available to parents and pupils.

The policy has been developed in response to the recommendations and guidance from Use of reasonable force in schools (Ref: DFE-00295-2013).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

The policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils and in particular the Behaviour Policy.

#### **Purpose of the Policy**

The school believes that good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the safety and well-being of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- (i) Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- (ii) Are provided with appropriate advice to deal with these difficult situations.

Any intervention must be in the paramount interests of the child and or used to prevent behaviour that is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline in the school.

Staff have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Physical intervention will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff, good order or property are at risk, but should be reasonable and proportionate.

#### **Physical Contact**

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, e.g. in games or P.E. or in the supervision of children. It may be appropriate to place a very young child on the knee of an adult if the child is very distressed or ill. At all times members of staff will act as a responsible parent would. Physical Intervention This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

### **Restrictive Physical Intervention**

This will involve the use of physical intervention/reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or risk of significant damage to property. All such incidents will be recorded on the Record of Restraint/Physical Intervention Form. A copy of this is to be placed in the Restraint/Cause For Concern File in school.

Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- Recognition of their unique identity;
- Be treated with respect and dignity;
- Learn and work in a safe environment;
- Be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- Individual consideration of pupil needs by staff who have a responsibility for their care and protection;
- Expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- Be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school;
- Be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

The school will do all they can to ensure that pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits which govern behaviour in the school. We rely on the support of parents to ensure the good behaviour of their child and that he/she understands and follows the school's Behaviour Policy.

### **Staff Authorised to Use Restrictive Physical Intervention**

By reason of their conditions of service, the Headteacher can authorise all teachers to use restrictive physical intervention. All Classroom Assistants may also be authorised to use restrictive physical intervention. Authorisation is not given to volunteers or parents.

Staff working as a team will create:

- A calm, secure atmosphere throughout school and use consistent approaches;
- Opportunities for pupils to earn praise/rewards. It is important to praise good behaviour as often as possible;
- Opportunities to identify problem behaviour or triggers in order to avoid creating further difficulties i.e. by anticipating behaviour before it occurs;
- Awareness of pupil behaviour so that attention seeking behaviour is seen but ignored where it is safe to do so;
- Opportunities for discussion with the pupil where discussion can take place in order to set targets designed to deal with the difficult or attention seeking behaviour;
- Opportunities for explanation of the action/consequences to the pupil;
- Opportunities for regular contact with parents /carers to share plans and spread the strategies over a 24-hour period. Parents/carers must be involved in a behaviour programme which has indicated that restraint may be needed and informed if the physical intervention of their child has taken place.
- Liaise with outside agencies for support and involvement in the programme to ensure that joined up approaches are in place.

Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and requires intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

1. Meet the pupil's needs.
2. Range of positive behaviour strategies (rule reminders, positively phrased reprimands).
3. Encourage the pupil to make positive choices and develop self-control.
4. Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with a direction to the pupil to refrain.
5. Further verbal reprimand stating, - this is the second request for compliance; - provide an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable; - an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
6. Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible, summon assistance.
7. Physical intervention - reasonable force using the minimum degree of force necessary to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property (as stated in 3(b)).

### **Types of Incidents Where Physical Intervention May Be Required**

The incidents described in Use of reasonable force in schools (Ref: DFE-00295- 2013) fall into five broad categories:

'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; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.'

### **Examples of situations which fall into categories are:**

- A pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil;
- Pupils are fighting;
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property; A pupil is causing, or is at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by mis-use of dangerous materials or objects;
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which he or she might cause an accident or injury to himself, herself or to others;
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).
- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an instruction to leave a classroom;
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

### **Consequences and Rewards as an Alternative to Physical Intervention**

A system of positive rewards and consequences has been developed in the school to encourage appropriate behaviour. (see Positive Behaviour Policy).

### **Acceptable Measures of Physical Intervention**

The use of any degree of force can only be deemed reasonable if:

- (a) It is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident;
- (b) It is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is intended to prevent;
- (c) It is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result;
- (d) The age, level of understanding and gender of the pupil are taken into account;
- (e) It is likely to achieve the desired result.

Wherever possible assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervening. Physical intervention uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property. Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

### **Complaints**

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Any complaints received by the Headteacher from parents, staff or any other persons regarding alleged ill treatment of pupils or injuries received by a student during the course of physical intervention must be investigated fully by the Head teacher.

The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints.

Children who have been subject to physical intervention will be given the opportunity to discuss the incident with a member of staff at the first reasonable opportunity following the incident. Such discussions will offer pupils and school fresh opportunities to work together and to renew relationships that may be strained by the incident. Pupils will be informed of ways in which their behaviour could change in order to prevent a repetition of the incident.

It is particularly important that this is done properly to increase the chances of pupils learning from the experience.

Parents may not request that individual pupils be exempt from physical intervention, as outlined in the policy, as this policy will be implemented on health and safety grounds.

The full policy is available upon request.

Anyone wishing to make a response to the full policy may do so in writing to the headteacher.

## Document Record

| <b>Version</b> | <b>Reason for Amendments/Update/Review</b>             | <b>Date of Adoption by Seghill First School</b> | <b>Date of next review</b> |
|----------------|--|---|----------------------------|
| 1.0            | New policy and procedure written based on DfE guidance | 16.03.2021                                      | 16.03.2021                 |
| 2.0            | Revisited and no changes made                          | 23.03.23  | March 2024                 |
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