

Physical Restraint and Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Nursling C of E Primary School

Date of Issue: October 2023

Review date: October 2024



Nursling C of E Primary School fully 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. Care and consideration will be given to the age of the child when following the guidance in this policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour and Safeguarding & Child Protection Policies. It details how we will implement guidance provided by DfE, Team-Teach and other relevant advice.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the school including governors. We all have a duty to intervene in order to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, damaging property, or in order to maintain good order and discipline. Furthermore, the school takes seriously its duty of care to pupils, employees and visitors to the school.

- The first and paramount consideration is the welfare of the children in our care.
- The second is the welfare and protection of the adults who look after them.

Staff at Nursling C of E Primary School are trained to look after pupils in their care and aim to focus on de-escalation techniques wherever possible using Team Teach training and advice.

For the Purposes of this Policy Document:

- Positive handling includes a wide range of supportive strategies for managing challenging behaviour for all pupils, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, within an ethos of mutual respect, care and safety.
- 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.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school.
- 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 in the playground;
- 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.

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

At this school, we only use physical restraint when there is no realistic alternative and for the shortest amount of time possible:

- 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.

Before using Physical Restraint

We take effective action to reduce risk by:

- Showing care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning.
- Giving clear directions for pupils to stop.
- Reminding the pupil about rules and likely outcomes.
- Removing an audience or taking vulnerable pupils to a safe place.
- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Using positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured.
- Ensuring that colleagues know what is happening and call for help.

Whilst or before intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. “I am doing this to keep you safe.”.

In the event a child absconds from the school site

- Staff will not give chase as this could put the child into further danger
- Staff will use their judgement on keeping the child in sight for as long as possible
- Safeguarding procedures will be followed, Police and parents will be informed immediately

Method of Restraint

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following: Restraint must not:

- Involve hurting the pupil
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- 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
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back or 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 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, Assistant Headteachers or SENCO as soon as possible after the incident. These must be recorded on CPOMS using the reason 'Restraint'.

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.

Other physical contact with pupils (DfE Use of reasonable force 2013)

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper and necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly, when walking together around the school or keeping them safe on the roadside.
- When comforting a distressed pupil
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To give first aid

This list is not exhaustive, but provides some examples of situations where physical contact is proper and necessary.

| Date | Amendments made to Policy |
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This policy has been written using advice taken from: Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies DfE 2013. The school acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND). Equality Act 2010, SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years 2015.

The following are a list of specific policies relating to using restraint and reasonable force:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy