

**St. Columba's Catholic Primary School**

**Policy on the use of Positive Handling to manage physically  
challenging behaviour**

**Reviewed Jan 2018**

**INTRODUCTION**

The behavioural challenges presented by a small number of pupils mean that some form of physical intervention may be unavoidable. For this reason it is necessary to establish a system of safeguards to protect pupils and staff. This policy on the use of physical intervention to control or restrain pupils is agreed between Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council - the Local Education Authority, the recognised Teachers Associations and other trade unions recognised by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The policy is recommended for adoption by all education settings within the authority.

**PURPOSE**

- Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1998 (Circular 10/98) and sets the legal position about the use of reasonable force by teachers and other authorised staff in schools to control or restrain pupils;
- The joint DfES/DoH guidance, 'The use of restrictive physical interventions for staff working with children and adults who display extreme behaviour in association with learning disability and or autistic spectrum disorder issued in July 2002 supports the implementation of the above Act;
- Health and Safety at Work Acts/Regulations (1974,1992,1999) set the legal position with regard to legal duty, what is reasonable and practicable and risk assessment;
- The Human Rights Act 1998.

Within this legal framework the purpose of this policy and its accompanying further guidance is to clarify for members of staff, pupils and parents what is acceptable and what is not in terms of the use of physical intervention to control or restrain pupils.

**PRINCIPLES**

Knowsley LEA's policy on the use of physical intervention is based on the following key principles:

- The right of all pupils, members of staff, volunteers and visitors of the school to be protected from harm, violence and assault and acts of verbal abuse;
- That physical intervention will only be used as a last resort when all other behavioural management strategies have failed or when pupils or staff are at risk, in approximately 95% of cases the use of de-escalation strategies will be sufficient and physical intervention will only be necessary in approximately 5% of incidents;
- That physical intervention will be kept to a minimum to achieve the desired results and any response will be graded and gradual moving from least intrusive to more restrictive dependent on the circumstances;
- There is recognition that guidance, information and adequate training for staff are essential;
- That meaningful contact with parents is essential;
- The intention that this policy should not stand alone but should complement and reinforce the principles and practice contained within both the school's and the local authority's behaviour and discipline policies.

## **AUTHORISED STAFF**

All teaching staff at the school are authorised within the context of this policy and the legal position above, to use physical intervention to control or restrain pupils. In addition some members of the non-teaching staff who have lawful control or charge of pupils at the school may also be authorised by the head teacher to use physical intervention to restrain pupils. The decision as to which members of staff to authorise should be at the discretion of the head teacher but all authorised persons should have undergone the necessary training and appropriate refresher courses.

Staff should only use physical intervention to restrain pupils after they have received appropriate training. Knowsley LEA has a team of instructors trained to deliver the 'Team-Teach Approach to Positive Handling', (see appendix A). Any training providers should be on the register of trainers approved by BILD (the British Institute of Learning Disabilities) and should include regular reaccreditation as part of their training package.

The head teacher should keep an up-to-date list of authorised staff and all staff should know who is authorised. The head teacher should ensure that once staff are trained they are regularly re-accredited.

## **'Reasonable force'**

In the absence of any legal definition of reasonable force four considerations will be applied in determining that the use of force is reasonable:

- The circumstances of the particular incident warrant it;
- The degree of force employed is in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent;
- The amount of force used is the minimum required to achieve the desired result;
- The degree of force used is appropriate for the age understanding and sex of the pupil upon which the force is employed.

### ***Situations in which the use of physical intervention may be appropriate*** **Definitions**

- Restrictive physical intervention involves the use of force to restrict movement, restrict mobility or disengage from dangerous or harmful physical contact.
- Planned intervention occurs when staff employ prearranged strategies and methods, which are based upon a risk assessment, and behaviour management plans.
- Emergency or unplanned use of force occurs in response to unforeseen events and should serve as a trigger to implement a behaviour management plan for the individual involved.

### ***Authorised members of staff may use such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:***

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be a criminal offence if the child were not under the age of criminal responsibility);
- Injuring themselves or others (including members of staff);
- Causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property);
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere on any authorised out of school activity. Where possible any physical intervention should be planned for in advance in order to reduce the levels of stress for both pupils and staff and in order to make any necessary risk assessments. Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve:
  - Physically interposing between pupils;
  - Blocking a pupil's path;
  - Holding;
  - Pushing or pulling;
  - Leading a pupil by the hand or arm;

- Shepherding a pupil away;
- Using more restrictive holds in extreme circumstances.

### **Staff should not:**

- Hold a pupil round the neck or in any way that might restrict the airway;
- Slap, punch or kick a pupil;
- Twist or force limbs against a joint;
- Trip a pupil;
- Hold a pupil by the hair or ear;
- Hold a pupil face down on the ground except in extremely serious situations and then only using approved techniques in which staff members have been fully trained.

## **RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Whenever it is foreseeable that a pupil may require restrictive physical intervention a risk assessment should be carried out. A considered response involves balancing risks. Taking action should be weighed against the risks involved in not taking action. Restrictive physical intervention should only take place when absolutely necessary and after all other behaviour management strategies have been exhausted. Occasionally, for some identified individuals, the least intrusive physical intervention may be a necessary behaviour management strategy. The use of such an intervention will be fully documented and employ only the minimum amount of force required. Schools must be aware of the medical issues around all individuals involved in physical intervention. It would be appropriate for parents to be consulted in the risk assessment process.

## **RECORDING INCIDENTS**

As soon as is reasonably practicable following an incident in which force has been used the member of staff should inform the head teacher or other designated senior member of staff and must follow this up with a written report of the incident (see attached form). All staff involved in any incident should produce a written report. Not only is this important for monitoring the nature and frequency of interventions and the pupils and staff involved but it is crucial in case there are any complaints. Separate record of the incident must be kept in a bound logbook and cross referenced to the report form. As incidents can be stressful all members of staff should be given the opportunity to discuss the incident with another member of staff. Any injuries resulting from the use of physical intervention should be recorded using the appropriate forms. On the very rare occasions when it may be necessary to hold a pupil on

the ground a copy of the completed incident form should be forwarded to the LEA's Health and Safety Office as soon as possible.

## **MONITORING**

Schools should appoint an appropriate member of staff to monitor and evaluate incidents of physical intervention. Not only will this give an overview of the current situation within the school but it will also enhance planning for possible future incidents. All incidents involving holds on the ground must be reported to the LEA's Health and Safety Officer as soon as possible.

For those schools that have been trained in Team Teach techniques routine monitoring of incident forms is part of the follow up process. Other schools will be required to forward incident forms for random sampling at designated times.

## **PARENTAL AND PUPIL INVOLVEMENT**

A summary statement of the school's policy on the use of physical intervention to restrain pupils will be included with information the school gives to parents about the school's policy on discipline and standards of behaviour. If physical intervention becomes a necessary part of a child's behaviour management there should be discussion with the parents or guardians and the handling techniques used should form part of the individual's behaviour management plan. Within the framework of the school's policy on discipline and standards of behaviour the school will also consider appropriate ways of raising awareness of the key principles and issues within this policy with pupils.

The head teacher or senior member of staff will inform parents/guardians of a pupil involved in an incident in which physical intervention has been used to restrain or control pupils. The parent/guardians will also be requested or given the opportunity to discuss the incident and issues relating to it further. Any incident involving the use of force will also be followed up with the pupil involved in line with the standard practices of the school.

## **COMPLAINTS**

All allegations and complaints by pupils and or parents of the inappropriate use of physical interventions will be investigated openly and thoroughly in accordance with the school's complaints procedures. The Lead Child Protection Officer should be informed of any such allegations.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **The 'Team Teach' approach to physical intervention**

The 'Team Teach' approach to positive handling (also known as physical intervention) is a whole school/setting holistic approach to behaviour management that aims to protect the safety and rights of all individuals and promotes the use of physical intervention as a last resort option when all other behaviour management techniques have been exhausted.

'Team Teach' was developed by the deputy head of an EBD residential special school, as there was an identified need to find a method of physically handling children with behavioural difficulties that was graded and gradual without damaging relationships and in a way that protected staff and children from physical injury and unnecessary allegations. The 'Team Teach' framework was developed to meet this need.

'Team Teach' is accredited by BILD (the British Institute of Learning Disabilities) who are currently establishing a scheme for the accreditation of trainers in physical intervention on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills. Apart from techniques for holding and restraining children and strategies for behaviour management there is also an element relating to personal safety. This teaches techniques that staff can use when they are placed in potentially dangerous situations, for example, if they are grabbed by the hair or if punches are being thrown at them. This is not self-defence training, as all techniques taught are nonaggressive. Health and safety issues and risk assessment are of paramount importance throughout all aspects of the 'Team Teach' approach.

Knowsley is training 12 'Team Teach' instructors to provide training to its schools. Schools are offered individualised training packages of 6 or 12 hours based upon their needs, to be taken as whole day or twilight sessions. In order to take up one of these packages schools will have to fulfil identified criteria and be prepared to commit to completing the necessary documentation which is an essential part of the quality control of the programme and is vital for the protection of all should there be any complaints. There will also need to be commitment to short refresher course.