



# Brierley Hill Primary School

## Physical Restraint Policy

This policy has been written and developed with our school mission statement and aims in mind:

At Brierley Hill Primary School we:

Wish all children to grow and develop into confident young people with respect for themselves and for each other, to have high aspirations and to achieve the very best that they can in all aspects of learning.

We aim to:

Enjoy Learning

Work Together

Achieve Goals

Celebrate Success

**"Every Child Achieves"**

Approved by: The Governing Body

Date: 30/11/23 *J.R. Atto*

Last reviewed on: November 2023

Next review due by: September 2024



## Brierley Hill Primary School

### Physical Restraint Policy



This policy has been prepared for the support of all staff who come into contact with pupils at Brierley Hill Primary School. It is designed to explain the school's arrangements for care and control. Its contents will be made available to all parents/ carers and pupils. The policy has been developed in response to the recommendations of Circular 10/98 'The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils' issued following the implementation of the Education Act 1996 (Section 550A).

#### Purpose

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practiced by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety 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.

Children and young people need to be safe and aware of how they should behave. Some (generally only a few and very occasionally) lose control. They need to know we are able to control them safely and confidently. Our pupils respond well to the school rules and conventions. Situations in which physical intervention may be needed are therefore likely to be relatively few in number.

All our staff need to be safe and confident in how they manage inappropriate behaviour. This policy seeks to ensure that staff at Brierley Hill Primary School clearly understand their responsibilities in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is required. It is essential that staff are well-informed and appropriately trained to deal with these difficult situations and understand fully the rationale.

Parents need to know that their child and those who are teaching her or him are safe and free from disruptive influences or danger. They also need to know that they will be properly informed if their child is the subject of physical intervention, and they need to know the nature of the intervention and the rationale for its use.

This policy connects to and is consistent with our other policies, especially those on Behaviour Management, Health and Safety and Child Protection.

#### Our Approach: 'Prevention is better than cure'

We always try to avoid using physical interventions and regard them as a last resort for a very small minority of situations. We provide a clearly planned and differentiated curriculum that provides appropriate levels of challenge to all pupils, and maintain an effective school behaviour policy that is known and understood by all staff and pupils.

Restrictive physical intervention is then our method of last resort, after all other approaches have been tried or in situations of clear danger or extreme urgency. We utilise only the minimum force required to resolve the situation safely. How we respond always has regard to the circumstances and to the age and understanding of the child or young person.

Where there is a foreseeable risk that a pupil could behave in such a way as to require restrictive physical intervention, we undertake a risk assessment in order to balance the risks to the pupil and to others of intervening or not. Planning is also undertaken to see if trigger situations can be avoided and other positive strategies employed to lessen the likelihood of such incidents occurring.

## Who can use restrictive physical intervention and when?

The law allows teachers, and other persons who are authorised by the Head Teacher to have control or charge of pupils to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances 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 an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility)
- Injuring themselves or others
- 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'. (Education Act 1996, Section 550A)

In this school, the following staff (in addition to teachers employed at the school) are authorised by the Head Teacher to have control of pupils and must be made aware of this policy and its implications: teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors and our site manager.

School staff are also, like anyone else, allowed to use reasonable force (the minimum necessary) to defend themselves.

We take the view that staff are not expected to put themselves in danger; and that removing pupils and themselves from a source of danger is an appropriate thing to do. We appreciate the integrity of our staff and value their efforts to rectify situations that are difficult and in which they exercise their duty of care for their pupils. However, we do not require them to go beyond what is reasonable. In particular, it is acceptable for any member of staff to decide that they will not use restrictive physical intervention for personal reasons.

Staff should not normally use force to maintain order or to avoid damage to property unless the young person's actions pose a threat to themselves or another.

## Acceptable Physical Interventions

Reasonable force is not defined legally in isolation. It must be justified as appropriate by the circumstances. We use only the minimum force that is needed to restore safety or appropriate behaviour; and we take account of the age, understanding and gender of the pupil.

Acceptable forms of intervention in this school include:

- Leading, guiding or shepherding a pupil with a hand in the centre of the back
- Holding a pupil who has lost control until they are calm and safe
- Physically moving between and separating two pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Use of reasonable force to remove a weapon or dangerous object from a pupil's grasp
- Where there is immediate risk of injury, any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force', for example, to prevent a pupil running into a busy road or hitting or hurting someone
- Using more restrictive holds in extreme circumstances

It is also acceptable for doors to have double or high locks to ensure pupil safety, or for external doors to be locked for security purposes, if a member of staff is always with the pupils in such circumstances. At all times the fire regulations will be adhered to.

Staff may move, defend themselves, lead, restrain or block someone, bearing in mind the whole time their own safety, as well as that of others, and of the child who is the subject of any restraint or other intervention.

It is unacceptable and likely to be illegal or grounds for disciplinary action for staff to use any physical intervention designed to cause pain or injury, including:

- Any form of corporal punishment, slapping, punching or kicking
- Holding by the neck or collar, or otherwise restricting the ability to breathe
- Holding by the hair or an ear
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a pupil or holding an arm out at neck or head height to stop them
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground or sitting on them
- Locking a pupil in a room

Staff should also avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Physical interventions are not used to achieve a search of clothing or property, even if we had good reason to believe that a weapon or dangerous drugs were being concealed.

### Using Physical Intervention

Except in cases where there is immediate danger, we would always try other ways of resolving or de-escalating a situation. These could include:

- Calmly re-stating the rules and expectations for the situation
- Removing other pupils from the situation and thus from danger of being an audience
- Use of physical proximity, but not in a threatening way
- Encouraging the pupil to withdraw to a safer and calmer situation
- Calling another adult for support or to take over

If more than minor physical intervention is judged to be necessary, the teacher or adult in charge should:

- Send for the assistance of another adult (for support, or to take over, and as a witness)
- Remove other pupils from the scene, if possible
- Continue to talk calmly to the pupil, explaining what will happen and under what circumstances the physical intervention will cease (but not in a threatening way)
- Use the minimum force necessary and cease the intervention as soon as it is judged safe
- Not act punitively in any way, verbally or physically

In rare circumstances, we may consider it appropriate to call the police.

Following a significant incident of physical intervention, when a pupil has resisted or challenged and force has been used, the teacher or adult responsible should as soon as possible inform either the Associate Headteacher. We acknowledge that such events are stressful for both pupils and staff and both parties will need time to recover, with the chance of de-briefing and resolving the situation.

A full written account of the incident will be made by the member of staff concerned and recorded on an incident form which contains:

- Name(s) of pupil(s) concerned, when and where the incident occurred
- Names of staff or pupils who witnesses
- The reason why force was needed
- How the incident began and progressed, who said what, who did what
- What was done to calm things down
- What degree of force was used, what kind of hold, where and for how long
- Pupil's response and the outcome of the incident
- Details of any injury to any person or damage to property

The form will be signed and dated by the member of staff and countersigned that it has been read by the Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher, who will:

- Discuss the incident with the pupil as soon as possible
- Interview staff involved and any other witnesses
- Inform the pupil's parents/carers and social worker, if relevant
- Record any disagreements expressed by the pupil or adults about the event
- Take any appropriate further action, liaising with Council, governors or unions, as appropriate, and acting within the Council's Child Protection Procedures

We report incidents to the chair of governors.

### Planning for Physical Intervention

Where we think a pupil might require physical restraint, we plan in advance and know who will do what. This planning includes helping pupils to avoid provoking situations, helping them find success and minimise frustration. It also helps us see better where we can head off difficulties when we spot them early enough. The plan will include:

- Involving the parents and the pupil to gain their views and to ensure that they are clear about what specific action the school might need to take
- A risk assessment that considers carefully the likely outcomes to the pupil and others of undertaking intervention or not
- Managing the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, at what stage and why type of holds to be used)
- Identifying key staff who should know exactly what action they should be taking. Any member of staff who may have to use a physical intervention should always be fully briefed about the child in question, and it is best if they are well known to the child
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned, if appropriate
- Identifying training needs and updates

### Training

We are clear that training of staff is vital in this area if we are to be seen to adopt best practice and maintain a record of safe management of all school situations. The training may include:

- ⇒ Awareness training for staff and governors
  - ⇒ General training on behaviour management for all staff (not just teachers)
  - ⇒ Training on avoiding and coping with crisis/difficult/physically challenging events for appropriate staff
- Specific training and skill development on use of some basic 'breakaway' or 'hold' techniques that are safe and useful to know, for all or some staff

### Who needs to know?

Everyone connected with the school should know of the existence of the policy. However, not everyone needs to know about specific incidents.

	About the Policy	About a Specific Incident
Governors	Yes	Not generally – usually the chair of governors. Other governors receive regular reports on the total number of incidents.
Parents	Yes	About incidents relating to their own child.
Staff	Yes	About any incidents involving pupils they may have charge of
Pupils	Yes	Only those they witness

Council Health and Safety Team	Yes	Normally annual report
Unions	Yes	If informed by members

### Complaints

We hope that, by adopting this policy and keeping parents well informed, it should help to avoid the need for complaints. Any disputes that do arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with in accordance with Child Protection Procedures, a copy of which is available in school. This could in some circumstances lead to an investigation by police and social services.

Complaints about this policy should be directed to the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors.

## Incident Report Form

Name and role of person completing this form:
Signature of person completing this form:
Date:

Date and time of incident:	
Name/s of person/s involved in the incident:	
Description of incident:	
Witnesses	
Incident Reported to:	Date:
How (this form, in person, email, phone):	

Description of actions to be taken:
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