



Heathside School

Positive Touch and the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention for all Staff working with Children & Young People

Policy and Guidance for Staff and Parents/Carers

Staff Member with Responsibility:	Ms A. Shakespeare, Vice Principal
Reviewed by:	Local Advisory Board
Ratification by Full Governing Body:	Summer 2018
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1. Introduction

This policy is based on the Surrey guidance on 'Positive Touch and the use of restrictive physical intervention when working with children and young people' (2017). This document is available on the Surrey County Council website.

At Heathside School we believe that students need to be safe, know how to behave, and know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. For a very small minority of students the use of restrictive physical intervention may be needed, and, on such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention will be used.

The majority of students behave well and conform to the expectations of our school. We have responsibility to operate an effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class, and individual students. The following policies are also a source of further information and guidance:

- Behaviour for Learning
- Health and Safety
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs
- Staff Code of Conduct

All school staff need to feel able to manage inappropriate risk and behaviour, and to have an understanding of what and how challenging behaviours might be communicated. They need to

know what the options open to them are, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a restrictive physical intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

2. Definition of ‘restrictive physical intervention’

The Law allows for teachers and other persons authorised by the Principal to use Restrictive Physical Intervention to prevent a student from doing or continuing to do any of the following: -

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property
- engaging in any behaviour that is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school

“Restrictive Physical Intervention” is the term used by the DfE to include interventions where bodily contact using force is used. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Principal has to, in specific circumstances, use “reasonable force” to control or restrain students. There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. However, there are two relevant considerations:

- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it
- the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent

The definition of physical force also includes the use of mechanical devices (e.g. splints on the pupil prescribed by medical colleagues to prevent self-injury), forcible seclusion or use of locked doors. It is important for staff to note that, although no physical contact may be made in the latter situations, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

3. When the use of restrictive physical interventions may be appropriate

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. However, there are other situations when physical management may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain students may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well being of all staff and students are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

Who may use restrictive physical intervention?

All members of staff are authorised by the Principal to have control of students and must be aware of this Policy and its implications.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger, and that removing students and themselves is the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the students.

4. Planning for the use of restrictive physical interventions at Heathside School

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows: -

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions.
- Staff will strive to create a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require using force and apply school rules consistently and fairly.
- Staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and in the student's and/or other students' best interests.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion and at the level of understanding of the child or young person.
- Only the minimum force necessary will be used to prevent severe distress, injury, or damage.
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was in keeping with the incident.
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses.
- As soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the student to regain self-control.
- A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy.
- Escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable.
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual student will always be taken into account.
- In developing Pupil Profiles, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each student's circumstance.
- Procedures are in place for recording the incident (see Appendix 1) and for supporting and debriefing students and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.
- Wherever possible, staff will endeavour to inform the student that force may need to be used before using it.
- Staff will have been made aware of any significant needs i.e. those with Special Educational Needs.

5. Positive Touch at Heathside School

- There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate.
- When physical contact is made with students it should be in response to their needs at the time, be of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.
- It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since what is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.
- Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with students.
- Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.
- Staff supervising PE and games or providing musical tuition may be required to initiate physical contact with students to support a child to perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. Contact under these circumstances should be done with the student's agreement, for the minimum time necessary and in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the student.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and students takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the student's age and level of understanding
- the student's individual characteristics and history
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present)

Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participant's neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints.

Physical contact must never become a habit between a member of staff and a particular student.

6. Developing a positive handling plan at Heathside School

If a student is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This Plan will help the student and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing.

The plan will include:

- involving parents/carers and students to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- a risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- a record needs to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- managing the student, strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention is to be used
- identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the student
- ensuring a system to summon additional support
- identifying training needs

7. Guidance and training for staff

Guidance and training is essential in this area. We need to adopt the best possible practice. At Heathside this is arranged at a number of levels including:

- awareness for governors, staff and parents
- behaviour management for all staff
- positive touch training

8. Recording of incidents

A record sheet (see Appendix 1) will be completed by all staff engaged in any incident where handling has taken place even if they did not handle the child. The record sheets will be passed to the Vice Principal and then retained securely. The Vice Principal will make parents aware of the incident.

Following any incident where force has been appropriate, the Principal will make arrangements to support the staff and students if required.

9. Complaints

If concerns arise please refer to the school's complaints procedure which is available on the school website.

APPENDIX 1 – Record of Incident Form

Details of student or students on whom Restrictive Physical Intervention was used by a member of staff	
Name and Tutor Group	
Date, time and location of incident	
Names of staff involved (directly or as witnesses)	
Names of students involved (directly or as witnesses)	
Description of incident by the staff involved	
De-escalation techniques used (defusing, deflection, distraction, appropriate humour, proximity control, verbal advice, rule reminder, planned ignoring, time out, changes of task, choices, limits, consequences, another member of staff, other..)	
Justification for use of physical controls (To prevent a criminal offence, injury to student, staff, self, serious damage to property, disruptive behaviour, student absconding)	
Any injury suffered by staff or students and any first aid and/or medical attention required.	
Follow up, including post-incident support and any disciplinary action against students.	
Consequences (how did the staff intervene, how did the student respond and how was the situation resolved)	
When and how those with parental responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed.	

Response and view of the student (this field must be completed)			
Report compiled by: (Name and role)		Signed	Date
Principal/Vice Principal's comments		Signed	Date