

Aylesford School

and Sixth Form College



wonder aspiration respect discipline

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION AND RESTRAINT POLICY

Written: December 2018
Review Date: December 2021
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Via: Standards, Personnel and Curriculum

'from potential to reality'

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Physical Intervention and Restraint

Rationale

Aylesford School is committed to ensuring that all our students and staff are able to live and work in a supportive and caring environment, demonstrating a mutual respect, so that teaching and learning can take place in order to maximise students' potential and achievement.

In the rare circumstances that it becomes appropriate to use physical intervention, it will be used as an act of care and not punishment and staff should follow the guidelines outlined below. Staff are required, while taking any of the action detailed in this policy, to ensure that the student understands that this is a last resort and the security of the student is continually maintained. When applying this policy staff should remember it is in the best interests of the child.

WHENEVER A SERIOUS INCIDENT OCCURS, THE HEADTEACHER (OR DEPUTY HEADTEACHER) SHOULD BE INFORMED IMMEDIATELY.

Circumstances When Physical Intervention Might Be Appropriate

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury to persons or of significant damage to property.
- Where a student attacks another student or a member of staff.
- Where a student absconds from class or tries to leave the school, in circumstances where that student could be at risk if not kept in a classroom or school.

It may be necessary to forcibly move a child in the following situations, but only when all other practicable strategies outlined in our Behaviour Policy have been tried.

- When a student persistently refuses to obey instructions to leave a classroom.
- When a student is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

A member of our staff will sometimes need to rely on their professional judgement about whether or not to physically intervene by placing her/himself in a hazardous situation or standing back and thereby allowing a student or colleague to face a potential hazard. Staff must balance the level and duration of their intervention against the seriousness and likely consequences of the incident.

What Staff Will Do Before and During Any Physical Intervention

Before physically intervening, staff need to:

- Remain calm and attempt to engender calm
- Tell the student to stop and explain to them what will happen if they do not
- Use a range of non-physical interventions aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation. These might include:
 - a) Continue to speak and listen to the student(s)
 - b) Employ an appropriate level of eye contact during any dialogue
 - c) Divert, distract, cajole or humour, where appropriate

- d) Reason with and offer appropriate choices to the student(s)

Sometimes a teacher should not intervene in an incident without help. For example, when dealing with physically large students or with groups of students, or if the teacher believes he/she may be at risk of injury, the teacher should remove other students who may be at risk and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues, or where necessary, telephone the Police. The teacher should inform the students that he/she has sent for help. Until assistance arrives, the teacher should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally and try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Whilst physically intervening, staff will:

- Use the minimum amount of force required to achieve the desired outcome
- Tell the student that physical restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary
- Continue to use a range of non-physical interventions aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation, as above

Ways In Which Staff May Use Reasonable Force

Teachers, and those directed by the Headteacher, are able to exercise 'reasonable force' to prevent students:

- i) Committing an offence
- ii) Causing personal injury
- iii) Damage to property
- iv) Damage to another person
- v) Causing a disturbance, preventing good order and discipline during a teaching session or otherwise

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force' and is therefore a matter of judgement dependent upon circumstances.

Whilst there is no legal definition of reasonable force, DFES circular 10/98 advises that *'the degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent'*.

A potentially dangerous situation may involve staff in:

- Physically interposing between students
- Blocking a student's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a student by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- Using more restrictive holds (in more extreme circumstances only)

Staff are not permitted to act in a way that might cause injury, for example, by:

- Holding a student round the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the student's ability to breathe
- Slapping, punching or kicking a student
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a student
- Holding or pulling a student by the hair or ear
- Holding a student face down on the ground

The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force.

Physical force cannot be justified in a situation that could clearly be resolved without force, for example, to prevent a student from committing a trivial misdemeanour.

Staff Who Are Permitted To Use Reasonable Force To Control Or Restrain Students

Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 permits adults who have lawful charge or control of students to use reasonable force to control or restrain them. This is supported by the Education and Inspectors Act 2006 Section 93. These include:

- Teachers
- Learning mentors
- Behaviour mentors
- Teaching assistants
- Midday supervisors
- Other adults who may be working with students either on school premises or accompanying them on out of school activities, e.g. during field trips or on school journeys.

Training

Our school will ensure that a copy of this policy is available for all permanent and long-term cover staff and fully explained to them.

Our school aims to identify, address and review the training needs of school staff, with a view to developing a shared awareness of:

- "Positive Handling" Training
- How and when to intervene
- How to prevent, defuse and/or resolve disputes, including the appropriate use of anger management, de-escalation and conflict resolution skills and techniques

Appropriate training will be made available to all school-based staff.

Planning For The Needs Of Individual Students

Our school aims to identify, in consultation with parents/carers, any student(s) whose behaviour is considered potentially to require a physical or restraining intervention or response, and to consider the needs of those students in relation to:

- Any individual medical, social, behavioural, learning or cultural factors
- Any Individual Education Plans, Pastoral Support Programmes or Personal Education Plans which support the student

If a member of staff considers that a particular student may at some time need such intervention, the circumstances and needs will be presented for discussion to an appropriate meeting of relevant staff.

Other Physical Contact With Students

Our school believes that some use of appropriate, positive, physical contact with students can contribute to its development as a safe and friendly school. Some physical contact may be necessary or unavoidable when staff are working with:-

- Very young children in the primary phase (in accordance with the intimate care policy document).
- Students requiring First Aid
- Students receiving coaching in sport or as part of another curriculum activity
- Students in distress

Our staff make professional and sensitive judgements about the nature and extent of their physical contact with students. We will have particular regard for cultural sensitivities and gender differences, for the needs of both very young children and of adolescent students and of those who may be particularly vulnerable following previous trauma or abuse.

Record Keeping

Our school keeps a record of all incidents where physical intervention has been necessary in a book with numbered pages. The Headteacher or nominated senior member of staff will be informed at the earliest possible time after an incident. This person will also decide how and when to report the incident to the student's parent/carer; this should not be left beyond the end of the day of the incident. The written record will be completed within one working day and discussed with the nominated person. A copy of the school's Incident Recording Form is attached as an appendix to this policy. If the incident included a physical or verbal assault on a teacher/adult or another student, the LA's accident/incident form should be completed. The teacher/adult involved may seek guidance from a senior colleague and or their Trade Union representative before filling in their report.

We will discuss the incident with any students or staff who were present and, where appropriate, collect a written account from them. In line with our commitment to working with parents, we aim to maintain an open dialogue for the duration of any relevant process which may follow an incident. The written accounts relating to an incident will be put together in a folder and numbered to match the record page on which the school's form is completed.

We will review regularly the number and type of incidents in which force has been deemed necessary. This will be used to ensure that there is adherence to this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the school.

Sharing Of Information

All members of the school community should know of the existence of this policy. In principle as few people as possible should know of any specific incident and staff should maintain confidentiality to the greatest possible extent. In part, this is to enable Governors and staff involved in any consequence or complaint to do so without having acquired hearsay knowledge.

Complaints

Complaints following a dispute about the use of force by an adult should, in the first instance, be referred to the Headteacher or the school's nominated person. This will generally result in an investigation, which will take account of the written or verbal reports which have been collected. Where disputes cannot be resolved informally within school, complaints should be pursued in accordance with the school's complaints procedures.