



**South Farnham Educational Trust**

●●●●● The Continual Pursuit of Excellence

# PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY



The  
**Blue Coat School**  
Basingstoke

*Member of the South Farnham Educational Trust*

REVIEW DATE:

AUTUMN 2024

NEXT REVIEW DATE:

AUTUMN 2025

# 1. Introduction

At The Blue Coat School (TBCS) we believe that pupils 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 pupils the use of restrictive physical intervention may be needed, and, on such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention will be used.

The majority of pupils 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 pupils.

All the school staff need to feel able to manage inappropriate risk and behaviour, and to understand 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 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 Headteacher to use Restrictive Physical Intervention to prevent a pupil 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 Head teacher has to, in specific circumstances, use “reasonable force” to control or restrain pupils. There is 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 situation, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

### **3. When the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention may be appropriate**

Restrictive Physical Intervention 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 pupils 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 pupils are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

### **4. Planning for the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions:**

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

The principles relating to 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 only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and, in the pupil's, and/or other pupil's 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 pupil 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 pupil will always be considered
- In developing Individual Education/ Behaviour plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing pupils 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.

## 5. Acceptable forms of intervention

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons, for example:

- To comfort a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age)
- To gently direct a pupil
- For curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc)
- In an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils
- In rare circumstance, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff in the following appropriate actions:

- Shepherding or Guiding; using body positioning and positive gestures to move a student away from harm. This may include the placing of a hand on the back (between the shoulder blades) and using reasonable force to actively move them from one place to another.
- Blocking or Interposing; placing yourself between the student and their objective (e.g exit, another student) thereby preventing the potential injury damage or prejudice to good order.
- Holding and Leading; gripping the student appropriately (e.g by the upper arm) to prevent them from injury, damage, etc. In cases of resistance from a student, it may be necessary to employ holding to effectively achieve shepherding and, hence you are actively leading them away.
- Restraining; used only in the most extreme cases, restraining may require a significant amount of force in order to prevent significant injury (as described in the policy). Essentially, restraining is a more extreme version of holding, may require more than one adult and may last significantly longer than other strategies. However, the same care must be taken to restrain a student appropriately.

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

- The pupil's age and level of understanding
- The pupil'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 participants next, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular pupil.

## 6. Inappropriate Use of Physical Intervention

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 participants neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular pupil.

The purpose of physical intervention is essentially to maintain good order and ensure the safety of all individuals, therefore it is never appropriate to employ a physical intervention strategy if you are not in control of your own emotions.

Physical interventions must never be employed in anger or frustration. If you find yourself angry or frustrated by the situation at hand you must step back and allow someone else to manage the issue. It is never appropriate to use physical intervention strategies as a punishment. Just as there are a number of acceptable intervention strategies, there are also a number of actions it is completely inappropriate to take.

Inappropriate actions include;

- Hitting or striking; while it is entirely possible that in the course of an intervention (e.g. breaking up a fight) you may be hit yourself, you must not strike a student.
- Deliberately inflicting pain; it is not okay to twist limbs or put pressure on joints (e.g. arm up a student's back), pull or hold hair, pinch or hold a student in a pain inducing way (e.g. by the ear).
- Making contact with sexually sensitive areas of the body; where at all possible contact should be restricted to arms, shoulders and the back as previously described.
- Restricting breathing; by holding round the throat or for a prolonged period around the chest. It is also never appropriate to sit on/straddle a student or hold them face down to the floor.

## 7. Developing a Positive Handling Plan

If a pupil 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 pupil 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 pupils 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 pupil, 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 pupil
- Ensuring a system to summon additional support
- Identifying training needs

## 8. Power to search without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, headteachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited items”:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

## 9. Guidance & Training for Staff

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

- Awareness of governors, staff and parents
- Behaviour management for all staff
- Managing conflict in challenging situations – all staff
- Specific training on Restrictive Physical Intervention techniques – all staff

## 10. Reporting and Recording

If physical intervention occurs the incident must be recorded using a Physical Intervention Report using the appropriate category in CPOMS.

Details about the following must be recorded:

- what form of physical intervention was required
- why staff felt physical intervention was required
- how was physical intervention applied, and by whom
- details of any other staff who supported/witnessed the incident and application of physical intervention
- when and where the physical intervention happened

The school does not require parental consent to use reasonable force on a student, however the parents/guardians of the student will be informed of the incident as soon as possible after the event.

We recognise that there may be some children within our school who find physical contact in general particularly unwelcome due to their culture/religious context or disability. There may be others for whom such contact is troubling as a result of their personal history, in particular of abuse. A risk assessment may be carried out by a senior member of staff where there is cause for concern about a student.

## 11. Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we could avoid the need for complaints. All disputes that arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to Hampshire's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.

## Appendix 1

### A summary of helpful strategies and/or responses from staff:

DO:	DO NOT:
Remain controlled.	Do NOT - use confrontational body language.
Talk clearly giving clear instructions.	Do NOT engage in prolonged and exaggerated eye contact.
Keep talking calmly.	Do NOT use confrontational language.
If a student needs to be removed, move WITH the student towards the appropriate exit.	Do NOT use physical intervention unless all other methods of calming have been used.
Request help and tell the student you are requesting help.	Do NOT use restraint to prevent the student leaving the scene if it is apparent that he/she does not represent a threat to others or his or herself.
Remove any audience to maintain a calm atmosphere.	Do NOT hold a student around the neck or collar or in any other way that might restrict the ability to breathe.
Remove other people if they are in danger.	Do NOT slap, punch, trip or kick a student.
Remove potential weapons.	Do NOT twist or force limbs against a joint.
Assume the student is going to calm down.	Do NOT hold a student by the hair or ear.
Only ever use reasonable force relevant to the circumstance.	Do NOT make contact with the persons neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area or other sensitive body parts.
	Do NOT use more force than is required.