



Policy for the Use of Physical Intervention

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This policy will be reviewed again:	Spring 2026
This policy will be reviewed by:	School Community Committee
Statutory policy?:	Yes
Source:	Governing Body



Policy for the Use of Physical Intervention

Circumstances when physical intervention might be appropriate

- Action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury to someone or of significant damage to property
- A pupil attacks another pupil or a member of staff
- A pupil tries to leave the school in circumstances where that pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or school

It may be necessary to physically intervene to move a child in the following situations, but only when all other possible tactics outlined in our behaviour policy have been tried. In either of the following cases, physical intervention will be limited to a request to leave the classroom and then physical presence only needed as a deterrent (for example, a blocking stance with the use of arms to direct to pupil to the door).

- A pupil persistently refuses to obey instructions to leave a classroom
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson

A member of staff will sometimes need to rely on their professional judgement about whether or not to physically intervene by placing themselves in a hazardous situation, or to stand back and allow a pupil or colleague to face a potential hazard. Staff must balance the level and duration of their intervention against the seriousness and likely affects results of the incident.

What staff will do before and during any physical intervention

Before physically intervening, staff will:

- remain calm and attempt to create calm
- tell the pupil to stop and explain to them what will happen if they do not; and
- use a range of non-physical alternatives aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation. These might include:
 - continuing to speak and listen to the pupil(s)
 - employing an appropriate level of eye contact during any dialogue
 - diverting, distracting, cajoling or humouring the pupil where appropriate
 - reasoning with and offering appropriate choices to the pupil(s)

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

Whilst physically intervening, staff will:

- use the minimum amount of force required to achieve the desired result
- tell the pupil that physical restraint will stop as soon as it is no longer necessary
- continue to use a range of non-physical alternatives aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation, as above; and/or
- remove the rest of the class when a pupil persistently refuses to leave or offers any kind of resistance to being removed from a classroom. Communication with the pupil concerned can continue in isolation

Ways in which staff may use reasonable force

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

A potentially dangerous situation may involve staff in:

- physically stepping in between pupils
- blocking a pupil’s path
- holding
- pushing
- pulling
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- guiding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- (in more extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds

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

- holding a pupil round the neck, by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil’s ability to breathe
- slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- tripping up a pupil
- holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- holding a pupil face down on the ground

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

Staff who are permitted to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils

Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 permits adults who have lawful charge or control of pupils to use reasonable force to control or restrain them. These include:

- teachers
- teaching assistants

- other adults who may be working with pupils either on school premises or accompanying them on out of school activities, for example during trips or on school journeys

The head teacher will clearly identify the staff authorised to use physical intervention, bearing in mind that any member of staff is entitled to intervene in an emergency.

Training

Our school will ensure that a copy of this policy will be given to all permanent and long term supply staff and be fully explained to them. Our Quick Guide to Safeguarding will be given to all short term supply and casual staff, as well as to any other person authorised by the head teacher to have care of pupils, for example parents accompanying a school trip.

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

- how and when to intervene; and
- 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 provided to all school-based staff, in line with the LEA's policy and guidelines.

Planning for the needs of individual pupils

Our school aims to identify, together with parents or carers, any pupils whose behaviour potentially might lead to physical intervention. We would consider the needs of those pupils in relation to any individual medical, social, behavioural, learning or cultural factors. In these cases an individual behaviour plan will be developed.

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

Other physical contact with pupils

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

- children who may need encouraging or guiding
- pupils with special educational needs who may need physical prompts or help
- pupils requiring first aid
- pupils receiving coaching in sport or as part of another curriculum activity
- pupils in distress
- Pupils requiring intimate care (See Intimate Care Policy)

Our staff will make professional and sensitive judgements about the nature and extent of their physical contact with pupils. We will take into account cultural sensitivities and gender differences, the needs of adolescent pupils 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 (See Appendix 1) involving the use of force against the will of a pupil has been necessary. A copy of the notes will be scanned and saved on CPOMS . The head teacher or SLT will be told at the earliest possible time after an incident. The written record will be completed within one working day and discussed with the nominated person who will also decide how and when to report the incident to the pupil's parent or carer. If the incident included a physical or verbal assault on a teacher or adult or another pupil, the council's accident or incident form should also be completed. (This can be found on the intranet.) The teacher or 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 pupils 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 discussion during events following an incident.

We will regularly review the number and type of incidents in which physical intervention has been 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 maximum confidentiality. This is so that governors and staff involved in any consequence or complaint can do so without having acquired hearsay knowledge.

Complaints

Complaints following a dispute about the use of physical intervention by an adult should, in the first instance, be referred to the head teacher. This will result in a referral to the LADO investigation, which will take account of the written or verbal reports which have been collected. In the event that the accusation is about the headteacher the complaint should be referred to the Safeguarding governor.

Where disputes cannot be resolved informally within school or by the governors, complaints should be pursued in accordance with the school's complaints procedures.

Implementation, monitoring and review

The headteacher is responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff are familiar with Richmond upon Thames LA's guidelines and the school policy
- ensuring that all relevant staff have received training in non-physical, de-escalation strategies in order reduce the need for physical intervention
- ensuring that named personnel have received training in physical intervention techniques
- monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the school's policy.

Appendix 1

Record of Physical Intervention

Report completed by:		Date of incident:	
Date of report:		Time of incident	
Name of pupil/s involved:		Location:	
Does this pupil have an Individual Behaviour Plan?			Yes/No
Does their I.B.P include physical intervention as strategy agreed by parents?			Yes/No
Circumstances: (e.g. what led up to the necessity to intervene, names of any other pupils involved, details of any warnings given, any injury suffered, how the situation concluded)			
Adults directly involved:			
Name/s	Job title	Signature	
Adult witnesses:			
Name/s	Job Title	Signature	
Name of any pupil witnesses			
Post Incident Procedures			

Name of SLT who discussed the matter with the pupil after the event:		
Summary of conversation (Including how they felt, what could have been done differently etc.):		
Name of staff who informed parent/s:		
Summary of conversation:		
Any actions agreed or taken (eg. Restorative, T.A.C. meeting, change to I.E.P., introduction if I.E.P.) and/or any lessons learned :		
Name of SLT reviewing the matter:	Signature:	Date: