



# Physical Intervention Policy

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## CONTENTS

1	Rationale	3
2	Objectives	3
3	Introduction: Physical Intervention	3
	Restrictive Physical Intervention	3
	Other Physical Intervention	3
	Principles	4
4	Alternatives to physical intervention	4
5	Reducing the likelihood of situations arising where physical intervention may be required	4
6	Deciding if the use of restrictive physical intervention is appropriate	5
7	Team Teach	5
8	Positive Handling Plans	6
9	Recording and reporting incidents	6
10	Search for Weapons & Prohibited Items	7
11	Post-incident support	7
12	Complaints procedure	8

## 1. Rationale

Peterborough Diocese Education Trust (the Trust) (and all the academies within the Trust (the academies)) is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for pupils' safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour and use restrictive physical intervention only as a last resort. If used at all it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil, and be reasonable and proportional to the circumstances of the incident. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.

It is recognised in both statute and Common Law that there is a need to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to pupils, staff and property.

This policy is based on [The Department for Education guidance Use of Reasonable Force Advice for Head Teachers, staff and Governing Bodies.](#)

## 2. Objectives

The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Maintain the safety of pupils, staff and visitors
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent serious breaches of academy discipline.

## 3. Introduction: Physical Intervention

### Restrictive Physical Intervention

Reference to physical intervention in this policy includes restrictive physical intervention. The term 'restrictive physical' intervention describes the use of reasonable force to control a person's behaviour. It involves the use of reasonable force to:

- Restrict movement
- Restrict mobility
- Disengage from dangerous or harmful physical contact.

In more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive physical interventions may be necessary. Such interventions require specific expertise and training.

Where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury, any member of staff is justified in taking any necessary action (consistent with the principle of seeking to use the minimum intervention required to achieve the desired result.)

### Other Physical Intervention

There are other types of physical intervention. These could include:

- Passive physical contact resulting from standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path
- Active physical contact such as:
  - Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
  - Ushering a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.

## Principles

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. However, it will only be used when the criteria outlined in this policy has been satisfied and it is in the pupil's best interest.

Any member of staff who undertakes physical intervention should be clear as to why it is necessary and be able to show that it was in the pupil's best interest and that it was reasonable and proportionate.

All academies are aware that they have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs.

The judgement on whether to use physical intervention, and what physical intervention should be used, should always depend on the circumstances of each case and in the case of pupils with special educational needs information about the individual concerned.

Staff need to make the clearest possible judgements about:

- The seriousness of the incident, assessed by the effect of the injury, damage or disorder which is likely to result if reasonable force is not used. The greater the potential for injury, damage or serious disorder, the more likely it is that using force may be justified
- The chances of achieving the desired result by other means. The lower the probability of achieving the desired result by other means, the more likely it is that using reasonable force may be justified
- The relative risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies. The smaller the risks associated with physical intervention compared with other strategies, the more likely it is that using reasonable force may be justified.

## 4. Alternatives to Physical Intervention

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk by implementing the individual academy's behaviour policy and plan. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason
- Give clear directions to the pupils to stop
- Remind them about rules and likely outcomes
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable pupils to a safer place
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons
- Guide or escort pupils to somewhere less pressurised
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

## 5. Reducing the Likelihood of Situations Arising where Physical Intervention may be Required

All physical interventions at each academy are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The individual academy's behaviour policy rewards effort and application and encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The behaviour policy also outlines the steps each academy will undertake to ensure a calm, orderly and supportive academy climate which minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind, thereby reducing the need for physical intervention.

A structured approach to staff development is adopted through the 'Team Teach' programme, which allows staff to develop the skills of positive behaviour management and de-escalating incidents.

Staff should recognise the need to effectively manage individual incidents. It is important to communicate calmly with the pupil, using non-threatening verbal and body language and ensuring that the pupil can see a way out of the situation.

## **6. Deciding if the Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention is Appropriate**

Staff will view restrictive physical intervention of pupils as a last resort; every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent the need for restrictive physical intervention.

The decision to use restrictive physical intervention will be based on a variety of criteria including:

- Following the guidance issued by the Department of Education
- Following this Trust policy: Physical Intervention / Positive Handling of Pupils
- Implementation of a Positive Handling Plan
- Recording of all incidents in the Bound and Numbered book
- Team Teach training
- Professional Judgement.

In the following situations staff must judge whether or not restrictive physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate to control the following behaviours:

- Self-harming
- Injury to other children, visitors, or staff
- Damage to property
- An offence being committed
- Any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the academy or among any of its pupils.

Before using restrictive physical intervention, staff should:

- Be aware of the de-escalation techniques and supporting strategies and interventions outlined in the Positive Handling Plan
- Communicate in a calm and measured manner
- Wherever practicable, warn a pupil that physical intervention may have to be used before applying it. Staff should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

## **7. Team Teach**

The Trust has adopted the 'Team Teach' approach. It is the expectation that relevant staff are 'Team Teach' trained in specific physical interventions and de-escalation strategies.

The restrictive physical interventions authorised by the Trust are those techniques in which staff have received appropriate training and development through 'Team Teach'. Each academy keeps an up-to-date record of staff who are trained in positive handling / restrictive physical intervention.

The core principles of 'Team Teach' include:

- Minimum of two staff involved
- Last resort minimum force and time
- Techniques that do not rely on pain or locks and allow for verbal communication
- Staff safety and protection addressed

- Planned responses and techniques are written out and included in positive handling plans for individual pupils.

Team-Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the pupil, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the pupil remains safe.

## 8. Positive Handling Plans

Individual pupils assessed as being at risk of requiring restrictive physical intervention will have Positive Handling Plans developed in consultation with the academy, parents/ carers, and, where appropriate, the pupil.

Positive Handling Plans set out the situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and the de-escalation strategies that are most effective. Specific strategies and techniques that have been agreed by staff when physical intervention is required are also included.

Positive Handling Plans should:

- Include risk assessments where necessary and alert people to risks
- Warn against strategies which have been ineffective in the past
- Include preferred strategies and suggest ideas for the future
- Bring together contributions from key partners working in partnership and signed by all concerned
- Be reviewed regularly.

For template Positive Handling Plans see [Appendix 1](#).

## 9. Recording and Reporting Incidents

The purpose of recording is to:

- Ensure that policy guidelines are followed
- Inform parents / carers
- Inform future planning as part of the academy improvement process
- Prevent misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the incident; and
- Provide a record for any future enquiry.

The academy keeps a record of all restrictive physical interventions in the Bound and numbered book. In addition, the academy keeps clear and accurate records / copies of incidents of restrictive physical intervention on MyConcern. These records will be retained and kept accessible for 75 years after the date of birth of the child

Accounts of the incident should be taken from the member(s) of staff who undertook the physical intervention, the pupil/s involved and any third-party witnesses.

Records will:

- Be completed after everyone has recovered
- Be clear and accurate
- State the supportive strategies and intervention used for de-escalation
- State briefly exactly what happened

- Be signed and dated
- Be monitored and evaluated
- Inform positive handling plans.

Parents / carers will be informed as soon as practicable when a significant incident requiring restrictive physical intervention has occurred. Parents / carers will be informed of:

- When and where the incident took place
- Which members of staff were directly involved (anonymised where necessary):
  - why they decided physical intervention had to be used
  - what physical intervention was used
- Whether there were any injuries and what follow up action was being taken in relation to their child.

The welfare of pupils is paramount and if for any reason an academy believes a pupil could come to harm as a consequence of a parent / carer being notified a judgement will be made by the Headteacher to notify the local authority.

The Academy Governance Committee (AGC) will be informed of the number of physical interventions on an annual basis.

## **10. Search for Weapons & Prohibited Items**

Reasonable force may also be used in exercising the statutory power, introduced under section 45 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (and re-enacted by Section 242 of the ASCL Act 2009), to search pupils without their consent for weapons.

Any searching, screening and confiscation will be conducted in accordance with the DfE's advice - [Searching, screening and confiscation](#).

Headteachers and authorised staff can use 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.

Reasonable force may be used by the searcher. Where resistance is expected academy staff may judge it more appropriate to call the police or if they have one, their Safer School Partnership (SSP) Officer.

## **11. Post-incident Support**

Each academy recognises the need to ensure that staff and pupils have appropriate emotional support. The pupil and the member(s) of staff will be checked for any sign of injury after an incident. Immediate action will be taken to provide first aid for any injuries requiring attention.

The pupil will be given time to become calm whilst staff continue to supervise. When it is deemed that the pupil is composed, a member of staff will discuss the incident with the pupil and ascertain the reason for its occurrence. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish a positive relationship between the pupil and the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.

All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff (or his / her nominee) will provide support to the member(s) of staff involved.

Parents / carers will be engaged in discussing the incident and for setting out subsequent actions and support.

## **12. Complaints Procedure**

If a parent / carer or pupil is concerned about any aspect of the management of an incident requiring physical intervention, the Headteacher should be informed of their concern. The Headteacher will respond to the complaint in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Policy.