

St Peter's Church of England Primary School



Physical Intervention Policy

Vision Statement

'Faith, Family, Future'

Jesus built his church upon the strength of St Peter – who was his rock. At St Peter's, we provide a solid foundation on which our community thrives through our rich, aspirational curriculum. As a family, we nurture and unlock individual potential through mutual love and respect; enabling all to flourish now and in the future.

'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others'

1 Peter 4 v10

Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review: October 2027

NOTE: This policy is written with due regard to Use of Reasonable Force. Department for Education, 2013.

Aims

- To create a learning environment in which young people and adults feel safe.
- To protect every person in the school community from harm.
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To put in place guidance for staff so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force to restrain pupils and how such reasonable force might be applied.

DEFINITION OF REASONABLE FORCE

The Education (NI) Order 1998 (Part II Article 4 (1)) states:

'A member of the staff of a grant-aided school may use, in relation to any pupil at the school, such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely:-

- a. committing any offence;*
- b. causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself);*
- c. or engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise.'*

Based on this legal framework, our 'working' definition of 'reasonable force' is the minimum force necessary to prevent a pupil from physically harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property, but used in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned. The use of reasonable force will always depend on the circumstances of the case and staff should take the following into consideration:

- Whether it is reasonable to use force, and the degree of force that could reasonably be employed, given the age, sex, physical strength, size, understanding, medical conditions and any special educational needs of the pupil.
- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force.
- The degree of force employed should be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used should always be the minimum needed to diffuse the situation.

When might it be appropriate to use reasonable force?

Reasonable force should be limited to EMERGENCY SITUATIONS and used only as a last resort in

situations where:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- Pupils are fighting;
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials, substances or objects;
- A pupil attempts to abscond from school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school and will be applied appropriate to age and individual special educational need – older children without SEN issues who attempt to abscond from premises should be reported to police and not restrained)

Prevention should be the primary consideration. Steps to avoid these situations should be taken and the adult should be able to demonstrate that those steps were taken. Physical restraint should always be the last resort.

Staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of their pupils. They are in a particular position of trust (in loco parentis).

The following should be applied in all cases:

- Staff should delay if at all possible. (However, in some circumstances e.g. a child running out onto the road, you might be deemed negligent if you do not intervene.)
- An 'on the spot' risk assessment for each occasion that you feel reasonable force or restraint may be necessary should be made.
- Consideration should be given to the environment, the medical circumstances and the clothing.
- Action being taken should always be for the good of the child, trying to keep them safe.
- Assure the child that the restraint is not a punishment.
- Never use other children in the restraint.
- Restraint or reasonable force should be witnessed by another responsible adult. Staff should use a responsible child/ren to call for another adult if restraint or reasonable force is needed and another adult is not available in the area.
- An immediate account of the incident and the steps taken to prevent and deal with it must be made to the Headteacher. A written report of the incident and action taken should be completed using the school's reporting form, signed by the person using restraint / reasonable force and the witness and logged with the Headteacher. The incident should be followed up with time for the adult and child to talk about the situation.

Reasonable force might be used:-

- in self-defence, where risk of injury is imminent;
- When there is developing risk of injury to the person deemed in need of restraint or others.

Physical intervention in these circumstances may take several forms, e.g.:-

- physically interposing between pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- holding;
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or
- (In extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

The law strictly prohibits the use of force, which constitutes the giving of corporal punishment. The use of force as a punishment or to intentionally cause pain, injury or humiliation, such as the examples below, (which are not exhaustive) should not be permitted under any circumstances:

- holding around the neck;
- any hold that might restrict breathing; kicking, slapping or punching;
- forcing limbs against joints;
- tripping;
- holding by the hair; and
- holding the pupil face down on the ground.

Physical intervention may involve staff in:-

- holding
- pushing
- pulling

Staff must always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

Where a pupil has caused actual harm or injury, details will need to be recorded in the school accident book.

Preventative Strategies

All staff in school need to be aware of strategies and techniques for dealing with difficult pupils and steps, which they can take to defuse and calm a situation. The strategies listed below as examples will be influenced by the age of the pupil(s) and the context in which they are applied.

- 1) Move calmly and confidently;
- 2) Make simple, clear statements;
- 3) Intervene early;
- 4) Try to maintain eye contact;
- 5) If necessary summon help before the problem escalates; and
- 6) If possible, remove the audience from the immediate location.

ACTION STEPS

- 1) Tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and tell him/her the possible consequences of failure to do so.
- 2) Summon another adult. (Another adult should be present if physical restraint of any kind needs to be applied.) Send another pupil / message to alert a member of the senior management team.
- 3) Continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident.
- 4) Make it clear that physical intervention will cease as soon as it is no longer necessary.
- 5) Appropriate follow-up action should be taken, which may include:
 - a. providing medical support;
 - b. providing respite for those involved; and
 - c. accessing external advice/support.

A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration when handling a problem. Whilst limiting damage to property and/or persons, it is advisable not to 'corner' or give the child a

feeling of being 'trapped' in any way as this can often inflame reactions. Where possible, allow the child space to move.

ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISKS FOR CHILDREN WHO PRESENT CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

The risk assessment and management proforma included in this policy has been designed to help teachers, teaching assistants and other adults working in schools to improve practice in relation to the assessment and management of risk posed by pupils with severely challenging behaviour. The risk may be to the pupils themselves, other pupils, teachers, other adults or property.

What is meant by "risk" and "risk assessment"?

The term "risk" refers to any circumstances, which could lead to adverse outcomes for the child or others. Risks may arise in relation to a number of factors, such as the health care and social support arrangements for the child; interactions between the child and his or her environment; the direct impact of behaviour(s) presented by the child; measures and interventions employed to reduce, limit or manage the risks presented to the child and others.

Risk assessment and management is a process that helps staff and others to consider risk issues, to act reasonably, and to learn from what happens in everyday practice. In the main, risk assessment and management involves: using what is known, in the light of experience, to make rational judgements about risk issues; weighing up options and taking reasonable risks; taking action to implement a range of approaches to support and safeguard children. By working in this way it is possible to make decisions and take actions to: limit the level of inherent risk to which children and others are exposed; take calculated risks to broaden the child's experience and maximise his or her individual potential; avoid unreasonable risks for this child and others; ensure that strategies used to respond to challenging behaviour are reasonable, and proportionate to the risks presented by the behaviour.

Using a structured approach to risk assessment and management will help staff to make decisions about what can reasonably be done to limit risks. At the same time it will help prepare them for times when things go wrong. Challenging behaviours are often foreseeable, even though it may be difficult to predict exactly when they will occur or the degree of challenge they will pose. As a rule, schools should: explore why children behave in ways that pose a risk; try to understand the factors that influence the behaviour; recognise the early warning signs that indicate that the child's behaviour is beginning to emerge, and develop the skills to manage difficult situations competently and sensitively. The measures agreed for managing identified risks should be set out in an agreed behaviour management plan for the individual child. Risk assessment and management can also be used in emergency situations when unforeseen risks occur.

Assessing the risk

Risk assessment involves a consideration of potential and actual risk. Key steps are: assessing the context for risk - trying to predict the situations in which risks do/may occur. For example, situations where pupils might feel frustrated, pupils being near open roads, on transport or in crowded places; assessing probability - trying to estimate how likely it is that the risk situation will occur and whether any injury or harm is very likely to occur, likely to occur, or unlikely to occur; assessing seriousness - trying to gauge the kind of injury and harm that could result. For example: choking, bruises,

bleeding, sprains, broken bones, stress, burnout, panic attacks, nervous breakdowns and post-traumatic stress disorder. When assessed, all risks should be recorded in accordance with relevant requirements such as LEA or school policies. In the event that risks are thought to be serious for the child or others, the school may need to use formal risk assessment frameworks and tools, such as the Health and Safety Executive's "Five steps to Risk Assessment".

Sharing and communicating an agreed approach

Once agreed, the behaviour management plan and risk management strategy should be shared with all those responsible for implementing or monitoring the impact of the plan. This is important as it will help to ensure that those concerned know how children are to be supported and why, which behaviours are to be managed and how they are to be managed; and which risk reduction measures are to be employed and when. The risk management strategy can be shared through discussion groups, meetings and circulating information. Those who should be informed include: the child; his/her parents or those with parental responsibility; members of the teaching team and other school staff; other professionals involved with the child, child protection teams and other agencies. Schools should keep a record of those informed about the strategy.

Staff training

Once the plan and risk management strategy have been shared with those who work with and support the child, consideration should be given to the ability of staff to implement the strategy. In particular, steps should be taken to determine what training may be required prior to implementation.

Roles and Responsibilities

At St Peter's Church of England Primary School, a number of staff have been PROACT-SCIP trained. Where possible only staff who have been trained will deal with situations where there is a need for physical handling. However, Legislation allows 'members of staff to use 'reasonable force 'and defines a member of staff as 'any teacher who works at the school and any person who, with the authority of the Headteacher, has lawful control or charge of pupils at the school'. **Staff that have not been trained will only restrain children or use reasonable force in emergency situations. In all other cases, members of staff who have been PROACT-SCIP trained should be called.**

New staff should be given a copy of the policy as part of their induction.

Staff should be made aware of individual pupils who are considered likely to pose serious behavioural problems or violence.

The SENCO should keep staff informed about pupils with special educational needs who may require special attention with regard to their physical management. Staff will consult with the SENCO regarding any concerns that they have about the physical management of pupils with special educational needs.

Record Keeping

Recording incidents

All incidents involving the handling and/or restraint of pupils must be logged on the school's CPOMS system under the 'Team Teach' category. The incidents will be closely monitored by SLT and centrally stored on the CPOMS electronic system. Serious incidents may need to be reported on an accident form. The child's parent/guardian must also be informed of the incident.

Reporting incidents

All incidents involving the handling/restraining of children must be reported to the Headteacher or in her absence the assistant Headteacher.

Advice may also be sought from external agencies e.g. Educational Psychologist/Behaviour Support Service/ local Safeguarding Board/police where necessary.

Post - incident Support

We recognise that staff as well as children may need support following an incident, this may include meeting immediate physical needs, rebuilding relationships and ensuring lessons are learnt.

Complaints and allegations

Complaints and allegations of misconduct will be addressed according to the school policy.

Monitoring & review

This policy and guidelines will be kept under constant review to ensure it remains appropriate. It will be reviewed at least bi-annually.

Pro-forma for assessing and managing foreseeable risks for children who present challenging behaviours

Name of child
 Class group
 Name of teacher
 School

Identification of Risk

Describe the foreseeable risk

Is the risk potential or actual?

List who is affected by the risk.

Assessment of risk

In which situations does the risk usually occur?

How likely it is that the risk will arise?

If the risk arises, who is likely to be injured or hurt?

What kinds of injuries or harm are likely to occur?

How serious are the adverse outcomes?

Risk Reduction Options

Measures	Possible options	Benefits	Drawbacks
Proactive interventions			
Early Interventions			
Reactive interventions			

Assessment completed by: Signature
 Date

