

Milverton Community Primary and Pre-School

Physical Intervention Policy



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Key Staff

Headteacher – Richard Stead

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) – Kate Lewis

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Governor – James Pyne

Statement of intent

Milverton Community Primary and Pre-School believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, physical intervention, including safe touch and the use of reasonable force, is necessary.

The school understands that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupil is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, the school takes a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use physical intervention, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to handle pupils' emotions or aggressive behaviour when other measures have failed to do so. The aim of this policy is to ensure that physical intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

Legal framework

All school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline amongst pupils. However, reasonable force should only be used as a last resort.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Children Act 1989
- **The Education and Inspections Act, Section 93**
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education Act 2011

This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force in schools'

- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- HM Government (2019) 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention'

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Monitoring and reviewing the overall implementation of this policy.
- Evaluating on an annual basis instances of physical intervention to analyse how and when reasonable force is used and identify any trends.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the Headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether members of staff require additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities, considering the needs of pupils.
- Ensuring all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling.
- Maintaining the records of the use of reasonable force and evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used.
- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes the relevant paperwork.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the governing board, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Providing training to members of staff on how to handle the needs of pupils with SEND (Team Teach)
- Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force.
- Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions.
- Developing individual risk assessments for pupils with SEND or medical conditions, where applicable, that are agreed with the pupil's parents, and ensuring teaching staff are aware of these.
- Ensuring that staff understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.
- Evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used with regard to pupils with SEND, in collaboration with the Headteacher.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, '**physical intervention**' is used to refer to any situation in which using reasonable physical force with a pupil is necessary; for example, to defuse a situation in which a pupil is at risk of harming themselves or others. For the purposes of this policy, '**positive handling**' is defined as the overall, graduated approach of responding to pupils' behaviour and emotions with the intention of protecting pupils and staff, and limiting damage to others and property. Positive handling adapts the least intrusive intervention techniques in response to situations, before using gentle physical intervention and reasonable force as a last resort. For the purposes of this policy, '**reasonable force**' is considered to refer to a broad range of actions that may be used to control or restrain a pupil to prevent that pupil from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. Reasonable force covers force that is necessary and proportionate to the circumstances.

There are two key types of reasonable force:

- '**Control**' – actions used in an attempt to direct a pupil's movements; this includes passive physical contact, e.g. standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact, e.g. leading a pupil out of a classroom by their arm.
- '**Restraint**' – actions used in an attempt to physically bring a pupil under control. This type of force is typically used in more extreme circumstances, e.g. where two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate, causing staff to intervene to hold them back from one another physically.

For the purposes of this policy, '**safe touch**' is defined as physical contact which, if avoided, would be inhumane, unkind or cause distress to a pupil, e.g. where a pupil is significantly distressed and in need of physical comfort.

Positive handling

The principle of positive handling means that the school expects staff to assess whether the incident requiring a response can be resolved without physical intervention. Where possible, the school implements an approach of prevention, where staff will be trained in recognising warning signs of severe pain or distress and/or aggressive behaviour, communicating empathetically with pupils displaying such signs to aid them in regulating their emotions, and altering their environment to minimise distressing stimuli. Teaching staff will be aware of the behavioural patterns, medical conditions and levels of need of pupils in their class, and will ensure that incidents of disruptive or aggressive behaviour in the classroom are handled in line with individual pupils' needs. Staff will not generally resort to physical contact or reasonable force immediately without first assessing whether there another non-physical intervention would be more appropriate. Staff will question whether:

- Verbal de-escalation can be attempted.
- There are actions that can be taken to remove triggers from pupils, e.g. dimming the lights and encouraging quiet where a pupil is distressed by sensory overstimulation.
- The pupil can be removed from the situation without physical intervention, e.g. if they will follow a member of teaching staff out of the classroom.
- The pupil has a condition or support needs that mean physical intervention would be inherently more dangerous, e.g. asthma which may be made worse by restrictive

holds or sensory issues where physical touch would contribute to sensory overload and may provoke aggressive behaviour.

- They have the ability, training and adequate support to physically intervene safely without causing unnecessary harm to the pupil or themselves.

Where there is no immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, destruction of property or serious disruption, reasonable force will not be used on the pupil. Any reasonable force used in situations that are non-urgent will only be used once all alternative options have been exhausted and where the staff member in charge deems that the situation is escalating.

The school understands that, in some cases, action may be required very quickly, e.g. in the event that a pupil attempts to run out into a busy road, or where pupils begin a violent fight with one another and staff are forced to pull the pupils apart. Staff will not be penalised for resorting to the use of physical intervention or reasonable force in such situations where it is justified and perceived necessary to prevent harm to others or property in the circumstances.

Positive handling will be applied with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Reasonable force is not used as a method of behaviour management or discipline – only as a last resort in situations that require de-escalation to prevent harm.

Reasonable force

Staff members will use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances. Where reasonable force is required, the degree and type of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. their age or SEND. This will be in line with the Team Teach approach. The following list is not exhaustive, but provides examples of situations where a staff member may decide to use reasonable force after other methods of defusing a situation have been exhausted, or are not appropriate:

- Members of staff need to control pupils risking the safety of themselves or others outside of school premises where the same range of support options are not available, e.g. on school trips.
- Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving an area, e.g. the classroom or school grounds, where doing so would risk their safety or the safety of others.
- A pupil is attacking a member of staff or another pupil.
- A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff must intervene to prevent this.
- A pupil is refusing instructions to leave the classroom and must be removed to maintain good order and allow teaching to progress.

All members of staff will be permitted to use reasonable force where they believe it to be appropriate in line with their training, as long as all necessary precautions are taken and in line with the team teach approach. The decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances. In most cases where physical intervention or reasonable force is required,

minimal and non-restrictive force will be appropriate, e.g. holding a pupils arm to escort them from a classroom.

Reasonable force techniques that involve restraint will only be used where the staff member in charge feels it is necessary to prevent serious harm. In general, restraint will only be used briefly and prolonged restraint will not be used, i.e. restraint beyond that which is necessary to remove the immediate threat a pupil is posing to themselves or others.

Where staff determine physical intervention is necessary, they will calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it is necessary in a non-threatening manner. In most cases, staff will communicate this to pupils before making physical contact to minimise distress and/or further aggressive behaviour from the pupil; however, the school recognises that this is not possible in some emergency situations.

Staff will never give the impression that they are acting out of anger or are punishing the pupil. Staff members will always avoid acting in a way that could cause injury; however, the school understands that accidental injury may occur in emergency situations where there is not sufficient time for a considered response, e.g. bruising on a child's wrist where a staff member has grabbed them to prevent them running onto a busy road.

Where a member of staff believes that they are at risk, e.g. where an injury is likely to occur, they will not intervene in an incident without the help and assistance of another staff member.

Reasonable force techniques which present an **unacceptable** risk and will not be used under any circumstances include:

- The 'seated double embrace' where two staff members force a pupil into a sitting position and lean them forward whilst a third staff member monitors their breathing.
- The 'double basket-hold' in which a pupil's arms are held across their chest.
- The 'nose distraction technique' which involves a sharp upward jab under the pupil's nose.

Staff will also be aware that, in some instances, it will cause more distress to a pupil, and may increase the risk of harm to their peers, if they are prevented from leaving an area, e.g. their classroom, using physical intervention. Where it is not dangerous to allow them to leave, the staff member in charge of the situation should use their judgement in allowing a pupil to remove themselves from the area, as environmental factors in the area specifically may be provoking their behaviour.

Following the incidents where reasonable force is used, the pupil involved may be subject to separate disciplinary procedures, in accordance with our school's Behaviour Policy, in which strategies should be formed to help avoid reoccurrence of such incidents.

Pupils with SEND

The school will have due consideration to the risks posed by the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND in terms of physical intervention and reasonable force.

The SENCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that staff that come into regular contact with pupils with SEND are aware of the ways in which their needs can be met without reasonable force.

The school is aware that pupils with SEND may sometimes feel overwhelmed, which can sometimes manifest in behaviour which may be aggressive or seem uncontrollable. Where it is known that a pupil is prone to this, the SENCO and Headteacher will draft a risk assessment to determine planned strategies for managing the pupil's "triggers", that are tailored to the pupil's specific needs, to avoid the use of reasonable force. These risk assessments will be conducted in collaboration with the pupil and their parents, where appropriate.

Some pupils with SEND may require physical intervention when they feel overwhelmed or stressed, e.g. a tight hug; however, this will be discussed as part of relevant risk assessments. Staff members will not assume that a technique employed for one pupil with SEND will be applicable to other pupils with SEND.

Staff will also be aware that pupils with SEND may engage in frequent, repetitive self-stimulatory behaviour, known as 'stimming', and that some pupils may engage in self-injurious stimming, e.g. repeatedly hitting or scratching themselves. While this can be alarming, staff will be aware that stimming is often carried out as a means of emotional regulation or self-soothing in response to stressful or overwhelming stimuli. Staff members will aim to remove distressing stimuli from the environment, where possible, or will support pupils to engage in less harmful stimming methods, e.g. by providing them with something to play with or demonstrating a less harmful stim, such as hand flapping.

Staff will be aware that restraining a pupil in a way that prevents them from stimming entirely can cause extreme distress and lead to further aggressive behaviour. Self-injurious stimming and tactics to support a pupil to engage in safer stims will be included as part of the pupil's risk assessment.

The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy at all times.

Post-incident support

Following an incidence of physical intervention using reasonable force, all pupils and staff members involved will be given any necessary first aid to treat injuries as soon as possible, and emotional support. Wherever reasonable force is used, staff members and pupils involved in incidents will be given separate opportunities to reflect on what happened.

The reason that such intervention was used will be explained to the pupil involved, and they will be reassured that the use of the intervention was not a punishment for their behaviour, but rather a method of defusing the situation and preventing them from harming themselves or others. When fully calm, the pupil will be asked about the reasons for their behaviour, including:

- Why their environment was causing such distress for them, e.g. in an instance of distressing sensory overstimulation.

- Whether they feel there was anything that could have been done to meet their needs before the situation escalated.
- Whether, and how, staff actions were helpful or unhelpful.

Staff will be encouraged to reflect on their actions and how they handled the situation, and will be reassured, where appropriate, that they have done nothing wrong and acted in what they perceived to be the best interests of pupils.

Reporting incidents

A detailed written report will be kept of **all** incidents where physical restraint is used, distinguishing between planned interventions, i.e. those in line with approved strategies for the behaviour of specific pupils, and unplanned or emergency interventions.

Immediately following an incident, the member(s) of staff involved will verbally report the incident to the Headteacher and provide a comprehensive written record of the situation as soon as possible, using the Physical Intervention Report Form. The written report of the incident must be thorough, including as much detail as possible as to what had happened before, during and after the incident, the reasons why specific interventions were employed, and any injuries incurred due to the incident.

Records should be retained and analysed by the Headteacher (and SENCO where physical intervention was used on a pupil with SEND) on a termly basis to ensure that such interventions are being used appropriately, and to identify patterns of behaviour and responses to that behaviour that may require changes to school practice, e.g. increased staff training or further behavioural or emotional support. An annual report of incidences should be compiled annually for evaluation by the Governing Board.

Staff members who refuse to record an instance of reasonable force where it has occurred may be disciplined in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

The Headteacher will make the decision as to whether it is appropriate to inform the pupil's parents of the details of an incident. If it is appropriate, the following will be adhered to:

- Parents will be informed in writing and a copy of this report will be given to the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.
- The report will inform parents of their right to complain about the use of positive handling and reasonable force, in line with the Complaints Procedures Policy.

Complaints:

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

This policy is shared with all parents via the school website.

Reviewing the Policy:

This policy will be reviewed annually. However this may be sooner if it is felt appropriate.



Appendix1: Milverton Community Primary and Pre-school
Physical Intervention Report Form

We believe that reasonable force should only be used when absolutely necessary. With this in mind, this form has been created to ensure that all incidents of this type are recorded. Incidents must also be documented in the Physical Intervention Log.

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of staff member: | |
| Name of pupil: | |
| Date: | |
| Time: | |
| Location: | |
| Name(s) of staff member(s) who witnessed the incident: | |
| | |
| Informed parties (parents, social workers, police, etc.): | |
| | |
| Circumstances prior to the incident: | |
| | |
| Details of the incident: | |
| | |
| Details of any negative impact on other pupils: | |
| | |
| Reason(s) for physical intervention (please tick): | |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Danger to self | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Danger to others | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Significant damage to property | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|--|--------|
| Was it a planned intervention, e.g. in line with approved strategies for the behaviour of specific pupils? Please circle. | Yes/No |
|--|--------|

Details of the intervention:

Any disciplinary additional action taken:

Injuries (if any) to staff members, the pupil concerned or other pupils:

Damage (if any) to property:

Recommendation(s) to avoid future incidents:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Headteacher's signature: | Date: |
|---------------------------------|--------------|

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Signature of staff member concerned: | Date: |
|---|--------------|

