

Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils
Friezland Primary School
January 2014

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the circumstances surrounding the use of force by teachers and other authorised staff in the school. Such powers are encompassed in Section 550A of the Education Act 1996: "The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils" which came into effect on 1st September 1998.

Authorised Staff

In addition to teachers, authorised staff include learning support assistants, midday supervisors, administrative staff, technicians and the school caretaker.

All authorised staff – teaching and non-teaching – need to be aware of and properly understand what authorisation entails and have received Team Teach training.

Principles

- Positive handling describes a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies including an adult's own personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion and de-escalation. At least 95% of incidents should be able to be handled in this way with less than 5% expected to result in physical intervention. The need for physical intervention may occur during 'Crisis', stage 3 of 'Stages of a Crisis'. Please see the appendix for this and low, medium and high level behaviours (p24-26 of the Team Teach Work Book).
- The use of force to control or restrain pupils at Friezland Primary School should only occur under exceptional circumstances and as a last resort in order to comply with the school's duty of care, such as when a child could seriously hurt themselves, another member of the school community or destroy property.
- Staff should always try to deal with any situation through other strategies and techniques which will defuse and calm the situation, namely: use of space, safe environments, comfortable environments, diversions, calm stances and postures, non-threatening facial expressions, low tone, volume and pace in communication, careful use of words, physical reassurance and prompts, effective guides and escorts. (Team Teach Workbook, p5 v.2015).
- Physical intervention to enforce compliance with staff instruction is inappropriate. It should never be used as a substitute for good behaviour management.
- Where physical intervention is deemed appropriate it should always be for the shortest time possible.

Circumstances when the use of 'Reasonable Force' may be appropriate

1. To prevent a pupil injuring themselves or others.

Examples of this circumstance might be:

- 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 or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- a pupil absconds from class or tries to leave school (NB this will ONLY apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

2. To prevent a pupil causing damage to property.

Examples of this circumstance might be:

- a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.

The Application of Force

'Reasonable force' will always depend on all the circumstances of the case.

Whether it is reasonable to use force, and the degree of force that could reasonably be employed, might also depend on the age, understanding, and sex of the pupil.

Before intervening physically a member of staff should, wherever practicable adhere to Stages 1 and 2: *Low Level Positive Handling Responses* and *Medium Level Positive Handling Responses* of *Stages of a Crisis* (Team Teach) and should remain as calm as possible so as not to exacerbate the situation. These stages can be found in the appendix of this policy or on p. 24-26 of the Team Teach Workbook. The member of staff should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. 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, or to punish the pupil.

Sometimes a member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help (unless it is an emergency). For example, when dealing with an older pupil, or a physically large pupil, or more than one pupil, or if the member of staff believes they may be at risk of injury. In those circumstances the member of staff should remove other pupils who might be at risk, and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues, or where necessary phone the Police. The member of staff should inform the pupil(s) that he or she has sent for help. Until assistance arrives attempts

to defuse the situation should continue, to try to prevent the incident from escalating.

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- ✓ physically interposing between pupils;
- ✓ blocking a pupil's path;
- ✓ holding;
- ✓ pushing;
- ✓ pulling;
- ✓ 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 as per Intervention training. Holds deemed appropriate by the Senior Leadership Team and governors of Friezland Primary School and those in which staff have been trained are:
 - Single elbow
 - Double elbow (1 person holding)
 - Double elbow (2 people holding)
 - Figure of four hold
- ✓ Staff should be aware of the 'Help Script' and be prepared to offer and accept help.
- ✓ All staff are given a summary of key information on de-escalation and the 'Help Script' at induction.

Staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

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

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent and should monitor airways and breathing throughout any hold.

It is essential that after any conflict there is time for recovery between those involved. There must be reflection on why the incident occurred and how it could avoided in the future.

Written Record

It is important that the Record of Incidents Requiring Physical Intervention be completed if force or restraint has been necessary (any hold other than a Friendly Hold). This book is kept in the Head teacher's office on the main notice board.

Immediately following any such incident the member of staff concerned should tell the Head teacher or a senior member of staff and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. That should include:

- the name(s) of the pupil(s) involved, and when and where the incident took place;
- the names of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident;
- the reason that force was necessary (e.g. to prevent injury to the pupil, another pupil or member of staff);
- how the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupil's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to defuse or calm the situation, the degree of force used, how that was applied and for how long;
- the pupil's response, and the outcome of the incident;
- details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil, or a member of staff and of any damage to property.

Parental Communication

Parents should always be informed of any incident where force has been used with their child as soon as possible after the incident. This would normally be done by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the member of staff involved.

Physical Contact with Pupils in Other Circumstances

There are other occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary. Some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons, sports coaching or if a member of staff has to give first aid. Young children and children with special educational needs may need staff to provide physical prompts or help. Touching may also be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting. Staff will use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of support.

However, physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence, and staff should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.