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Physical Intervention Policy

Combe Pafford School



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1 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff working directly with learners at Combe Pafford School are supported to develop skills in de-escalation, risk/restraint reduction and positive handling.

This policy is designed to be read in conjunction with other Combe Pafford Policies and documents specifically:

- Combe Pafford School Values
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- DfE RPI Guidance (Gov.uk)

Definitions:

Positive Handling – a holistic approach involving policy, guidance, management of the environment and deployment of staff. It also involves consideration of personal behaviour, diversion tactics, diffusion and de-escalation. Positive handling refers to a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies of which restraint is only a small part of the framework.

Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) - Any action that involves physically intervening within a pupil which involves restricting their movement.

2 Relevant Legislation

The use of all forms of positive handling, including RPI, are governed by the criminal and civil law. Unwarranted or inappropriate use of force may constitute an assault. In addition, it may infringe the human rights of a child or young person.

Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 came into force on 1 September 1998 and clarifies the powers of teachers and other staff who have lawful control or charge of pupils, to use reasonable force in a wide variety of situations. They fall into three broad categories:-

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because of an imminent risk of injury.
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

Under the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93), teachers and authorised staff can use reasonable force.

Purpose of Use: Force must be used only to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing injury to themselves or others
- Damaging property
- Disrupting good order and discipline

The DfE stipulate that: 'Use of reasonable force Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013'

"All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances" and must use professional judgement by asking three key questions:

Is it necessary?

Is it proportionate?

Have I considered the pupil's welfare?

Furthermore, seclusion should only be considered in exceptional circumstances and it is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order. Therefore, at no time should the door be locked as to do so is unlawful and can amount to the false imprisonment of a pupil.

The DfE provide the following advice and this advice is used by the school:

What is reasonable force?

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.

- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- . As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force

This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

Government Advice Informing This Policy

Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance: proposed amendments – Feb 2025

The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.

Reasonable force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

- Reasonable circumstances mean using no more force than is needed
- Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow instructions to do so.
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school visit.
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom to allow the pupil to leave would risk their safety.
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

Schools cannot use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

3 Whole School Approach to Positive Handling

Combe Pafford School actively encourages socially significant acceptable behaviours and reduce and replace socially significant unacceptable behaviours. This is largely done through positive reinforcement.

While this policy encompasses all at the school, some pupils will have their own individual behaviour plan and risk assessment to enable their time at the school to be as positive and successful as possible. The fundamental principle underlying our holistic approach to positive handling is to look at all the events surrounding a crisis, and not just at the crisis itself.

Every effort is made to identify triggers and ascertain functions of behaviour where possible a variety of techniques will be used to de-escalate situations. The care of all involved will be at the forefront of all actions and support, and time for de-briefing will be made available. All actions will be recorded, monitored and assessed to ensure best practice and constant improvement.

3.1 Reasonable Force

There is no legal definition of reasonable force so it is not possible to set out when it is reasonable or the degree of force that may be used. Staff will need to act in a professional and appropriate manner dependent upon the circumstances of the incident. There are two relevant considerations:-

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore, physical force should not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force. **Staff who act outside the circumstances of this policy are likely you face disciplinary action.**
- The degree of force employed must 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 achieve the desired result.

Practical Considerations

Before intervening physically as referenced in Section 6, a teacher should refer to the De-escalation strategies of positive handling referenced in section 4 of this policy.

3.2 Team Teach

Team Teach is a specialist research and training organisation which aims to equip those trained with the tools they need to understand and support behaviour as a form of communication, at work or in daily life, in a positive and respectful manner.

- Key Staff at Combe Pafford School receive Level 2 Team Teach training. This training covers theory, de-escalation, environmental considerations and physical interventions which range from personal safety techniques to more restrictive holds. Team Teach accreditations are valid for 12 months, after which, staff are required to complete a formal refresher of both theory and practical elements of the Team Teach curriculum.

3.3 Staff Responsibilities

3.3.1 Senior Leaders

- Senior Leaders will ensure the delivery of quality positive handling training by accredited Intermediate Team Teach trainers.
- Review and monitor the frequency and intensity of Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPIs)
- Ensure there are enough Team Teach trained personnel on staff to support the frequency and intensity of Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPIs).

3.3.2. Phase Leaders

- Ensure effective Review and maintenance of pupil documentation as required (Behaviour Support Plan, Risk Assessment).
- Review and maintain staff documentation as required (Risk Assessment).
- Deliver staff training on the implementation of that outlined in pupil documentation.

3.3.3. Staff Working Directly with Pupils

- Staff will always prioritise non-restrictive methods and not participate in positive handling or physical intervention without being trained to do so, through training from a qualified Team Teach Intermediate Trainer, ***unless not intervening could have potentially led to serious injury or danger in the most exceptional circumstances (duty of care).***
- Staff will call for support during any instance of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) to ensure a witness is present, even if circumstances where only one staff member is intervening.
- Accurately report and record all instances of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI).
- Conduct own self-evaluation of skills and competencies regarding positive handling and request additional training as and when required.

4 De-escalation

All who work within the school are encouraged and trained to prioritise non-restrictive methods of de-escalation, including:

- Use of Space – it is essential that all space within the school is used as effectively and safely as possible. Where triggers or difficulties are identified for a pupil, efforts are made to alter the environment to reduce stress. Staff need to consider the space around the pupil (circles of awareness) and if possible, move to a suitable space.
- Distractions – Distractions can be an effective tool to prevent behaviour from escalating and re-directing pupils to positive interactions.
- Body Language – Staff must continually reflect upon the messages their body language is communicating and adopt a calm stance with a neutral facial expression and tone of voice when supporting pupils. This is particularly important in an environment where more conventional communication methods can be challenging to individuals involved.
- Communication –
 - With pupils: Staff will communicate with pupils clearly, using simple and concise language or visuals outlined in their behaviour plans and risk assessments.

- o With colleagues: Staff will use 'help scripts' to quickly and concisely communicate vital information and ensure collaboration towards a shared goal of calming the situation.

5 Restrictive Physical Intervention

At Combe Pafford School, any Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) is used only when **reasonable**, **proportionate** and **necessary** and always with the minimum force for the minimum amount of time.

Any Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) must only be used, when necessary, reasonable and proportionate, to either:

- Protect individuals from harm (either to themselves or others)
- Prevent property damage.
- Prevent a situation where a child may expose themselves to risk (e.g., running into a road).

Pupils who have previously required Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) may have a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) which details the strategies and techniques that are effective to use with that pupil and in which situation these interventions are deemed necessary, reasonable and proportionate. Information regarding de-escalation and behaviour interventions will be included.

- Staff must read pupils' BSP before working with any pupil. BSP's are shared with home when created and/ or altered.
- If Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) is used for the first time, the incident is recorded in the incident book, stored in the front office.
- Whilst every effort is taken to reduce injury to pupil(s) and staff, the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) can occasionally result in unintended injuries including bruising or friction burns.
- When any injuries are observed, an incident report must be completed and communicated with home before the end of the school day that the incident occurred.

6 Reporting and Recording

It is essential that there is a detailed written report of any occasion where RPI is used. Incidents must be recorded in the Incident Book which is held in the front office. Immediately following any such incident, the member of staff should inform the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. The report should include:

- Details about the incident will be recorded as immediately after the incident as possible and must include:
 - The name(s) of the pupil(s) and staff members involved in the incident.
 - The time and location of the incident.
 - The name(s) of any additional staff members or pupils that witnessed the incident.
 - The reason that positive handling or any physical intervention was necessary.
 - Information regarding non-physical strategies that were employed.

- What physical intervention/s was/were used.
- The outcome of physical intervention.
- Details of any other action(s) taken to manage the incident.
- Details of any injury suffered by any pupil(s) or staff member(s) involved.
- Details of any damage to property.

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a senior colleague or a representative of their professional association when compiling a report. They should also keep a copy of the report.

The Head or Deputy Head will inform the parents/carers of the incident by the end of the school day and record that it has been done.

All instances of RPI must be stored and kept for 75 years.

Both RPI data and incident reports must be regularly monitored to ensure optimum success and best practice. Where injuries are sustained, entries in the appropriate logs will be made and relevant people informed (parents, head teacher etc.).

7 Actions Following an Incident

The Head Teacher or one of the Deputy Head Teachers will ensure that each incident is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil. This will be pursued through the appropriate procedures:

- Review of individual behaviour support plan (BSP).
- Review of pupil / staff member risk assessment (RA).
- Child Protection Procedure (this may involve investigations by police and/ or social services).
- Staff or pupil disciplinary procedures.
- School Behaviour Policy.
- Exclusions Procedure in case of violence or assault against a member of staff.
- The member(s) of staff involved in an incident will be kept informed of action(s) taken. In the event of any action concerning a member of staff, they will be advised to seek advice from their professional association/ union.

For complaints refer to the complaints policy

Policy Written by: Rachel Calandro July 2025

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Approved by Governors:

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