



## **Leedon Lower School Physical Intervention Policy**

Date agreed by Governors: **Spring 2023**

Date for renewal: **Spring 2025**

### **Introduction**

The school promotes positive behaviour techniques, which provide pupils with support in identifying ways of avoiding or resolving conflicts. However, inevitably there will be some incidents where physical restraint is the most appropriate response. This will be used only as a last resort and when all other strategies have failed.

### **Principles relating to the use of physical restraint**

The principles relating to the use of physical restraint are summarised as follows:

- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Staff should take steps in advance to avoid the need for physical restraint, e.g. through dialogue and diversion; and the child should be warned orally that physical restraint will be used unless he or she desists.
- Staff should have good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary to prevent a child from significantly injuring himself or herself or others, or causing serious damage to property, that there is no alternative approach which could be adopted, that such action would be likely to help and that staff would not be endangered by taking action.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before applying restraint. These staff can act as assistants and witnesses. A red triangle system is used to summon help.
- As soon as it is safe, restraint should be gradually relaxed to allow the child to regain self control.
- Physical restraint should not be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate risk to people or property.

### **Definition of circumstances in which physical restraint is appropriate**

- When a child is harming him/herself or others.
- Causing damage to property.
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

The provision applies when a teacher, or other authorised person, is on the school premises, and when he or she has lawful control or charge of the pupil concerned elsewhere e.g. on a field trip or other authorised out of school activity.

## **Authorised staff**

Responsible persons authorised by the headteacher and explicitly informed by them. (As allowed by the Education Act 1996, Section 550A). This may include teachers, nursery nurses, midday supervisors or specialist support assistants.

## **Action in self defence or in an emergency**

Section 550A does not cover all the situations in which it might be reasonable for someone to use a degree of force. For example, everyone has the right to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so. Similarly, in an emergency, for example if a pupil was at immediate risk of injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any responsible adult would be entitled to intervene.

## **Reasonable Force**

There is no legal definition. It will always depend on the circumstances of each case.

Two relevant considerations:-

- Force will only be 'reasonable' if the circumstances justify it. It should not be used for trivial misdemeanours or in a situation that could clearly be resolved without force.
- Any force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

## **Application of Force**

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

- Physically interposing between pupils.
- Blocking a pupil's path.
- Holding.
- Pushing e.g. away from danger.
- 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.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a responsible adult may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force': for example, to prevent a young pupil running off a pavement onto a busy road, or to prevent a pupil hitting someone, or throwing something.

In other circumstances staff should **not** act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe.
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil.

- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint.
- Tripping up a pupil.
- Holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear.
- 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.

### **Recording incidents**

A restraint report form (incident form on CPOMs) will be completed if and when an incident occurs. It will be logged on CPOMS that day.

### **Disengagement**

The child and adult(s) may need:

- Some personal space within which he/she can enter a cooling-off period.
- Some time for reflection.
- Some time to regain personal composure.

A third party may be used to help defuse tension, act as a mediator and provide a climate of reassurance for all involved, including adults.

This policy has been written with reference to: -

- Education Act 1996 (Section 550A)
- LEA Circular H/94/66
- DfEE Circular 10/98
- The Children's Act 1989
- NAHT document, Feb 1999. ISSN 1464-8385