



Buckingham Park

Church of England Primary School

Excellence, through God who strengthens us

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School Policy Document

Physical Intervention and Reasonable Force Policy

Date Adopted by Full Governing board:	19.04.2023
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Next review due by:	19.04.2026
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1. AIMS

- 1.1. At Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School it is important that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. We are a caring community, built on a clear Christian foundation and rooted in Christian values. We aim to provide the highest quality all round education, for each and every child, in partnership with parents, within the context of a Christian community. In short, 'Excellence, through God who strengthens us'.
- 1.2. The school behaviour policy is designed to support the way in which all members of the school can live and work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment where everyone feels happy, safe and secure. The majority of pupils behave well and conform to the expectations of our school. The policy is available to read on the school website.
- 1.3. We believe that pupils need to be safe, to know how to behave, and to know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. For a very small minority of pupils, the use of a physical intervention may be needed and this policy outlines the context, rationale and approach to such interventions.
- 1.4. At the heart of everything we do at the school is our Vision – 'Excellence, through god who strengthens us' and our set of Christian Values, found below. They are not a set of 'rules' but a set of values based on Jesus' Sermon on the mount. Our behaviour policy and approaches to promoting positive behaviour are underpinned by the code. By promoting these values positively, we aim to minimise the need for any physical intervention within our school.

We are kind, helpful and polite
We do our best
We are honest
We share
We are peacemakers
We forgive others
We take care of everything, and everyone

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. Buckingham Park CE Primary recognises the right of every person to be protected from harm and, for that reason, seeks to protect all children and young people against any form of physical intervention which is either unnecessary, inappropriate (either to the individual or in the prevailing circumstances) excessive or unlawful.
- 2.2. It is acknowledged that some staff in our school deal on a day to day basis with groups of children and young people some of whom may exhibit disturbed, distressed and distressing behaviours. Buckingham Park CE Primary seeks, therefore, to assist all staff in preserving good order and discipline and in promoting and maintaining an environment conducive to meeting the children's needs, and is aware that there are occasions when adults touch children and young people in ways which are entirely appropriate. There is also a need to minimise the risk to staff of false accusations of improper conduct towards a pupil and to ensure that staff members feel confident about appropriate action in very difficult circumstances.
- 2.3. The policy has been developed in response to guidance of 'Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies July 2013', 'Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention, 27th June 2019' and in line with the guidance of the Human Right's Act, 1998, which states:
- *If physical intervention or restrictive physical intervention is used when it is not reasonable, proportionate and necessary, this might be breaching the child/young person's human rights.*
 - *If the behaviour of one or a group of pupils is seriously disruptive and jeopardising the education and safety of others it is permissible to use effective measures to prevent such behaviour and protect the rights of others.*
 - *Decisions have to be made quickly, with little time for reflection. Nevertheless, staff need to make the clearest possible judgement about:*
 - a. the chances of achieving the desired result by other means. The lower the probability of achieving the desired result by other means, the more likely it is that using force may be justified;*
 - b. the seriousness of the incident, assessed by the effect of the injury, damage or disorder which is likely to result if force is not used. The greater the potential for injury, damage or serious disorder, the more likely it is that using force may be justified; and*
 - c. the relative risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies. The smaller the risks associated with physical intervention compared with other strategies, the more likely it is that using force may be justified.*
- 2.4. The Policy also considers the guidance of the Step On and Step Up training which members of our staff engage with at school following guidance on de-escalation and safe restraint techniques where needed.
- 2.5. The policy should be read in conjunction with Safeguarding and Behaviour school policies.

3. CONTEXT

- 3.1. All staff at Buckingham Park undertake Step On training as a part of the schools committal to high quality de-escalation practice, and interactions with children which reduce or diminish the need for physical restraint due to difficult or harmful behaviours.
- 3.2. Where deemed necessary, identified staff are invited to attend an authorised training course dealing with de-escalation and positive handling techniques in line with the school's approach to positive pupil behaviour and discipline. This is known as Step Up training and is delivered to staff on the basis of an audited need for possible intervention within the school. This provides a higher level of understanding for those who work with children who may require physical intervention regarding the most suitable and appropriate techniques.
- 3.3. This does not mean that only staff trained in Step Up are able to use a form of physical intervention with a child. In the case of emergencies, and if a staff member can justify that intervention is reasonable, proportionate and necessary, physical intervention could be used.
- 3.4. In the majority of cases, de-escalation is an appropriate method for dealing with situations which might result in a threat of harm to the health and welfare, wellbeing, or order within the school space.
- 3.5. The school recognises that not all children feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and, wherever possible, adults should seek the pupil's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed.
- 3.6. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples where physical contact with a pupil might be proper or necessary include:
 - Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when walking together around the school
 - When comforting a distressed pupil
 - When a pupil is being congratulated or praised
 - To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
 - To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
 - To give first aid.
- 3.7. For some children, including some with additional needs, positive and planned physical intervention may be used as a support strategy.
- 3.8. In rare circumstances, it may be necessary for a member of staff to use reasonable force in physical contact with a child. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions which are usually used either to control or restrain.
- 3.9. Physical Restraint is defined as: the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. All such incidents must be recorded. It is not possible to set out comprehensively when it is reasonable to use force, or the degree of force that may reasonably be used. This will always depend on the circumstances of the situation.

3.10. A physical intervention, with or without force, should never be used as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

3.11. Throughout this document, a physical intervention using force is termed a 'Restrictive Physical Intervention' (RPI).

4. THE USE OF 'REASONABLE FORCE'

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

4.2. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed and 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.

4.3. Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

4.4. The decision on whether or not to use a restrictive physical intervention is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. Any action taken must **be reasonable, proportionate and necessary**; and in the best interest of the young person.

4.5. Schools do not require parental consent to use reasonable force.

4.6. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force may be used.

- To remove a disruptive child from the classroom where he or she has refused to follow an instruction to do so
- To prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence (this applies even if they are below the age of criminal responsibility)
- To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- To prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk his or her safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- To prevent a pupil from injuring self or others
- To prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight
- To prevent a pupil from damaging property (including his or her own property)

5. USE OF REASONABLE FORCE AT BUCKINGHAM PARK

5.1. Reasonable force will generally be used as a last resort. All staff will focus on de-escalation and preventative strategies as outlined in our behaviour policy. Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used as a last resort, in response to foreseeable or actual harm. This will also be the least intrusive manner of intervention, using the minimal force necessary and for the least amount of time.

5.2. There are situations when restrictive physical interventions may be necessary, as outlined in section 4.

5.3. The safety and well-being of all staff and pupils are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

5.4. The principles relating to our use of restrictive physical interventions are as follows:

- A restrictive physical intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment.
- Staff will only use force when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the pupil's and/or other pupils' best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for reasonable force through dialogue and diversion. The pupil will be warned, at their level of understanding, that reasonable force may be used
- Staff will use the minimum force necessary to ensure safe outcomes
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as observers. Where possible, observers will also be trained in order to support safe use of physical intervention.
- As soon as it is safe, the physical intervention will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control
- Escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual pupil will always be taken into account
- Consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance

5.5. Support and debriefing for pupils and staff will be offered after every occasion when a restrictive physical intervention is used, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

6. PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR STAFF

6.1. In circumstances where there is a potential for Restrictive Physical Intervention, staff must act accordingly to ensure that their behaviours are not inflaming, but reducing confrontation. Staff will always be reminded to:

- a. Remain calm – the ability to try and remain calm and appear relaxed is less likely to provoke.
- b. Be aware of Space – try to be aware of the space around you and avoid stepping into another individual's personal/intimate space. Try to take a step back outside the circle of danger.
- c. Pacing and Chasing – angry people often pace around in tense situations and staff should try to avoid the temptation to follow as they attempt to help them calm down. This can be counter-productive as it may trigger an primal chase response and drive the other person away. Where possible it is preferable for the staff member to stand still, speaking calmly, clearly and confidently – or even sit down.
- d. Intonation - when people are anxious or angry they tend to talk faster, higher and more loudly. In a potential crisis situation staff need to deliberately speak slower, lower and more quietly

- 6.2. Staff should also be mindful of their own body language as this can help to diffuse situations and de-escalate behaviours. Staff should:
- a. Maintain an appropriate distance
 - b. Relax their body posture
 - c. Keep palms open and avoid crossing arms
 - d. Provide intermittent and not direct eye contact
 - e. Soften their frame by reducing height and taking a sideways stance

7. PLANNING FOR RISK REDUCTION

- 7.1. If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that restrictive physical interventions may be a likely result, then a behaviour support plan will be completed. This Plan will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing.
- 7.2. This will also make it clear to parents that physical intervention, based on previous behaviours, are a possible outcome and will contribute to positive relationships with our parents.

8. GUIDANCE AND TRAINING FOR STAFF

- 8.1. Guidance and training are essential in this area. We aim to adopt the best possible practice and recognise that this is supported by appropriate professional development and support for staff members.
- 8.2. Based on an audited need, a number of staff have had direct training in the use of safe restraint techniques that could be used in a variety of circumstances.
- 8.3. There is no legal requirement for staff to be trained in the use of practical techniques but it is recognised that such training may be required for staff where there is a significant likelihood of them needing to intervene physically due to the nature of the pupil (or pupils) that they are working with.
- 8.4. Training ensures that staff, identified on an audited need, are aware of best practice techniques.
- 8.5. All staff, as a part of our whole school Step On training, are aware of a number of techniques which pose an unacceptable risk, such as 'basket type holds' or those which cause a sense of violation, cause pain as a direct result of the technique or have a negative impact on the process of breathing. These are reviewed regularly by all staff working directly with children.

9. RECORDING AND REPORTING

- 9.1. Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil.
- 9.2. The written record will be made on Behaviour Watch and will indicate:
- The names of the staff and pupils involved
 - The reason for using a restrictive physical intervention
 - The type of restrictive physical intervention employed

- 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 date and the duration of the intervention
- Whether the pupil or anyone else experienced injury or distress and, if they did, what action was taken

9.3. Any incidents of Restrictive Physical Intervention will be communicated to parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss this.

9.4. Any Behaviour Support Plans must be considered in response to an act of RPI to ensure that learning takes place as a result of this. In many occasions, wider discussions with external professionals may be necessary to ensure that adequate support is in place for the child and family.

10. COMPLAINTS

10.1. It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we can avoid or minimise the likelihood of any complaints being made.

10.2. All disputes which arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to the school's existing policies (including Complaints Procedure, Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers, and Safeguarding Policies).