



# SYWELL CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

*'Working Together in God's Hands'*

Agreed Date	September 2020
Review date	September 2021

## **Rationale**

Sywell Church of England Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for pupil safety and welfare act professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour from children, and use physical intervention only as a last resort. If used at all it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the student, and be reasonable and proportional to the circumstances of the incident. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to students and staff.

It is recognised in both statute and Common Law that there is a need to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to children, staff or property.

This policy is based on The Department for Education guidance Use of Reasonable Force Advice for Head Teachers, staff and Governing Bodies 2012.

## **Objectives**

The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Maintain the safety of students, staff and visitors
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent serious breaches of school discipline

## **Deciding if the use of restrictive physical intervention is appropriate**

Staff will view physical intervention of students as a last resort. If students are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent the need for restrictive physical intervention.

In the following situations staff must judge whether or not physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate:

- Risk to the safety of staff, children or visitors.
- Where there is a risk of serious damage to property.
- Where a child's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline.
- Where a child is committing a criminal offence (age 10 or above).

Any member of staff who undertakes a restrictive physical intervention should be clear as to why it is necessary and be able to show that it was in the child's best interest and that it was reasonable and proportionate. For those children assessed as being at risk of restrictive physical intervention Positive Handling Plans will be developed. These plans outline what techniques should be used and not used along with de-escalation strategies.

The judgement on whether to use physical intervention and what physical intervention should be used should always depend on the circumstances of each case and in the case of children with Special Educational Needs information about the individual concerned.

Staff need to make the clearest possible judgements about:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- 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.

Staff should also be aware of guidance which states that:

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

School does not use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

### **Using physical interventions**

Before using restrictive physical intervention staff should, wherever practicable, tell the student to stop misbehaving and communicate in a calm and measured manner throughout the incident. Staff should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

The types of physical intervention could include:

- a. Passive physical contact resulting from standing between students or blocking a student's path.
- b. Active physical contact such as:
  - i) Leading a student by the hand or arm;
  - ii) Ushering a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back;
  - iii) In more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive interventions, which require specific expertise and training.

The restrictive physical interventions authorised by the school are those techniques in which staff have received appropriate training and development through 'Team Teach'.

The core principles of 'Team Teach' include:

- Minimum of two staff involved.
- Last resort minimum force and time.
- Techniques that do not rely on pain or locks and allow for verbal communication.
- Staff safety and protection addressed.
- Planned responses and techniques are written out and included in positive handling plans for individual students.

Where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury, any member of staff is justified in taking any necessary action (consistent with the principle of seeking to use the minimum intervention required to achieve the desired result.)

### **Alternatives to physical intervention**

A member of staff who chooses not to make a physical intervention can still take effective action to reduce risk. They can:

- Show care and concern by acknowledging unacceptable behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiation and reason.
- Give clear directions to the students to stop.
- Remind about rules and likely outcomes.
- Remove an audience or take vulnerable children to a safer place.
- Make the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons.
- Use 'positive touch'<sup>1</sup> to guide or escort students to somewhere less pressurised.
- Ensure that colleagues know what is happening and get help.

### **Reducing the likelihood of situations arising where physical intervention may be required**

All physical interventions at school are conducted within a framework of positive behaviour management. The Behaviour Policy outlines the steps the school undertakes to ensure a calm, orderly and supportive school climate which minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind, thereby reducing the need for physical intervention.

A structured approach to staff development is adopted through the 'Team Teach' programme, which allows staff to develop the skills of positive behaviour management and de-escalating incidents.

Staff should recognise the need to effectively manage individual incidents. It is important to communicate calmly with the child, using non-threatening verbal and body language and ensuring that the student can see a way out of the situation. Strategies might include, for example, going with the staff member to a quiet room, away from bystanders or other students, so that the staff member can listen to concerns; or being joined by a particular member of staff well known to the student.

Wherever practicable a child should be warned that physical intervention may have to be used before applying it.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Positive touch' is a 'Team Teach' technique where the student is guided by touching the arm above the elbow. Please refer to the Team Teach training manual for specific guidance on the technique.

## **Authorisation of staff to use physical intervention and staff development**

As stated in the 2012 guidance Use of reasonable force “All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force”.

Sywell Church of England Primary School believes in ensuring the Staff are trained in specific physical interventions and de-escalation strategies through the ‘Team Teach’ approach. Once staff have received their full training, refresher training will take place 2-3 years following initial training.

The names of staff that have been trained to use physical intervention techniques along with the dates they received their training are kept on the SCR.

## **Positive Handling Plans**

Individual children assessed at being at greatest risk of requiring restrictive physical intervention will be identified through the member of staff with responsibility for Positive Behaviour. These students will be placed on Positive Handling Plans developed in consultation with the school, Parents/ Carers, and, where possible, the child.

Positive Handling Plans set out the situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and the de-escalation strategies that are most effective. Specific strategies and techniques that have been agreed by staff when physical intervention is required are also included.

## **Recording and reporting incidents**

The school keeps a record of all physical interventions. The Bound and numbered incident book is located in the Headteacher’s office . All records are kept for ten years after the date of the incident.

The purpose of recording is to ensure that policy guidelines are followed, to inform parents/ carers, to inform future planning as part of the school improvement process, to prevent misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the incident and to provide a record for any future enquiry.

Accounts of the incident should be taken from the member of staff who undertook the physical intervention, the child/ren involved and any third party witnesses.

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible after any recordable incident. Parents/carers will be telephoned before details are confirmed in writing. Parents/carers will be informed of when and where the incident took place, which members of staff were directly involved (anonymised), why they decided physical intervention had to be used, what physical intervention was used, whether there were any injuries and what follow up action was being taken in relation to their child. Parents/carers will also be given a copy of the ‘Policy for the Restrictive intervention and Positive Handling of Students.’

The Headteacher will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity that a physical intervention has taken place. The Headteacher will initiate the recording process and review each incident.

Governors will be informed of the number of physical interventions carried out on a termly basis, or as requested.

## **Post-incident support**

The school recognises the need to ensure that staff and students have appropriate emotional support.

The student and the member of staff will be checked for any sign of injury after an incident. Immediate action will be taken to provide first aid for any injuries requiring attention.

The student will be given time to become calm whilst staff continue to supervise. When it is deemed that the student is composed, a senior member of staff will discuss the incident with the student and ascertain the reason for its occurrence. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish a positive relationship between the student and the member of staff involved in the incident.

All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff (or his/her nominee) will provide support to the member of staff involved.

Parents/carers will be engaged in discussing the incident and for setting out subsequent actions and support.

## **Complaint procedure**

If a parent/carers or student is concerned about any aspect of the management of an incident requiring physical intervention, the Headteacher should be informed of their concern. The headteacher will respond to the complaint in accordance with school policy and procedure.