Chalton Lower School

Physical Intervention Policy

Document Control		
Edition	**Issued**	**Changes from previous**
1	15/11/22	None this is a new policy.
2	15/11/23	Change to review date. Now every 3 years.
3	15/11/26	Updated policy - change made to physical intervention form.

Policies/Documents referred to in this policy	Postholders/Persons named in this policy
Education Act 2011	
Children Act 1989	
Equality Act 2010	
DfE - Use of Reasonable Force in Schools	
DfE - Working Together to Safeguard Children	
DfE - Keeping Children Safe in Education	

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Approved By: Governing Body

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Statement of Intent

Chalton Lower School believes that it is important to establish a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. To achieve this, the school recognises that, in certain circumstances, physical intervention, including safe touch and the use of reasonable force, is necessary. The school understands that behaviour is often a means of communication which may signal that a pupil is in need of support but does not know how to express this; therefore, the school takes a proactive approach to anticipating, managing and minimising potential triggers of distressed behaviour that may cause harm.

This policy acknowledges that situations may arise in which staff members will be required to use physical intervention, and in some cases reasonable force, in order to handle pupils' emotions or aggressive behaviour when other measures have failed to do so.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that physical intervention is used in a correct and safe manner, which is in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010

This policy has due regard to the following guidance:

- DfE - Use of Reasonable Force in Schools
- DfE - Working Together to Safeguard Children
- DfE - Keeping Children Safe in Education

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Monitoring the overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy should include the power to use reasonable force.
- Evaluating on an annual basis instances of physical intervention to analyse how and when reasonable force is used and identify any trends.
- Reviewing this policy on a regular basis.
- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the headteacher, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Deciding whether members of staff require additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities, considering the needs of pupils.
- Ensuring that all members of staff understand the correct conduct in terms of positive handling.
- Maintaining the records of the use of reasonable force and evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used.
- Ensuring that any member of staff who uses reasonable force completes the Physical Intervention Report Form.
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy sets out the circumstances in which force might be used.

- Responding to any complaints, in liaison with the governing board, from pupils or parents regarding the use of reasonable force.

The SENCO is responsible for:
- Providing training to members of staff on how to handle the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Ensuring staff understand how pupils with SEND may react differently to reasonable force.
- Ensuring that staff understand the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND or medical conditions.
- Ensuring that staff understand how reasonable force principles may need to be adapted for pupils with medical conditions.
- Evaluating on a termly basis how reasonable force and physical intervention is used with regard to pupils with SEND, in collaboration with the headteacher.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:
- Providing staff with reasonable force training where the headteacher deems it necessary.
- Ensuring all members of staff use reasonable force in accordance with this policy.
- Reviewing this policy in liaison with the headteacher and governing board.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, 'physical intervention' is used to refer to any situation in which physical contact with a pupil is necessary - this includes reasonable force, e.g. to defuse a situation in which a pupil is at risk of harming themselves or others and safe touch, e.g. comforting a pupil in emotional distress.

For the purposes of this policy, 'positive handling' is defined as the overall, graduated approach of responding to pupils' behaviour and emotions with the intention of protecting pupils and staff, and limiting damage to others and property. Positive handling adapts the least intrusive intervention techniques in response to situations, before using gentle physical intervention and reasonable force as a last resort.

For the purposes of this policy, 'reasonable force' is considered to refer to a broad range of actions that may be used to control or restrain a pupil to prevent that pupil from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. Reasonable force covers force that is necessary and proportionate to the circumstances.

There are two key types of reasonable force:
- 'Control' - actions used in an attempt to direct a pupil's movements; this includes passive physical contact, e.g. standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact, e.g. leading a pupil out of a classroom by their arm.
- 'Restraint' - actions used in an attempt to physically bring a pupil under control. This type of force is typically used in more extreme circumstances, e.g. where two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate, causing staff to intervene to hold them back from one another physically.

For the purposes of this policy, 'safe touch' is defined as physical contact which, if avoided, would be inhumane, unkind or cause distress to a pupil, e.g. where a pupil is significantly distressed and in need of physical comfort.

Positive Handling

The principle of positive handling means that the school expects staff to assess whether the incident requiring a response can be resolved without physical intervention. Where possible, the school implements an approach of prevention, where staff will be trained in recognising warning signs of severe pain or distress and/or aggressive behaviour, communicating empathetically with pupils displaying such signs to aid them in regulating their emotions, and altering their environment to minimise distressing stimuli.

Teaching staff will be aware of the behavioural patterns, medical conditions and levels of need of pupils in their class, and will ensure that incidents of disruptive or aggressive behaviour in the classroom are handled in line with individual pupils' needs. Staff will not generally resort to physical contact or reasonable force immediately without first questioning whether there is a need to use physical intervention. Staff will question whether:

- Verbal de-escalation can be attempted.
- There are actions that can be taken to remove triggers from pupils, e.g. dimming the lights and encouraging quiet where a pupil is having a meltdown in response to sensory overstimulation.
- The pupil can be removed from the situation without physical intervention, e.g. if they will follow a member of teaching staff out of the classroom.
- The pupil has a condition or support needs that mean physical intervention would be inherently more dangerous, e.g. asthma which may be made worse by restrictive holds or sensory issues where physical touch would contribute to sensory overload and may provoke aggressive behaviour.
- They have the ability, training and adequate support to physically intervene safely without causing unnecessary harm to the pupil or themselves.

Where there is no immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, destruction of property or serious disruption, reasonable force will not be used on the pupil. Any reasonable force used in situations that are non-urgent will only be used once all alternative options have been exhausted and where the staff member in charge deems that the situation is escalating. The school understands that, in some cases, action may be required very quickly, e.g. in the event that a pupil attempts to run out into a busy road, or where pupils begin a violent fight with one another and staff are forced to pull the pupils apart. Staff will not be penalised for resorting to the use of physical intervention or reasonable force in such situations where it is justified and perceived necessary to prevent harm to others or property in the circumstances. Positive handling will be applied with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Reasonable force is not used as a method of behaviour management or discipline - only as a last resort in situations that require de-escalation to prevent harm.

Reasonable Force

Staff members will use actions that are appropriate and in proportion to the circumstances. Physical restraint will never be used routinely. Where reasonable force is required, the degree and type of force that is used will depend on the pupil's circumstances, e.g. their age or SEND. The following list is not exhaustive, but provides examples of situations where the school may decide to use reasonable force where other methods of defusing a situation have been exhausted or are not appropriate:

- Members of staff need to control pupils risking the safety of themselves or others outside of school premises where the same range of support options are not available, e.g. on school trips.
- Members of staff must prevent a pupil from leaving an area, e.g. the classroom or school grounds, where doing so would risk their safety or the safety of others.
- A pupil is attacking a member of staff or another pupil.
- A pupil is at serious risk of harming themselves and a member of staff must intervene to prevent this.
- Disruptive children must be removed from the classroom and are refusing instructions to leave.

All members of staff will be permitted to use reasonable force where they believe it to be appropriate in line with their training, as long as all necessary precautions are taken. The decision to physically intervene during a situation is down to the professional judgement of

the member of staff and always depends on the circumstances and the pupil's individual needs.
The power to use reasonable force also applies to any individual whom the headteacher has identified as temporarily in charge, such as volunteers. In many cases where physical intervention or reasonable force is required, minimal and non-restrictive force will be appropriate, e.g. holding a pupils arm to escort them from a classroom. Reasonable force techniques that involve restraint will only be used where the staff member in charge feels it is necessary to prevent serious harm. In general, restraint will only be used briefly, and prolonged restraint will not be used, i.e. restraint beyond that which is necessary to remove the immediate threat a pupil is posing to themselves or others.
Where staff determine physical intervention is necessary, they will calmly communicate the reasons for their actions to the pupil and explain why it is necessary in a non-threatening manner. In most cases, staff will communicate this to pupils before making physical contact to minimise distress and/or further aggressive behaviour from the pupil; however, the school recognises that this is not possible in some emergency situations.
Staff will never give the impression that they are acting out of anger or are punishing the pupil. Staff members will always avoid acting in a way that could cause injury; however, the school understands that accidental injury may occur in emergency situations where there is not sufficient time for a considered response, e.g. bruising on a child's wrist where a staff member has grabbed them to prevent them running onto a busy road.
Where a member of staff believes that they are at risk, e.g. where an injury is likely to occur, they will not intervene in an incident without the help and assistance of another staff member.
Staff will also be aware that, in some instances, it will cause more distress to a pupil, and may increase the risk of harm to their peers, if they are prevented from leaving an area, e.g. their classroom, using physical intervention. Where it is not dangerous to allow them to leave, the staff member in charge of the situation should use their judgement in allowing a pupil to remove themselves from the area, as environmental factors in the area specifically may be provoking their behaviour. Following the incidents where reasonable force is used, the pupil involved may be subject to separate disciplinary procedures, in which strategies should be formed to help avoid reoccurrence of such incidents.

Pupils with SEND

The school will have due consideration to the risks posed by the additional vulnerability of pupils with SEND in terms of physical intervention and reasonable force.
The SENCO will ensure that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 are adhered to in relation to reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that staff that come into regular contact with pupils with SEND are aware of the ways in which their needs can be met without reasonable force.
The school is aware that pupils with SEND may sometimes experience meltdowns, which can sometimes manifest in behaviour which may be aggressive or seem uncontrollable. Where it is known that a pupil is prone to meltdowns, the SENCO and headteacher will draft a risk assessment to determine planned strategies for managing the pupil's meltdowns that are tailored to the pupil's specific needs, to avoid the use of reasonable force. These risk assessments will be conducted in collaboration with the pupil and their parents, where appropriate.
Some pupils with SEND may require physical intervention when they feel overwhelmed or stressed, e.g. a tight hug; however, this will be discussed as part of relevant risk assessments.
Staff members will not assume that a technique employed for one pupil with SEND will be applicable to other pupils with SEND. Staff will also be aware that pupils with SEND may engage in frequent, repetitive self-stimulatory behaviour, known as 'stimming', and that some pupils may engage in self-injurious stimming, e.g. repeatedly hitting or scratching themselves. While this can be alarming, staff will be aware that stimming is often carried out as a means of emotional regulation or self-soothing in response to stressful or overwhelming

stimuli. Staff members will aim to remove distressing stimuli from the environment, where possible, or will support pupils to engage in less harmful stimming methods, e.g. by providing them with something to play with or demonstrating a less harmful stim, such as hand flapping.
Staff will be aware that restraining a pupil in a way that prevents them from stimming entirely can cause extreme distress and lead to further aggressive behaviour. Self-injurious stimming and tactics to support a pupil to engage in safer stims will be included as part of the pupil's risk assessment. The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy at all times.

Post-Incident Support

Following an incident of reasonable force, all pupils and staff members involved will be given any necessary first aid to treat injuries as soon as possible, and emotional support. Wherever reasonable force is used, staff members and pupils involved in incidents will be given separate opportunities to reflect on what happened. It will be explained to the pupil involved the reason that such intervention was used, and reassured that the use of the intervention was not a punishment for their behaviour, but rather a method of defusing the situation and preventing them from harming themselves or others. The pupil will be asked about the reasons for their behaviour, including:

- Why their environment was causing such distress for them, e.g. in an instance of sensory overstimulation leading to a meltdown.
- Whether they feel there was anything that could have been done to meet their needs before the situation escalated.
- Whether and how, staff actions were helpful or unhelpful.

Staff will be encouraged to reflect on their actions and how they handled the situation, and will be reassured, where appropriate, that they have done nothing wrong and acted in what they perceived to be the best interests of pupils.

Reporting Incidents

A detailed written report will be kept of all incidents where reasonable force is used, distinguishing between planned interventions, i.e. those in line with approved strategies for the behaviour of specific pupils, and unplanned or emergency interventions. Immediately following an incident, the member(s) of staff involved will verbally report the incident to the headteacher and provide a comprehensive written record of the situation as soon as possible, using the Physical Intervention Report Form. The written report of the incident must be thorough, including as much detail as possible as to what had happened before, during and after the incident, the reasons why specific interventions were employed, and any injuries incurred due to the incident.
Records should be retained and analysed by the headteacher, and SENCO where physical intervention was used on a pupil with SEND, on a termly basis to ensure that such interventions are being used appropriately, and to identify patterns of behaviour and responses to that behaviour that may require changes to school practice, e.g. increased staff training or further behavioural or emotional support.
Where reasonable force or physical restraint has been used, the pupil's parents will be informed as long as this would not place the pupil at greater risk. If the decision is made that the parents cannot be informed as this would place the child at greater risk, a safeguarding referral will be made in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The headteacher will make the final decision as to whether it is appropriate to inform the pupil's parents of the details of an incident.

Complaints

All members of staff will be made fully aware of the consequences and legal retributions that can occur following the incorrect use of physical intervention and force. All complaints

regarding the use of physical intervention or force will be investigated in a thorough and speedy manner. The person making the complaint is responsible for providing evidence for their allegations, e.g. testimony of events or evidence of injury - it is not for the member of staff to prove that their actions were made reasonably.
In extreme circumstances, parents may take civil action or pursue a criminal prosecution. In the case where a member of staff has acted within the law, this will provide a defence to any civil or criminal prosecution. Members of staff accused of using excessive force will not be automatically suspended as a response to the allegations. The following procedure will be adhered to:

- Careful consideration will be given to whether the case warrants a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved.
- The governing board will always take into account whether a staff member has acted within the law when considering whether or not to take disciplinary action against a staff member involved in an incident.
- Where a member of staff is suspended, the school will ensure that the staff member has access to a named contact that can provide support and guidance.
- The school will provide pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation.

Where a safeguarding allegation is made against a member of staff that involves physical contact, e.g. restraint, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the LADO will take into account that teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Safe Touch

The school understands that the following examples are instances of safe touch which may occur between staff and pupils:

- Comforting an upset or distressed pupil
- Congratulating or praising a pupil
- Holding the hand of a pupil to guide them, such as when crossing a road or walking to assembly
- Giving first aid to a pupil
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons
- Administering medicine
- Using musical instruments

The school understands that certain types of physical contact between staff and pupils are inappropriate, e.g. cuddling, lap-sitting and some instances of holding hands, and that safe touch should never be invasive or humiliating. The school designates that the only appropriate places on a pupil's body to touch them are their shoulders, arms and upper back. Staff employing touch for reward or comfort will use the 'school hug', rather than an embrace. The school hug is a sideways hug whereby the member of staff places their hands on the pupil's shoulders. This type of hug prevents the pupil from turning themselves towards the member of staff and thus engaging in a 'front' embrace, which the school deems inappropriate. The school recognises that staff will sometimes need to hold a pupil's hand, e.g. to guide them or prevent them from physical harm.
The school understands that pupils are not always aware of the boundaries between staff and pupils and thus may try to engage in physical contact, such as lap-sitting or inappropriate hand-holding and hugging. Should a pupil try to engage in any inappropriate physical contact, the member of staff will explain to the pupil why it is unacceptable.
Appropriate touch involving pupils with SEND will be in line with their EHC plan or IEP.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the headteacher and governing body, who will consider any necessary changes and communicate the findings of the review to all members of staff.

Chalton Lower School - Physical Intervention Report Form

We believe that reasonable force should only be used when absolutely necessary. With this in mind, this form has been created to ensure that all incidents of this type are recorded. These report forms should be added to CPOMS.

Name of staff member:	
Name of pupil:	
Date:	
Time:	
Location:	
Name(s) of staff member(s) who witnessed the incident:	
Informed parties (parents, social workers, police, etc):	
Circumstances prior to the incident:	
Details of the incident:	
Details of any negative impact on other pupils:	

Reason(s) for physical intervention (please tick):	
Danger to self ☐ Danger to others ☐ Significant damage to property ☐	
Was it a planned intervention, e.g. in line with approved strategies for the behaviour of specific pupils? Please circle.	Yes/No
Details of the intervention:	
Any disciplinary additional action taken:	
Injuries (if any) to staff members, the pupil concerned or other pupils:	
Damage (if any) to property:	
Recommendation(s) to avoid future incidents:	
Headteacher's signature:	**Date:**
Signature of staff member concerned:	**Date:**