



# **Churchill Park School**

## **Physical Intervention Policy**

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## **Preface**

In exceptional situations it is necessary to physically restrain a child as the most appropriate action to take.

If you restrain children when there are other workable, less restrictive options available to them, children are hurt, their rights are breached, the focus remains on behavioural issues rather than the whole child and their needs, and civil or criminal proceedings could also result. However, you should be aware that if you do not restrain a young person in situations when it is needed, it could be dangerous to them and to others.

***Restraining a child at the right time, in the right way, for the right reasons, can be a better thing to do than failing to restrain them.***

Physically restraining children is something, which causes many staff, as well as children, a lot of anxiety - as it should. Even when done properly it can be a traumatising experience for children and staff alike. At Churchill Park we see restraining children as a last resort. This means that children should only be restrained when restraining them cannot be avoided and restraining them is necessary because of your duty of care to the child or others.

Churchill Park School embraces the Norfolk Steps holistic approach to the positive management of behaviour.

## **De-escalation and Physical Intervention**

Churchill Park School is committed to using the Norfolk Steps holistic approach to positive handling. Positive handling describes a broad spectrum of strategies to manage behaviour; these include policy, guidance, environment management, staff deployment, personal behaviour, diversion, diffusion and de-escalation. Physical intervention is only a small part of this framework.

- Use of space
- Safe environments
- Comfortable environments
- Diversions
- Calm Stances and Postures
- Non threatening Facial Expressions
- Low Tone, Volume and Pace in Communication
- Careful use of words
- Physical Reassurance and Prompts
- Effective Guides and Escorts
- Releases and holds with minimum drama and effort

It is envisaged that non-physical intervention will constitute at least 95% of all behaviour management intervention.

It is an integral part of the Norfolk Steps approach to physical intervention that all staff share responsibility for assisting and supporting. It is undesirable and counter productive that the responsibility for physical intervention is left to particular individuals.

### **Staff Training**

All teaching staff employed at Churchill Park School will be trained in de-escalation techniques and physical intervention if deemed appropriate. The School is committed to providing this training at the earliest opportunity to safeguard the welfare of both pupils and staff.

It will be the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to arrange the required training.

### Minimum Training

Each member of staff will receive as a minimum, a 6 hour accredited course of de-escalation and physical intervention training. In addition to this, training will be refreshed on an annual basis. The Senior Leadership Team will keep a list of those authorised to use physical intervention.

### Meeting Need

The school's Senior Leadership Team is responsible for auditing practice and skills and will provide additional training and support for staff as required. It is also the responsibility of the individual member of staff to bring to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team any areas of concern they may have in regards to their own ability or the ability of others to safely and consistently apply the de-escalation and physical intervention strategies. There will be on-going monitoring and evaluation to ensure that all trained staff maintain the highest standards of practice.

### Duty of Care Prior To Training

Although it is the intention of the school to provide training as soon as possible for new staff it will be the case that for a short period they will not have been trained in de-escalation and physical intervention. Absence of training *does not negate* the duty of care the member of staff has towards the pupils in the school and does not prevent them from physically intervening in an emergency situation. However best practice would be to seek the assistance of a trained member of staff if at all possible. A new member of staff who feels that a situation is developing beyond their ability to manage safely should seek assistance at the earliest opportunity to prevent the need to manage a potential crisis.

It will always be the intention of managers within the school to place new staff in such a way that the risks they face and the knowledge, skills and understanding they possess are appropriate to the capacity in which they are used. New members of staff will have risk assessments completed for them to support this.

### Acceptable situations for a non-trained member of staff to physically intervene

- To prevent physical injury to pupils or staff
- To prevent a pupil from absconding, when it is deemed in their behaviour intervention plan that they are a serious risk

Physical Intervention to prevent damage to property or to prevent the prejudice of good order is not deemed as an emergency.

### Supply Teacher and Cover Staff

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to make aware to any supply staff employed by the school, the physical intervention policy. A risk assessment will be completed to minimise the potential that such staff should find themselves in situations, which may require physical intervention.

### Temporary Inability to Physically Intervene

In the event that a member of staff finds themselves in the position where they can no longer be involved in situations of physical intervention due to medical considerations etc. they are to inform the Senior Leadership Team, advising them of the likely duration and providing any relevant medical documentation. It is the individual's responsibility to inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team if this situation should occur. Individuals in this position will have a risk assessment for them in line with their level of need. In the event that an individual is incapable either long term or permanently to involve himself or herself with physical intervention advice will be sought from Occupational Therapy. The Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for keeping a record of those staff in this position and, senior managers will be informed accordingly. If for any reason this information is not communicated clearly to all staff and individuals are asked to become involved in a situation involving positive handling, it remains the responsibility of the individual to make staff aware at the time of their situation and they should not involve themselves in physical intervention if they know they are not fit to do so.

## Administration and Housekeeping Staff

All ancillary and domestic staff will be made aware of the principles of de-escalation and physical intervention and of the schools physical intervention policy. Training will be offered to those in need as identified by risk assessment.

## **Creating the Right Conditions**

### Maintaining a positive culture

It is the duty of every member of staff to help maintain positive culture and ethos throughout the school. This will be achieved by the staff making themselves fully aware of the aims and objectives that we have at Churchill Park and supporting them. An understanding of children's positive handling plans and risk assessments will go a long way towards successful management of behaviour without the need for physical intervention.

We can best develop the values and principles which support a positive ethos when:

- There is a sense of identity and pride which is clear in the organisation;
- The reception and ethos are welcoming;
- Young people and staff members morale is good and helps to motivate;
- The behaviour and discipline of young people fits with their age and stage of development;
- There are appropriate expectations and praise is used by staff and young people;
- Staff promote an ethos of achievement;
- Equality and fairness are a central part of the organisation;
- Parents or carers and staff are encouraged to be involved in the young peoples development and the life of the organisation;
- Communication with other agencies and links with the community are effective;
- Support is available to address the complicated needs of young people (where appropriate);
- Young people are seen as individuals with unique needs;
- There is shared target-setting with young people;
- Opportunities have been provided so young people can manage a number of situations with support through a thorough care planning process;
- There are opportunities for staff and young people to achieve.

## Developing Ethical Practice

When considering whether or not to restrain a child, you are faced by two demands. First there is the child's right to freedom of movement. Secondly there is your duty of care to others.

You can only ethically justify denying the child's right to freedom of movement if the circumstances are exceptional and restraining them is the only practical way you can secure their welfare or the welfare of others.

Restraining a child may involve difficult ethical choices, when in doubt a member of staff should actively seek opportunity to discuss such choices with colleagues and senior management.

## Develop and Maintain Self- awareness

Staff working within a complex needs setting should understand the importance of self-knowledge and appraisal. It is not only the pupils in our care who bring a history of experiences both positive and negative with them. You will have your own fears and impulses and particular pupils may trigger unhelpful responses in you. You should actively seek to make yourself aware of potential triggers you may have and those individuals who may require a greater degree of professionalism as a result of a personal response.

## Leading By Example

One of the most powerful tools we have in working with pupils is the example we ourselves set:

- Demonstrate self control yourself
- Control pupil's behaviour in ways which do not involve punishment
- Interact in ways which invite co-operation rather than coercion
- Show respect for the property of others and legitimate interests
- Model through the quality of our own interaction that which we expect

## Using Authority Appropriately

Child-centered practice does not mean that you should be reluctant to take charge when you should be in charge. You need to be clear about what the children can decide, what is negotiable and what is non-negotiable.

Not intervening with young people in situations where they may need to be restrained or otherwise stopped can have the unfortunate consequence of confirming for them that intimidation, severely disruptive behaviour and violence are acceptable ways to achieve what they want.

A strong adult presence, using authority appropriately, will reduce the need for restraint. Acting in this way, you can give the young people and your colleagues a sense of security. However, there must be a sense of fairness and a spirit of care underlying all interactions and decision-making.

## Promote Positive Relationships

It is much more likely that a pupil will co-operate with you as a member of staff if you have developed a positive relationship with that individual. The process of developing such a relationship should be seen as the greatest part of the job we do.

## **Behaviour Management and Positive handling plans**

It is the intention of the schools Senior Leadership Team that all staff trained in physical intervention have at least the minimum skills necessary to cope with all but the most extraordinary situations. There will be pupils who because of increased levels of risk require positive handling plans. The intention of such documentation is to protect the safety and interests of both pupils and staff. It is the duty of the individual member of staff to be fully aware of the contents of any such positive handling plan and any amendments. Members of the Leadership Team will be responsible for making staff aware when such documentation exists.

Key staff working with individuals will be involved in the planning process but the experience and expertise of all staff affected should be contributed to ensure the highest quality.

## **Practice of Physically Intervening**

### **When to Physically Intervene**

You may only physically intervene when it is the only practical means of securing the welfare of that child or another child and there are exceptional circumstances.

You must reasonably believe that:

- A pupil will cause physical harm to themselves or another person
- A pupil will run away and in doing so will put themselves or others at serious risk or harm
- A pupil will cause significant damage, which is likely to have a serious emotional effect or create a physical danger.
- A pupil's behaviour seriously affects the positive culture and ethos of the school.

When restraining a child or young person is necessary, you must do so in a way that doesn't harm your relationship with them and creates the possibility of making good progress when the crisis is over. This will permit the continuation of other therapeutic work once the restraint is over.

In the simplest application the member of staff should ask themselves the following question;

***“What harm am I preventing by taking hold of this child?”***

There are three important parts involved in the process of restraining children well:

- ***How you think***
- ***How you act***
- ***What you do***

### **When Not To Physically Intervene**

- You can restore safety in another practical way
- You are not in control of yourself
- To gain compliance
- As a punishment
- When it is likely that physical intervention will make the situation less safe

## Risk Assessing Prior To Intervention

It can often be the case that a member of staff has to take a split second decision as to whether a physical intervention is the appropriate action. This process can be described as a 'Dynamic Risk Assessment'. It is important that the following considerations are used to assist this process:

- That staff present are capable of safe effective physical intervention i.e. staff ability and quantity are sufficient to meet the needs for that pupil.
- That the environment is as safe as possible in the circumstances i.e. chairs, furniture, type of floor covering, fixtures and fittings.
- Consideration of the effects that peers may have if within the vicinity.
- Knowledge of the individual and any medical conditions they may have.

It is possible for staff to introduce an element of pre-intervention risk assessment by being aware for example of those rooms/ areas within the school that present a higher risk environment.

## During Physical Intervention

During physical intervention de-escalation and physical intervention protocols should be followed at all times. These include:

- Monitoring the health of the child
- Minimising as far as possible any pain or discomfort
- Avoiding pressure on or across joints
- Constantly reviewing the need for the physical intervention to continue and the nature of that physical intervention
- Staff to be aware of elevated risks connected with separate techniques and warning signs that may be apparent.

## Changing Staff

In any physical intervention other than those of the shortest duration it may be necessary to initiate a staff rotation. This is to minimise the risk of injury, fatigue and inter-personal conflict.

## Prolonged Physical Intervention

Any physical intervention that is of greater duration than 5 minutes, support from a senior member of staff should be sought.

## **Ending a Physical Intervention**

The way in which a physical intervention is ended, and the action you take after it will have a large influence on its overall effect.

### Letting go

It is important to end the physical intervention as soon as possible. However it may be dangerous to do so prematurely. The decision to do so is based on experience and knowledge of the child. The safest approach to take involves gradually through dialogue and ongoing assessment allowing the pupil to regain control. It often helps if one person takes the lead in directing this process. It is essential at this time to avoid any recrimination or blame and to communicate in a calm and controlled way.

### After the Physical Intervention

Adrenalin created as a result of physical intervention can affect the normal functioning processes for up to an hour after the event. It is important to avoid putting the pupil in a position that may cause further anxiety and a possible repeat of the situation for which they have just emerged. Staff need to be particularly sensitive to the needs of the pupil to support them through this period. It is rarely helpful to discuss triggers and attribute blame.

Staff should be aware that physical intervention is not risk free in regard to potential injury. Even if all protocols are followed and techniques applied correctly there is still a risk of injury and harm to both pupils and staff. Such injury is not necessarily an indication of poor practice.

## Well Being

All those involved in, or observing a physical intervention may be affected by it. This includes pupils and adults. Often injuries sustained may only become apparent after the event. It is important that we as a community are sensitive to the consequences of physical intervention and do not become immune to the needs it may create in others or ourselves. Tutorials and staff supervision can provide useful conduits to discuss issues rising as a result.

All staff are entitled to a de-brief following an incident, and can request this from a member of the Senior Leadership Team or from one of the Norfolk Steps Tutors.

## **Learning and Reflection**

Every incident of physical intervention should stimulate reflection on the following points:

- Confidence that the physical intervention was necessary and other responses were not more appropriate
- That the physical intervention was effective and safe
- The techniques used were the least intrusive and for the shortest possible time
- By employing alternative strategies earlier the intervention could have been avoided

In the event of a pupil being involved in a serious incident that has resulted in a physical management, there will be a review undertaken by key staff to consider the suitability of that student's participation in activities that might carry heightened risk.

## **Recording and Informing**

After any serious incident involving physical intervention the following procedures must be followed:

- That a member of the Senior Leadership Team is informed as soon as possible after the event
- That an incident report is completed on sleuth before the end of the school day.
- That parents/carers are informed as soon as possible or if an individual agreement

exists with a child's parents at the end of the week.

- That a pupil debrief is completed as stated in their positive handling plan.
- Any other agencies are informed in line with school policy
- Extraordinary behaviours may require a review of the positive handling plan.

### **Monitoring**

It is essential that the nature, frequency and patterns of physical intervention are constantly monitored in order to predict, evaluate, improve practice and minimise risk. The Senior Leadership Team will monitor all incidents requiring physical intervention. It is both good practice and beneficial for all staff to be aware of such incidents and the events leading up to them. Regular checking of class diaries, Sleuth and professional meetings can help construct an objective insight to cause and effect of physical intervention.

The following will be monitored:

- How often each pupil is involved in physical intervention
- How often each employee is involved in physical intervention
- Time and place of physical intervention
- Causes of physical intervention
- Techniques used
- Injuries sustained
- Police involvement
- Complaints