

Castle Hill Primary School Physical Contact Policy



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Reviewed by: Headteacher

Su Broadhurst

Review frequency: Annually

Castle Hill Primary school has an approach based on positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring pupils are safe, happy and learn in a calm and positive environment. We are committed to promoting positive behaviour and also ensuring that children are clear about the Castle Hill Diamond Rules they are expected to follow at all times.

There are times when a member of staff might be required to physically intervene with a pupil in the best interest of their welfare or the welfare of other pupils. The Department for Education states that “all school staff have the power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline in the classroom.” Reasonable force will only be used rarely and would never be used punitively, but in the best interest of pupils should the situation require it.

There are two kinds of physical intervention that might be used:

- Positive contact
- Use of reasonable force to control or restrain

This policy explains when and how each of these might be used by Castle Hill Primary School Staff. It has been written within the guidelines established by the Department for Education in the document, ‘Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies’. This states that ‘all school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force’ under the Education Act, 2006.

A risk assessment of children in school will determine whether, as well as the Senco, which other named staff need to update training in the use of physical force and restraint. All authorised staff should be clear about the criteria for when physical force and restraint should be used and the procedures to follow.

All school staff are familiar with the school’s policy and have a clear understanding about when physical restraint is appropriate and how it should be done. Parents should also be made aware of this policy.

Positive Contact

We believe that to deny pupils all physical contact with adults is to deny a basic human need and an expression of care and concern for all pupils.

However physical contact must be appropriate for the age, understanding and sex of the child and must never threaten or be sexually inappropriate.

Staff must be sensitive to

- cultural backgrounds
- the need to maintain pupils’ personal space

- be aware of pupils who have been sexually abused and will either seek physical contact or positively avoid it

Physical contact may be appropriate

- When a pupil needs to get comfort or reassurance e.g. following an incident or personal crisis.
- When a pupil needs encouragement to attempt a new challenge e.g to climb on to a piece of apparatus.
- When there is a need to take urgent action to avoid an incident or injury.

Staff should take care when offering comfort to pupils and also mindful of pupils who may be approaching puberty because physical contact can be misconstrued and this can cause distress to all concerned.

Staff should take reasonable measures when they are left alone supervising/talking with/teaching small groups or individual pupils (such as leaving the door open).

The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils

When should reasonable force or restraint be used?

According to guidance, reasonable force and restraint may be used to prevent a pupil from doing. Or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing serious damage to property including the pupil's own property.
- Engaging in behavior prejudicial to good order at the school or among any of its pupils whether that behavior occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

Staff have a right to defend themselves against physical attack, and to do everything possible to diffuse the situation before such an attack occurs. In the event that it is necessary to defend themselves against physical attack minimum force for maximum effect should be used.

Situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate are:

- When action is necessary in self-defence e.g when the pupil attacks another pupil or adult.
- Where there is an immediate or imminent risk of injury to another child or an adult e.g. when pupils are fighting or there is rough play or misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- When there is immediate risk of significant damage to property- when a pupil is about to vandalise property.

- Where behaviour jeopardises good order and discipline e.g. where a pupil absconds from the classroom or school buildings. This applies if the pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school.
- A pupil persistently refuses to leave an area and this is likely to cause harm to their wellbeing, or their safety cannot be secured if they remain in that area (e.g. somewhere they cannot be supervised).
- Behaviour which seriously disrupts a lesson.

Physical intervention may be used when:

- There is clearly no alternative approach which would work in the circumstances i.e. there is no immediate urgency to resolve the situation.
- Defending or protecting

What kinds of physical force and restraint might be used?

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

- Physically intervening between pupils.
- Blocking pupil's path.
- Holding.
- Pushing or pulling but only in extreme circumstances to avoid danger.
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm.
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- In extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds.- shoulder hold, walk sideways.

Staff should not act in a way that could 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 ability to breathe.
- Slapping, punching or kicking
- Twisting or forcing limbs against joint
- Tripping up
- Holding or pulling by the hair or ear.
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground
- In exceptional circumstances where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of reasonable force. For example to prevent a young pupil from running onto a busy road, or to prevent a pupil from hitting someone or throwing something.
- Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.
- Staff must always consider whether a risk is urgent and whether there is any alternative to physical intervention.
- Staff should always try to deal with the situation using other strategies to calm a situation before using force.

Procedure

- Staff must use minimum force for maximum effect over the shortest time and use only the agreed restraint methods.
- Pupil safety is paramount. Staff must be aware of signs of distress such as vomiting, changes in colour, breathlessness etc.
- After an incident staff must complete the 'Report of incident involving Physical Restraint' or the serious incident report pertaining to the incident should contain information consistent with this (ie: the context and circumstances of the incident and a clear reason as to why restraint was necessary). A copy must be passed to the Head teacher (or other member of the SLT with delegated responsibility).
- Parents should typically be informed of the incident, the circumstances which led up to the incident and the outcome. Parents must also be informed of any future action the school intends to take.
- Should there be a need to do so, reassurance and support will be provided to any pupils who witness an incident.
- The SLT and staff will evaluate any incident or physical restraint to inform future management of pupils in similar situations.
- Staff involved will be debriefed following an incident and keep informed of any future action which relates to it.
- A report on the operation of this policy will be made by the Head teacher to the full Governing Body when it has been necessary to apply it to a situation in school.
- The Governor with designated responsibility for child protection will be informed of any vulnerable pupils for whom restraint may need to be regularly used.

Essential Points to Remember:

- Whenever possible staff are advised to seek the support of another adult (ideally a named adult- Pastoral lead/SENDco/SLT) when they need to use reasonable force to resolve a situation they cannot deal with in any other way. The other adult will be witness to the incident and will complete a witness report for the record.
- In some extreme cases staff are advised not to intervene in an incident unless it is an emergency. Staff must judge whether it is safe to remove other pupils to a safe distance and seek help using a red card. In such incidents, the staff member should tell the pupil that he/she has sent a red card for help and continue to try to diffuse the situation verbally. If the situation is diffused successfully the incident log must still be completed so that others may learn from the experience.

Complaints

- In the event of complaints to Castle Hill Primary School or to Social Services in connection with the use of force by a staff member, the Head teacher (or delegated member of SLT will seek the advice and support of personnel on how to respond to the complaint).A procedure for complaints can be found in the school safeguarding policy.

Risk Assessment

- All staff in the school must be informed about pupils/families who are vulnerable or volatile.
- Vulnerable or volatile pupils/families should be clearly identified in documentation – (Mini SEF)
- A risk assessment based on the knowledge and previous experience will be carried out and a plan of action for individuals will be written by the SENDco.