



St Mark's West Essex Catholic School

Physical Intervention Policy

Date Reviewed: June 2019

Next Review Date: June 2021

Committee: Curriculum, Pupils and Admissions

Our Catholic school is one in which Gospel values inform all aspects of community life. We are distinguished by the quality of education and care extended to all our members. Each person is recognised as an individual, valued and enabled to fulfil her or his potential to the highest possible standard.

In partnership with the wider community we prepare each member to make full use of the opportunities available, so that all for the benefit of all, are able to shape their destinies and create a better world.

St Mark's West Essex Catholic School believes that all children have the right to be taught in an environment in which they feel safe and where they will enjoy and achieve.

Members of our community are treated as individuals who are significant and valued, and who see others as significant and valued. All members of our school community must be treated with respect. Our policy is rooted in the Gospel message of respect for every individual as a unique creation of God.

St Mark's seeks to protect all pupils and staff against any form of physical intervention which is inappropriate, excessive or unlawful.

It is acknowledged that staff working on a day to day basis with pupils, may have to deal with challenging behaviour and will need assistance in preserving order, maintaining positive relationships and in promoting and maintaining an environment conducive to the education of pupils. At the same time, it is important that staff try to both protect themselves and minimise the risk of injury to staff or pupil in the use of any necessary control or physical intervention. These are a matter of professional judgement. **The use of physical force should be seen only as a last resort.** Staff should be clear about the appropriateness of their actions and should notify a senior member of staff of an intervention immediately after the incident unless exceptional circumstances prevent them doing so, in which case they must make their report at the very earliest opportunity.

This policy has been drawn up with the aim of promoting good practice based on maintaining good relationships in a positive and safe environment with appropriate support being provided and to make clear the position of the school with regards to necessary physical interventions and to safeguard the well-being of pupils and staff when a situation or incident requires the use of physical intervention.

The aims of this policy are to:

- explain staff right to use physical intervention when necessary;
- explain the circumstances in which physical intervention may be justified;
- set out the recording and reporting system; and
- explain the various responsibilities.

It is the objective of St Mark's High School to maintain consistent and safe practices in the use of handling, reasonable force & restraint.

Physical Intervention and the Law

The law allows all adults who are authorised by the Headteacher to be responsible for pupils to use such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil:

- a) Committing a criminal offence (or for younger children that which would be an offence)

- b) Causing personal injury, injury to others or damage to property
- c) Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline

Staff should not hesitate to act in these situations provided they follow this policy and the attached guidance; however, they should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of their professional colleagues.

Definition of Terms:

Handling – refers to any physical intervention applied by a member of staff where it necessary to make physical contact with a pupil in order to manage their conduct or ensure their own or others safety. Handling strategies may be restrictive or non-restrictive and include shepherding, guiding, supporting, blocking, confining, holding and, in the most extreme cases, restraining.

Use of Reasonable Force – is the application of appropriate and proportionate force required to achieve the required outcome from the handling strategy employed (see above) without further endangering the pupil, member of staff or others present at the time of physical intervention.

Restraint - is the positive application of force in order to actively prevent a child from causing significant injury* to him/herself or others or seriously damaging property.

*Significant Injury would include: actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning.

It must be shown that on any occasion where physical restraint is used there were strong indicators that if immediate action had not been taken, significant injury would have followed.

Implementation of Physical Intervention:

All members of staff working with pupils at the school are authorised to handle, use reasonable force or restrain pupils if/when such physical intervention is necessary.

No member of staff is required to employ any physical intervention strategy if they are not comfortable or confident to do so effectively.

No member of staff should intervene physically if they have reason to believe that to do so would worsen the situation/incident that is taking place.

In all circumstances where physical intervention is or may become required members of staff should ensure that adult assistance is requested before intervention, although it is understood that circumstances may lead to the need for intervention prior to the assistance arriving.

Staff considering handling, use of reasonable force or restraint must provide opportunity for the pupil to alter their behaviour/actions before employing a physical intervention strategy and should continue to make instructions to the pupil and details of their intended interventions clear.

The method of physical intervention employed must use the minimum reasonable force for the minimum length of time (additional guidance regarding what intervention is and is not appropriate is given in Appendix A).

Recording Physical Intervention

All incidents where staff feel that they have used force to modify behaviour or conduct should be recorded. It is not necessary to record every incident of contact with a child, but where a member of staff perceives that contact has been received at all negatively, they are advised to record the circumstances.

Intervention Recording Forms are available in the staff room and should be submitted to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The Headteacher will be informed of the intervention that has taken place.

It is the responsibility of the intervening member of staff to complete the record form on the day that the intervention took place.

The circumstances and nature of the physical intervention will be held on the record of the pupil involved.

The DSL will inform any necessary agencies/authorities (eg. Lado) of the physical intervention in accordance with DFE guidance. The Headteacher will ensure that parents/carers are appropriately informed.

For the safeguarding of both staff and pupil, any subsequent investigation of the situation /incident should be undertaken by a member of staff other than the one applying the physical intervention.

Searching Pupils

On occasions a member of staff may have reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of an item or items which contravene school regulations and could potentially cause harm to the pupil or others. Under these circumstances The Education Act 2011 and the DfE 'Use of reasonable force' guidance 2013, extends the power of staff to search pupils without their consent. Any prohibited items found in pupils' possession will be confiscated. These items will not be returned to pupils.

We will also confiscate any item which is harmful or detrimental to school discipline. These items will be returned to pupils after discussion with senior leaders and parents, if appropriate.

Searching and screening pupils is conducted in line with the DfE's latest guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. Searches will be conducted by two members of staff, at least one of whom will be the same sex as the pupil.

St Mark's does not endorse and will not undertake a physical search of any pupils' person. Where necessary a pupil will be asked to remove his/her coat and/or blazer, empty all pockets, open their bags and in some circumstances remove their shoes and socks. Possessions and items of apparel that have been removed may then be searched by the staff present.

If undesirable items are discovered the school will use its power of confiscation to retain the offending item(s). Parents/carers will be contacted to explain what has been found and any subsequent sanctions that have been applied. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be invited to retrieve the offending property and asked to ensure that they are not brought to school again. In the event that illegal items are discovered then the Police will be informed immediately.

Appendix A:

Guidance for Staff re: Handling, Use of Reasonable Force & Restraint

1. Purpose of this document

- To provide for the safety and security of pupils in need of physical intervention.
- To clarify for staff the steps they are allowed to take if a situation requiring physical intervention arises
- To enable staff to distinguish between what intervention is and is not acceptable.
- To ensure that staff have access to the documentation from DfE.
- To help ensure that any physical intervention is minimal, infrequent, recorded and that relevant authorities and parents are appropriately informed.

2. The decision to employ a Physical Intervention Strategy

You should be aware that all staff who have responsibility for a pupil or group of pupils are authorised to employ physical intervention strategies in the event they are necessary and that the law allows you to intervene in this manner.

You should however be aware that you have a choice whether or not to intervene physically in any given situation and that you should not do so if you are uncomfortable with the situation or not confident to deal with it effectively.

You should be aware that in the event that you employ a physical intervention strategy, the parents of the child will be informed of your actions, the record of the intervention will be kept on the pupil's file and where necessary relevant authorities (e.g. Lado – Local Authority Designated Office for Safeguarding) will be notified of the incident for your own future protection.

3. In what way can you Physically Intervene?

Any application of physical intervention must only use the minimum force for the minimum time.

There are a number of ways in which you can physically intervene and you must choose the strategy appropriate to the situation and presenting least risk to yourself, the pupil and other persons.

Appropriate actions include;

- **Shepherding or Guiding;** using body positioning and positive gestures to move a pupil away from harm. This may include the placing of a hand on the back (between the shoulder blades) and using reasonable force to actively move them from one place to another.
- **Blocking or Interposing;** placing yourself between the pupil and their objective (e.g. exit, another pupil) thereby preventing the potential injury damage or prejudice to good order.
- **Holding and Leading;** gripping the pupil appropriately (e.g. by the upper arm) to prevent them from injury, damage, etc. In cases of resistance from a pupil, it may be necessary to employ holding to effectively achieve shepherding and, hence you are actively leading them away.
- **Restraining;** used only in the most extreme cases, restraining may require a significant amount of force in order to prevent significant injury (as described in the policy). Essentially, restraining is a more extreme version of holding, may require more than one adult and may last significantly longer than other strategies. However, the same care must be taken to restrain a pupil appropriately.

4. In what ways must you NOT Physically Intervene?

The purpose of physical intervention is essentially to maintain good order and ensure the safety of all individuals, therefore it is never appropriate to employ a physical intervention strategy if you are not in control of your own emotions. Physical interventions must never be employed in anger or frustration. If you find yourself angry or frustrated by the situation at hand you must step back and allow someone else to manage the issue.

It is never appropriate to use physical intervention strategies as a punishment.

Just as there are a number of acceptable intervention strategies, there are also a number of actions it is completely inappropriate to take.

Inappropriate actions include;

- Hitting or Striking; while it is entirely possible that in the course of an intervention (eg. breaking up a fight) you may be hit yourself, you must not strike a pupil.
- Deliberately inflicting pain; it is not okay to twist limbs or put pressure on joints (eg. arm up a pupil's back), pull or hold hair, pinch or hold a pupil in a pain inducing way (eg. by the ear).
- Making contact with sexually sensitive areas of the body; where at all possible contact should be restricted to arms, shoulders and the back as previously described.
- Restricting breathing; by holding round the throat or for a prolonged period around the chest. It is also never appropriate to sit on/straddle a pupil or hold them face down to the floor.

5. Guidance for managing your intervention

- Always give a pupil an opportunity to resolve the situation without use of physical intervention first.
- Always send for assistance from colleagues or another authorised adult; other pupils should never be involved in physical intervention. You may have to intervene before help arrives, but not managing this entirely on your own is safer for all concerned.
- Be aware of your emotions. Are you comfortable and confident to deal with this scenario without anger? If not – don't intervene.
- Continue to communicate with the pupil (and witnesses) throughout the incident even if the pupil doesn't respond. Be clear about what you are doing and inform the pupil that the intervention will cease when it is no longer necessary.
- Apply only appropriate strategies and the minimum required force to achieve the required outcome (prevention of injury/harm, pupil/staff safety, restoration of good order). Release the pupil once this has been achieved.
- Manage the situation calmly – even if the pupil responds negatively.
- Complete a 'Physical Intervention Record Form' as soon as possible after the event.

6. Minimising the need for Physical Intervention

In most circumstances Physical Intervention really should be a last resort or an emergency action. Therefore, all staff should:

- Endeavour to create a calm environment which will minimise the risk of incidents where the use of physical intervention may be required;
- Endeavour to teach pupils how to manage strong emotions and conflict through opportunities for SMSC and wider aspects of the school curriculum;
- Quickly seek to de-escalate incidents if they do arise;

- Only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force;
- Be aware of risk assessments and positive handling plans for specific individual pupils.

A list of authorised personnel is available from the school but will include all teachers and staff who are contracted by the school.

All staff must read the latest guidance from the DfE Circular on the 'use of reasonable force' 2013. There will be a copy permanently kept in the staffroom.

Appendix B:



**St Mark's West Essex Catholic School
Physical Intervention Incident Log**

Staff member involved:

Date:

Time:

Place of incident:

Pupil involved:

Form Group:

Adult witnesses:

Pupil witnesses:

Reason for force/ intervention:

Incident leading to restraint. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Pupil's behaviour (what was said, strategies used to diffuse the situation, force used, how was it applied and for how long). Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Pupil response. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Details of any injury / damage to property. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Senior member of staff informed: