



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Physical Intervention Policy (Use of Reasonable Force)

Team Teach

Rev	Date Issued	Prepared By	Approved	Comments
1.1	Feb 2025	RTL		Updated with enhanced approaches and procedures

Objectives

At Sparken Hill Academy, we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our pupils to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximize their potential.

We take the safety of our pupils and staff very seriously. We believe that all pupils and staff have the right to be and feel safe whilst at school or on a school-run activity.

We believe that good relationships are at the core of managing all behaviour. Physical intervention is always an action of last resort and only used in exceptional circumstances. It is not a substitute for behaviour management strategies.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Relationships and Emotional Regulation Policy and Safeguarding policies.

Policy Development and Framework

This policy aims to provide a framework for the management of any physical interventions that are legal, effective, safe, appropriate and proportionate. It is written in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's policy and reflects both Team Teach training principles and the 'Coping with Risky Behaviours' course delivered by NCC.

Staff Authorized to Use Reasonable Force

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act (2006) and subsequent guidance published by the DfE in January 2016 entitled 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools -- Guidance for Head Teachers and Staff', the head teacher of our school is empowered to authorize those members of his/her staff to use reasonable force.

At Sparken Hill Academy, the principal has empowered the following members of staff to use reasonable force:

- Teachers and any member of staff who has control or charge of pupils in a given lesson or circumstance have permanent authorization
- Teaching assistants have permanent authorization if a circumstance should arise in which immediate action should be taken
- Other members of staff such as site management and administrative teams also have the power to use reasonable force if a circumstance should arise in which immediate action should be taken

Minimizing the Need to Use Reasonable Force

As a school we are firmly committed to creating a calm and safe environment which minimizes the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force. We use a curriculum which endeavours to explore and strengthen emotional responses to situations.

We will only use force as a last resort and strongly believe in de-escalating any incidents as they arise to prevent them from reaching a crisis point. Staff will be skilled in promoting and rewarding positive behaviour and will utilise various appropriate techniques in the management of a class environment.

Before using physical intervention, we take effective action to reduce risk by:

- Showing care and concern by acknowledging dysregulated behaviour and requesting alternatives using negotiating and reasoning
- Giving clear directions for pupils to stop
- Reminding them about rules and likely outcomes
- Removing an audience or taking vulnerable pupils to a safe place
- Making the environment safer by moving furniture and removing objects which could be used as weapons
- Using positive guidance to escort pupils to somewhere less pressured
- Ensuring that colleagues know what is happening and requesting help

Managing Confrontation - Advice for Staff

- **Emotional regulation:** At all times try to manage your own emotions -- maybe take a deep breath -- and don't become involved in a 'conflict spiral'. Situations are rarely personal
- **Clear communication:** Name the inappropriate behaviour; express clearly the desired behaviour -- calmly, confidently and assertively
- **Language of choice:** Put the responsibility/ownership of behaviour with the child
- **Remain calm:** The ability to try and remain calm and appear relaxed is less likely to provoke
- **Calm stance:** Think of the values of stepping back from a situation, both physically and emotionally
- **Awareness of space:** Try to be aware of the space around you and avoid stepping into another individual's personal/intimate space
- **Intonation:** When people are anxious or angry they tend to talk faster, higher and more loudly. In a crisis situation staff should deliberately speak slower, lower and more quietly

Help Script Approach

Particularly useful when addressing an agitated child:

- Connect by using the child's name
- Recognise the feelings -- "I can see you are upset"
- "I'm here to help"
- Give direction but not promises

Diffusing Body Language Responses

- Social distance
- Sideways stance, step back
- Intermittent eye contact
- Relaxed body posture
- Palms open

Deciding Whether to Use Reasonable Force

Under English law, members of staff are empowered to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from or stop them continuing:

- Committing any offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself)
- Injury or risk of injury to another child

- Injury or risk of injury to a member of staff
- Serious damage to property
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise

All members of staff will make decisions about when, how and why to use reasonable force. To help staff in making decisions about using reasonable force the following considerations may be useful:

- Whether the consequences of not intervening would have seriously endangered the wellbeing of a person
- Whether the consequences of not intervening would have caused serious and significant damage to property
- Whether the chance of achieving the desired outcome in a non-physical way was low
- The age, size, gender, developmental maturity of the persons involved

Staff are also expected to remember that physical intervention is only one option and for behaviours involving extreme levels of risk it may be more appropriate to gain support from other agencies, including the police.

All staff owe a duty of care to children. To take no action, where the outcome is that a child injures him/herself, or another, including staff, could be seen as negligence.

Staff will only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved by **not** using force.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments are required for pupils who exhibit extreme challenging behaviour. Where a child habitually exhibits challenging behaviour, the school will work with the LA Targeted Support Service to write appropriate risk assessments. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate triggers and reactions.

When considering a pupil's behaviour, staff will think about the following questions:

- Can we anticipate a Health and Safety risk related to this pupil's behaviour?
- Have we got all the information we need to conduct a risk assessment?
- Have we provided a written plan as a result?
- What further steps can we take to prevent dangerous behaviour from developing?

All pupils who have been identified as presenting a risk should have an individual risk assessment. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any particular responses which are not recommended. Any particular physical techniques which have been found to be effective should be named, along with any alerts to any which have proved to be ineffective or which caused problems in the past.

These plans should be considered along with the child's EHCP/SEND need and any other planning document relevant to the pupil. They should take account of age, gender, level of physical, emotional and cognitive development, special needs and social context.

Staff will be kept informed and have a duty to inform others about the plans around specific pupils who can present risks to themselves and others. This may include information about SEN, personal circumstance and temporary upset.

Using Reasonable Force

Physical restraint will only be used when there is no realistic alternative. We expect staff to conduct a risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. When using force, members of staff should only use the minimum amount of force required in achieving the required outcome.

Physical restraint must only be in accordance with the following:

- The child should be in immediate danger of harming itself or another person or in danger of seriously damaging property
- The member of staff should have good grounds for believing there is an imminent risk or danger
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied
- Every effort should be made to secure the presence of other staff before physical intervention. These staff can act as assistants or witnesses
- Once safe, restraint should be relaxed to allow the child to regain self-control
- Restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment
- Physical restraint should not usually be used purely to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no immediate danger present to people and property
- The restraint should be discussed with the child, if appropriate, and the parents at the earliest opportunity
- During intervention, staff should speak calmly as a way of reassurance e.g. "I am doing this to keep you safe"

Types of Intervention That May Be Appropriate

- Any holding tactic in which a child is held without injury until he/she calms down
- Physical contact with a child designed to control the child's movements which pose a danger (e.g. holding by the arms against the side of the body). Standing by the side of the child is likely to minimise the risk to adult and child
- The holding of a child's arms or legs to prevent/restrict striking/kicking
- The use of sufficient physical force - without causing injury - to remove a weapon/dangerous object from a child's grasp
- Physically preventing a child from exposing themselves to possible danger by leaving the premises

The member of staff should talk to the child calmly and repeatedly that he/she could stop the restraint by applying self-control. The child should be released from restraint as soon as is safely possible. Release must always be carried out in a planned and controlled way.

Staff should, where possible, avoid any type of intervention that is likely to injure a pupil, unless in the most extreme of circumstance where there was no viable alternative.

Team Teach Training CPD

The Team Teach system is recognised by the Local Authority and accredited through BILD -- British Institute of Learning Disabilities. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have completed the course led by qualified trainers.

Staff at Sparken Hill Academy who have been identified as needing training in this area will access:

- Team Teach Physical Intervention training
- CRB training (Coping with Risky Behaviours) through the County Council coordinator who delivers certified courses

These courses provide participants with an insight into recent legislation and guidance that could impact on policy and practice, as well as a range of physical and non-physical strategies to help manage the risks posed by children and young people's behaviour.

Staff who receive this training will be certified and will be expected to complete refresher courses:

- Team Teach certified staff: refresher courses every two years
- CRB certified staff: refresher courses every 12-15 months

Although any member of staff may be required to physically intervene with a pupil who is endangering themselves or others, trained individuals should take over as soon as possible.

Training programmes will be delivered to staff via whole school inset or by accessing specialist training events.

Recording and Reporting Incidents

All incidences will be reported via CPOMS.

The record must be made as soon as practicable after the incident. While ultimately only a court of law could decide what is 'significant' in a particular case, in deciding whether or not an incident must be reported, staff should take into account:

- An incident where unreasonable use of force is used on a pupil would always be a significant incident
- Any incident where substantial force has been used (e.g. physically pushing a pupil out of a room) would be significant
- The use of a restraint technique is significant
- An incident where a child was very distressed (though clearly not over reacting) would be significant

In determining whether incidents are significant, schools should consider:

- The pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time
- The degree of force used and whether it was proportionate in relation to the behaviour
- The effect on the pupil or member of staff
- The age of the child, any special education need or disability or other social factors which might be relevant

Records are important in providing evidence of defensible decision-making in case of a subsequent complaint or investigation. Staff may find it helpful to seek the advice of a senior colleague or a representative of their trade union when compiling a report.

Where a staff member has been injured, Sparken Hill Academy will use the Nottinghamshire County Council electronic health and safety recording system 'Well-Worker'. This system enables members of staff to report, using a standardised format, any significant incident where force has been used, or any incident where violence to staff has occurred or been threatened. Staff can access Well Worker via Schools Portal. Additionally, an internal "Physical Restraint" form is completed (see school website) which provides an internal log.

The governing body will ensure that a procedure is in place, and is followed by staff, for recording and reporting significant incidents where a member of staff has used reasonable force on a pupil.

Post-incident Support

Following the use of physical intervention staff and pupils will be supported, the immediate physical needs of all parties will be met and staff will ensure that positive relationships are maintained.

Post-incident procedures should include:

- **De-escalation:** How the incident was resolved and de-escalated
- **Physical check:** Recording any injuries to staff or pupils sustained during the incident
- **Emotional support:** Ensuring all involved were physically and emotionally well
- **Pupil voice:** Recording the pupil's views on the incident
- **Learning outcomes:** What learning has taken place following the incident and what will be done differently to avoid recurrence

Complaints and Allegations

We will make clear to pupils that they have a right, and are able, to question/complain about the use of reasonable force. We will ensure that mechanisms are in place for pupils, parents, carers and staff to voice their opinions, comments or concerns.

Every complaint is a matter of concern to the school and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness. We have a staged approach to dealing with complaints, including speaking to various stakeholders in the first instance to resolve any issues or concerns they may have.

For further information, please see our complaints procedure/policy.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed by the governing body at least annually or as required.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy and Mrs Sue Sparks is the Link Governor, who also has responsibility in this area.