

Seva Education



Physical Intervention Policy

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The Use of Restraint / Physical Interventions

Introduction

All students who attend Seva School and FE College have an EHCP, and many of our students can present with challenging behaviour that may necessitate the use of restraint or physical intervention to prevent injury, damage to property, or the breakdown of discipline.

Physical interventions, restraints or the use of reasonable force, are a safeguard, not a sanction. The purpose of any physical contact is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the person being held, along with anybody else whose welfare is threatened.

This policy has been written with reference to the following documents:

- Behaviour in Schools - 2024
- DfE Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools, Guidance for schools in England – February 2025
- Positive environments where children can flourish - A guide for inspectors about physical intervention and restrictions of liberty - 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - 2024
- Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention – DfE 2019

Terminology

This policy will use the following definitions which are taken from the DfE document 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools'.

Reasonable force: Physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions/movements. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Any use of reasonable force is an example of a restrictive intervention and may or may not involve the use of restraint.

Restrictive interventions: Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. Restrictive interventions may include use of equipment, medication or seclusion. Restrictive interventions may or may not involve the use of reasonable force.

Restraint: A form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force where the intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a pupil. Restraint may also include mechanical or chemical restraint. Restraint may or may not involve the use of force.

As noted within the definitions, these terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories. For example, depending on the circumstances, if two members of staff briefly physically pull apart two pupils who are fighting, all three definitions could be relevant.

Deciding whether to use a Physical Intervention

All staff should work positively and confidently with children and find the least intrusive way possible to support, empower and keep children safe. The foundation of good practice in working with children should be:

- building relationships of trust and understanding
- understanding triggers and finding solutions
- if incidents do occur, defusing the situation and / or distracting the child wherever possible

Restraint should be used as a **last resort**. However, sometimes the last resort may become the first resort depending upon the circumstances.

School staff are able to use **such force as is reasonable in the circumstances** to prevent a child from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing any offence (or for a child under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil)
- Causing personal injury to another person
- Causing injury to the themself
- Damaging property
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any children receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise (Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 93)

In Seva this translates as:

- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Who can restrain?

All members of Seva Education School staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances. The staff to which this power applies are defined in section 95 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. As defined in the Act, this power may be used where the pupil is on Seva's premises, or elsewhere, in the lawful control or charge of the staff member (for example on a school visit).

They are:

- Any teacher who works at the school or college, and
- Any other person whom the Executive Headteacher has authorised to have control or charge of pupils. At Seva Education this includes support staff such as teaching assistants, sports coaches and office staff.
- At Seva Education the following are **not** authorised to hold children - unpaid volunteers, visitors, and students.

All staff and volunteers will have the Behaviour Policy and Physical Intervention Policy shared with them as part of their induction process. Staff will be required to sign to say they have understood the policy. Staff will also be adequately trained in the safe and lawful use of reasonable force.

The Last Resort Principle

Physical Intervention should only be used when all the other reasonable methods of managing the above situations have been tried. This does not mean that we always expect people to methodically work their way through a series of failing strategies, before attempting an intervention in which they have some confidence. Nor does it mean always waiting until the danger is imminent, by which time the prospect of safely managing it may be significantly reduced. National guidance is clear on this point.

It does mean that we expect staff to conduct a dynamic risk assessment and choose the safest alternative. It also means that we expect staff to think creatively about any alternatives to physical intervention which may be effective.

Help Protocols

The expectation at Seva Education is that all staff will support each other. This means that staff always offer help and always accept it. Help does not always mean taking over. It may mean just staying around in case you are needed, getting somebody else or looking after somebody else's group. Supporting a colleague does not only mean agreeing with their suggestions and offering sympathy when things go wrong. Real support sometimes means acting as a critical friend to help colleagues become aware of possible alternative strategies.

All staff and authorised adults are expected to support one another; this includes if a member of staff feels that another member of staff needs to adjust a physical intervention/hold during the time of intervention, or if they are observing it occurring and feel adjustment is needed.

It is equally important for staff to actively support each other and not observe or walk on by, without checking in with other staff present.

At Seva Education we will say "Help's available" or ask "Do you need any support?" when offering support.

A member of staff may also say "More help's needed" when they feel that a change of adult is necessary. The member of staff will then take over and explain their actions later – away from the child.

Well Chosen Words

A well-chosen word can sometimes avert a crisis. When pupils are becoming angry there is no point in getting into a confrontation. Telling people to calm down can actually aggravate the situation. Pointing out what they have done wrong can make things worse. It is better to say nothing and take time to choose your words carefully than to say the wrong thing and provoke a further escalation.

Personal Learning Plans (PLPs)

Risk management is regarded as an integral part of behaviour management planning. All children have a Personal Learning Plan at Seva, linked to the Emotional Zones of Regulation. The plan details any strategies which have been found to be effective for that individual, along with any responses which are not recommended. If particular physical techniques have been found to be effective they should be named, along with alerts to any which have not proved effective or which caused problems in the past. These plans should be considered alongside the EHCP and other documents which relate to the pupil. They should take account of age, sex, level of physical, emotional and intellectual development, special needs and social context.

It is important to take account of developmental changes, such as the onset of puberty and menstruation. Gradual changes, such as the child getting bigger, can happen so slowly that staff fail to notice that long-standing practices are becoming inappropriate. These changes should be noted in the Personal Learning Plans.

Older children should be encouraged to contribute to their plan where appropriate.

Personal Learning Plans are reviewed on an ongoing basis, with a minimum update carried out each term. Personal Learning Plans will be shared with Parents / Carers at least annually.

Proactive and Appropriate Physical Interventions/Touch

It is sometimes reasonable to use physical controls to prevent extreme behaviour from becoming dangerous provided that it is an agreed part of a Physical Intervention Plan. Examples of this are where a pupil has shown ritual patterns of behaviour, which in the past have led to the child becoming more distressed and violent, or hurting themselves. In such circumstances it may be reasonable to withdraw the child to a safer place when the pattern of behaviour begins, rather than wait until the child is distressed and out of control. The paramount consideration is that the action is taken in the **best interest of the child or young adult** and that it reduces, rather than increases risk.

Appropriate to the circumstances, physical intervention may also be used to teach, reassure, guide, de-escalate, or comfort a child or young adult.

For example:

- A child who is visually impaired may need support to put a jumper on or take a jumper off.
- A child who has poor muscle tone and finger control may have difficulty undoing/doing buttons up on a dress or trousers after going to the toilet.

- A child who has had an accident e.g. sprain may need to be moved/supported to a comfortable position.
- Giving a child a side hug who is wanting nurture/comfort because of a trauma/event that has occurred in their life.

It is important to relieve distress, reduce anxiety and act in loco parentis to reduce any escalation in behaviours and any potential consequences.

Staff are advised not to be on their own and be in the presence of another colleague to reduce any potential allegations relating to physical interventions.

Reasonable and Proportionate

Any response to extreme behaviour should be reasonable and proportionate. 'Reasonable' is the minimum force needed to avert injury or damage to property or to prevent a breakdown of discipline, applied for the shortest period of time.

Staff must not react in anger. If they feel they are becoming angry they should consider withdrawing to allow someone else to deal with the situation. Where staff act in good faith, and their actions are reasonable and proportionate they will be supported.

When physical controls are considered staff should think about the answers to the following questions:

- How is this in the best interest of the pupil?
- Why is a less intrusive intervention not preferable?
- Why do we have to act now?
- Why am I the best person to be doing this?
- Why is this absolutely necessary?

If staff can answer these questions it is more likely that a physical intervention will be judged to be reasonable and proportionate.

Unreasonable use of force

It is not reasonable to use force simply to enforce compliance in circumstances where there is no risk. Nor is it reasonable to use any more force than is necessary to achieve a reduction in risk. Under no circumstances should pain be deliberately inflicted or should pupils be deliberately subjected to undignified or humiliating treatment (this should not be confused with the unavoidable discomfort associated with some approved techniques for disengaging from assaults such as bites and grabs).

Seclusion

Force should never be used to keep a pupil secluded (locked in a room on their own). Seclusion is only lawful by specific court order and cannot become part of a planned strategy at this school.

Children are not allowed to be put in a room with an adult on the outside. Whenever children need time away from class they will always be supervised by adults in the same room.

If a child takes themselves to a room and closes the door then an adult must supervise to ensure that the child is kept safe and enter the room when it is felt that it would be safe for the child and adult or to prevent the child from hurting themselves.

Health and Safety

If dangerous behaviour presents a significant risk of injury to people, there is a legal Health and Safety issue to be addressed. Dangerous occurrences should be reported to the Executive Headteacher. We all have a shared responsibility to identify risk, communicate potential risks and take active steps to reduce risk wherever possible. We recognise that it is not possible to entirely remove risk.

As a minimum requirement, in order to comply with Health and Safety legislation, each employee has a responsibility to ensure that they are conversant with school policy and guidance, and to cooperate to make the school safer. It is also a requirement that they participate in training if they are directed to do so.

Risk Assessment

Dynamic risk assessments should be a routine part of life for staff working with pupils who may exhibit extreme behaviour. Responsible staff should think ahead to anticipate what might go wrong. If a proposed activity or course of action involves unacceptable risk the correct decision is to do something else.

Factors which might influence a more immediate risk assessment, and therefore a decision about how to intervene, might include the state of health and fitness of the staff member, their physical stature, competence, confidence and relationships with the pupils concerned. Other than in an emergency, staff should only attempt physical controls when they are confident that such action will result in a reduction of risk.

Where children require strategies beyond the usual scope of the school a separate risk assessment will be devised and this will be sent to the Local Authority. e.g. if a child requires holds not taught in Team-Teach.

Getting Help

In an emergency a message will be sent to the Executive Headteacher, other senior member of staff, or the office. Help will then be organised and deployed within the school. When support is needed staff can use the school radios to request help.

Responding to Unforeseen Emergencies

Even the best planning systems cannot cover every eventuality and the school recognises that there are unforeseen or emergency situations in which staff have to think on their

feet. It is not enough to thoughtlessly apply rules without thinking through the likely consequences.

Whenever a physical intervention has to be made there should be a verbal warning if appropriate. Where possible staff should always attempt to use diversion or diffusion in preference to physical interventions.

The Post Incident Support Structure for Pupils and Staff

Following a serious incident, it is the policy of this school to offer support for all involved. People take time to recover from a serious incident. Until the incident has subsided the only priority is to reduce risk and calm the situation down. Staff should avoid saying or doing anything which could inflame the situation during the recovery phase.

Immediate action should be taken to ensure medical help is sought if there are any injuries which require more than basic first aid. Any injuries should be reported on CPOMS and on a First Aid slip completed by a First Aider. It is important to note that injury in itself is not evidence of malpractice.

Time needs to be taken to repair relationships. When careful steps are taken to repair relationships a serious incident does not necessarily result in long term damage.

Time needs to be given to following up incidents so that children have an opportunity to express their feelings, suggest alternative courses of action for the future and appreciate other people's perspective.

Both adults and children may need time to recover and rest or regain composure before returning to class.

Prohibited forms of Restraint or Holding

Corporal punishment (or the threat of it), any act or threat of an act, such as hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, prodding, poking, throwing an object, rough handling etc. which causes or threatens harm or the expectation of harm to a pupil is forbidden and could lead to disciplinary action against staff.

Children should never be held face down or in a supine hold.

Complaints

It is not uncommon for pupils to make allegations of inappropriate or excessive use of force following an incident. Any marks of injury on a child should be noted in CPOMS and any such allegations should be reported to a DSL.

The school has a formal complaints procedure. The complaints policy applies equally to staff. We are an open school and promote transparent policy and practice in order to protect the interests of pupils and staff alike. Any staff concerns regarding the welfare of children should be taken to the designated person for Child Protection (DSL).

Training

Staff should only use the techniques and methods approved for use in this school (Team Teach methods).

Teachers and anyone authorised by the Executive Headteacher who are expected to use planned physical techniques will be trained. This school has adopted the Team Teach method for Physical Intervention. All training courses have been fully accredited in accordance with DfE and Department of Health guidance. Physical Intervention training is always provided by qualified instructors within rigorous guidelines.

The level of training recommended is related to the level of risk faced by members of staff. Our preferred approach is for whole staff training. The level of training required is kept under review and may change in response to the needs of our children.

Currently all staff who may need to physically intervene/restrain are trained initially for 12 hours, over 2 days and thereafter for 6 hours refresher training every year.

New staff will be trained in basic holds by the in-house trainer as soon as is practical after starting but will not be accredited until trained within the cycle of training.

Recording

Whenever physical intervention/restraint is used the incident must be reported to the Executive Headteacher, or another senior leader, on the day.

Schools should record the following details as a minimum:

- names of pupil and staff directly involved
- any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code
- time, date, location and approximate length of time the intervention was used
- brief account of the incident, including what led up to the incident, identified or potential triggers if known, any preventative or de-escalation strategies used, what type of reasonable force was applied, the degree of force, and details of physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance
- any post-incident support, such as details of any medical treatment for injuries or other adverse impacts

Schools may also wish to record additional details to support their evaluation of incidents to identify best practices and areas for improvement. For example, the pupil's and/or witnesses' accounts of what happened, when and how parents were notified, and what follow-up has taken place.

Staff need to follow the system of reporting verbal headline information of the PI on the day of the event to the Executive Headteacher, or other senior leader, and then recording the physical intervention incident by logging it on CPOMS once all of the facts have been established.

The incident report form needs to be filled in on CPOMS before staff leave at the end of the day, but at the latest the end of the next day on returning to work when everybody is present and has had the opportunity to communicate about what led up to the event, the event itself and then the action taken that resulted in the PI. All parties should agree with the PI report facts and if there is any disagreement with the facts then this needs to be

noted in the account with a reason as to why and who disagrees. This is for transparency of information.

All staff involved must read through the report form and agree it before logging it on CPOMS as one incident. This avoids any confusion at a later stage about events and avoids potential allegations being made against staff.

During the time of the PI if a member of staff has a concern about a hold/or any form of physical contact/ or if they see any PI being undertaken that in their perception needs addressing then that member of staff who has the concern should speak directly at the time to that other member of staff. This is to offer support, guidance and re-correction. This is very important to avoid any false allegations/ interpretations of events towards staff, and also provides staff with confidence that another member of staff who has a different viewpoint is expected to make that known at an early stage of events.

A follow-up, at an appropriate time, with the child is important, along with informing the parent after the PI has taken place.

Parents/carers **must** be notified by email, and followed up with a phone call if necessary, if their child has been restrained. If a member of staff feels that a child's welfare will be compromised they should seek advice from the Executive Headteacher or DSL.

Staff should report the following (in line with Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools) to parents and carers and should include the following details as a minimum:

- time, date, location and approximate length of time the force was used
- brief account of what type of reasonable force was applied, and the degree of force
- details of any physical injuries sustained, if applicable
- brief account of why the use of force was assessed as necessary in that instance

It is a working reality that children and adults may get hurt in restraint. Any known injuries, including scratches and marks, should be reported to the Executive Headteacher or other senior leader and in the report on CPOMS. Injuries to children should also be reported to parents where known. Staff should check visually and/or verbally with the child after a restraint to ascertain if any injuries have occurred and need to have this verified by another adult.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Incidents

The Executive Headteacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed and instigate further action if required. CPOMS can be opened, and hard copies printed for external monitoring and evaluation.

The school administration team will collate all the information on physical intervention/restraint providing clear data on the number of restraints for each child and any trends. Data will initially be analysed by the school's senior leaders and trends or concerns presented in weekly Attendance and Safeguarding Meetings. This data may be used to decide on whole school issues, to provide an indication of individual improvement or deteriorating behaviour, and to provide evidence when involving outside agencies.

The information gathered is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and by the Governing Body.

Parents and Carers

The policy on physical intervention/restraint is available to parents and carers electronically and/or in hard copy on request. It is shared, alongside the behaviour policy, on entry to the school.

Where there are concerns raised by either the school or home, a meeting will be held to discuss and resolve the issue.