

MANOR SCHOOL POLICY ON THE USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN PUPILS

INTRODUCTION

This policy is based on guidance outlined in Circular 99/8 and the 2002 DfES guidance which clarify the position regarding the use of physical force by teachers and other staff working in schools, to control or restrain pupils. Staff should also refer to the whole school behaviour policy on behaviour and discipline.

Purpose of the Policy

The school believes that good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the safety and well being of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- (i) Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- (ii) Are provided with appropriate advice to deal with these difficult situations.

Any intervention must be in the paramount interests of the child and or used to prevent behaviour that is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline in the school.

Staff have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Physical intervention will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff, good order or property are at risk, but should be reasonable and proportionate.

Physical Contact

There are situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, e.g. in P.E. or in the supervision of children. It may also be appropriate to place a very young child on the knee of an adult if the child is very distressed or ill. At all times members of staff will act as a responsible parent would.

Physical Intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

Restrictive Physical Intervention

This will involve the use of physical intervention/reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or risk of significant damage to property. All such incidents will be recorded on the Record of Restraint/Physical Intervention Form. A copy of this is to be placed in the pupils' file, another copy in the Restraint/Serious Incident File in school.

Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- Recognition of their unique identity;
- Be treated with respect and dignity;
- Learn and work in a safe environment;
- Be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school and their parents have a right to:

- Individual consideration of pupil needs by staff who have a responsibility for their care and protection;
- Expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- Be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school;
- Be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

The school will do all they can to ensure that pupils understand the need for and respond to clearly defined limits which govern behaviour in the school.

We rely on the support of parents to ensure the good behaviour of their child and that he/she understands and follows the school's Behaviour Policy.

Staff Authorised to Use Restrictive Physical Intervention

By reason of their conditions of service, the Headteacher can authorise all teachers to use restrictive physical intervention. All Classroom Assistants may also be authorised to use restrictive physical intervention.

Authorisation is not given to volunteers or parents.

Staff working as a team will create:

- A calm, secure atmosphere throughout school and use consistent approaches;
- Opportunities for pupils to earn praise/rewards. It is important to praise good behaviour as often as possible:
- Opportunities to identify problem behaviour or triggers in order to avoid creating further difficulties i.e. by anticipating behaviour before it occurs;
- Awareness of pupil behaviour so that attention seeking behaviour is seen but ignored where it is safe to do so;
- Opportunities for discussion with the pupil where discussion can take place in order to set targets designed to deal with the difficult or attention seeking behaviour;
- Opportunities for explanation of the action/consequences to the pupil;
- Opportunities for regular contact with parents /carers to share plans and spread the strategies over a 24-hour period. Parents/carers must be involved in a behaviour programme which has indicated that restraint may be needed and informed if the physical intervention of their child has taken place.
- Liaise with outside agencies for support and involvement in the programme to ensure that joined up approaches are in place.

Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment. Where unacceptable behaviour threatens good order and discipline and requires intervention, some or all of the following approaches should be taken according to the circumstances of the incident:

1. Meet the pupil's needs.
2. Range of positive behaviour strategies (rule reminders, positively phrased reprimands).
3. Encourage the pupil to make positive choices and develop self-control.
4. Verbal acknowledgement of unacceptable behaviour with a direction to the pupil to refrain.
5. Further verbal reprimand stating,
 - this is the second request for compliance;
 - provide an explanation of why observed behaviour is unacceptable;
 - an explanation of what will happen if the unacceptable behaviour continues.
6. Warning of intention to intervene physically and that this will cease when the pupil complies. If possible summon assistance.

7. Physical intervention - reasonable force using the minimum degree of force necessary to prevent a child harming him or herself, others or property.

Types of Incidents Where Physical Intervention May Be Required

The incidents described in Circular 99/9 and Department of Education 2002 fall into three broad categories:

- (a) Action due to imminent risk of injury;
- (b) Action due to developing risk of injury or significant damage to property;
- (c) Action where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

Examples of situations which fall into one of the first two categories are:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil;
- Pupils are fighting;
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- A pupil is causing, or is at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by mis-use of dangerous materials or objects;
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which he or she might cause an accident or injury to himself, herself or to others;
- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB. this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations which fall into the third category are:

- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an instruction to leave a classroom;
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

At all times the School's Behaviour Policy will be followed which itemises rewards and sanctions that result from behaviour choices that pupils make.

Acceptable Measures of Physical Intervention

The use of any degree of force can only be deemed reasonable if:

- (a) It is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident;
- (b) It is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is intended to prevent;
- (c) It is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result;
- (d) The age, level of understanding and gender of the pupil are taken into account;
- (e) It is likely to achieve the desired result.

Wherever possible assistance will be sought from another member of staff before intervening.

Physical intervention uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming himself, herself, others or property

Any such measures will be most effective in the context of the overall ethos of the school, the way in which staff exercise their responsibilities and the behaviour management strategies used.

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy about reasonable force and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them. Any complaints received by the Headteacher from parents, staff or any other persons regarding alleged ill treatment of pupils or injuries received by a student during the course of physical intervention must be investigated fully by the Headteacher.

The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints.

Children who have been subject to physical intervention will be given the opportunity to discuss the incident with a member of staff at the first reasonable opportunity following the incident. Such discussions will offer pupils and school fresh opportunities to work together and to renew relationships that may be strained by the incident. Pupils will be informed of ways in which their behaviour could change in order to prevent a repetition of the incident.

It is particularly important that this is done properly to increase the chances of pupils learning from the experience .

Parents may not request that individual pupils be exempt from physical intervention, as outlined in the policy, as this policy will be implemented on health and safety grounds.

Preferred Practice

DO...

- Wherever possible plan appropriate positive intervention and involve parents, carers and colleagues.
- Know the procedures within the school's guidelines for the use of physical restraint. A copy of these are available from the Headteacher's office. Discuss these with a senior member of staff if you are unsure of any point.
- Be aware of pupils who have been physically restrained before and what happened.
- Send for adult help early if things get out of hand and restraint seems likely.
- Assess the situation before acting.
- Stay calm – do not over-react.
- Use minimum restraint for minimum time until the situation is calm.
- Report the incident to the headteacher or senior member of staff as soon as possible and complete a report form.
- Consult your Line Manager, Professional Association or Trade Union if you have any concerns.
- Remember your professional obligations to all pupils in your care.

DO NOT...

- Place yourself at risk : do not attempt to restrain a pupil who obviously carries a 'weapon'.
- Attempt to restrain a pupil when you have lost your temper.
- Allow the situation to get out of hand.
- Use unreasonable force.
- Place yourself at risk of false allegation : avoid being alone with any pupil.

