



7.3 Physical restraint and intervention of children in our care

Policy Statement

Here at Woodlands, we believe that children need to be safe, know how to behave, and know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. For a very small minority of children only will the use of physical restraint be needed, and, on such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used.

Woodlands operates an Achieving Positive Behaviour Policy (7.1 in our policy folder). It is our aim to establish good behaviour from our children in a caring and supportive environment where the welfare of the children is paramount, the policy encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures to be followed in situations where restrictive physical intervention is use by a member of staff towards a child.

Induction

Physical intervention is where practitioners use reasonable force to prevent children from injuring themselves or others, or damaging property

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014

On occasions it may be necessary for staff to use physical intervention/restraint for the following reasons -

- When there is immediate danger of personal injury to the child
- When there is immediate danger of injury to another person
- To avoid damage to property
- When a child is behaving in a way to cause serious disruption to other children

Definition:

There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. However, there are two relevant considerations:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it.
- The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent

Physical intervention - is any method of physically intervening to resolve a difficult, Violent or dangerous situation, and is not necessarily physical restraint.

Physical restraint - is defined as when a member of staff uses force with the intention of restricting a young person’s movement against their will, lifting and carrying a child is also classed as physical restraint.

What do we mean by physical intervention?

Physical intervention in our setting used by staff can take several forms. It could include:

- Physically interposing oneself between children
- Blocking a child’s path
- Leading a child by the hand
- Holding
- Removing shoes if child has kicked or attempted to kick person or equipment
- Placing a child in the quite corner.
- Restricting space with an adult supervising

Physical intervention/restraint should be used as last resort to support children in times of crisis. Restraint should be avoided wherever possible. Other methods (such as defusing conflict, non-physical calming, etc) of managing the situation should always be tried first, unless this is impractical.

Staff will use only the minimum force that is needed to restore safety or appropriate behaviour, and will take account of the age and understanding of the child.

Acceptable Forms of Physical Restraint/Intervention

Following are the acceptable forms of physical restraint and intervention that may be required to be used,

- Leading or guiding a child by the hand or arm, or shepherding them with a hand in the centre of the back
- Holding a child who has lost control until they are calm and safe
- Physically moving between and separating two children
- Blocking a child's pathway
- Using reasonable force to remove a tool that may be used in a dangerous manner from a child's grasp
- Where there is immediate risk of injury, any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force' – i.e. to prevent a child running into a busy road or hitting or hurting someone

In all situations where physical contact between staff and children takes place, staff must consider the following:

- The child's age and level of understanding
- The child's individual characteristics and history
- The location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present).

However, given the nature of our setting there will be occasions that our staff will work as 'Lone Workers'. Our procedure is laid out in our Managing Allegations Policy.

Unacceptable Forms of Physical Restraint/Intervention

Following list is deemed unacceptable forms of physical restraint/interventions and are potential grounds for disciplinary action for staff.

- Any form of corporal punishment, slapping, punching or kicking
- Holding by the neck or collar, or otherwise restricting the ability to breath
- Holding by the hair or an ear
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a child or holding an arm out at neck or head height to stop them
- Holding a child face down on the ground or sitting on them
- Shutting or locking a child in a room, except in extreme situations whilst summoning support
- Holding down a child during intermate care

Staff at Woodland's MUST avoid touching or holding a child in a way that might be considered indecent. Should, in very rare occurrences, it may be necessary to use physical restraint and intervention, the following procedures will be enforced:

Staff will:

- Where possible remove other children from the area, if this is not possible seek to remove the individual child from the areas always in the supervision of other staff
- Seek help if necessary
- Maintain a calm environment

In all incidents where any form of physical restraint/intervention is used staff will:

- Stay with the child and support them whilst they calm down
- Checks will be made for any injuries and first aid administered as appropriate
- Be given time to recover, where possible with a member of the management team and then debrief
- a written record of the incident on an incident form.

- Inform parents/carers of the restraint and the reasons for doing so and a Physical Intervention plan written if considered necessary.

Staff will also -

- Inform the management team straight away
- All staff involved must complete a full written and signed account of the incident as soon as possible but within 12 hours of the incident taking place.

Risk management

Any child who displays any challenging behaviour should have a risk assessment and a behaviour plan specifying situations most likely to trigger difficulty behaviour. Any strategies (de-fusing techniques most likely to help, agreed with parents/cares and communicated to all staff who work with the child. (This must be reviewed every half term)

Health & safety

The young person's health and safety must always be considered first and monitored at all times. Any restraint must be ceased immediately if significant signs of physical distress are seen. i.e. sudden changes in colour, difficulties in breathing, vomiting.

Staff are not under a duty to run the risk of personal injury, by intervening where it is not safe to do so. If the situation is assessed as being too dangerous, staff should remove other children, retire to a safe distance and call for another member of staff to help.

If a child and his/her parents/carers wish to make a complaint about physical restraint used by a member of staff or other authorised person, they will complain to the manager in the first instance (or to the chairperson if the manager is the subject of the complaint). The incident will then be investigated under the relevant disciplinary procedure.