



7.3 Physical Control of children in our care

Policy Statement

Woodlands operates a 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 purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures to be followed in the rare case of a restrictive physical intervention being used by a member of staff towards a child.

The use of physical intervention/restraint is wherever possible avoided. However, where necessary and appropriate, reasonable force will be used to control or restrain children.

It is our aim to:

- Create a warm, calm and orderly atmosphere that promotes a sense of community
- Achieve a consistent attitude by all staff that gives pupils a sense of security and safety whilst promoting clear expectations on acceptable behaviour
- Ensure that all staff, relevant directors, children, parents/carers understand their roles and responsibility with regard to behaviour management
- Promote the continual development of staff and appropriate documented training necessary

The attitude and behaviour of all staff is essential in creating and maintaining a positive ethos within our setting, the committed team's approach will help provide a positive role model for children where they respect themselves and others.

Definition:

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.

Physical intervention and 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.

The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. Physical restraint should only be considered an option if:

- Calming and defusing strategies have failed to de-escalate the situation
- The response is in the paramount interests of the young person
- Not intervening is likely to result in more dangerous consequences than intervening.

Using force

Before using force staff should, wherever practicable, tell the child to stop misbehaving and communicate in a calm and measured manner throughout the incident. Staff should never give the impression of acting out of anger or frustration or to punish a child, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

Certain types of physical contact to “punish a child or cause pain, injury or humiliation” explicitly forbidden (Educational Act 1996). Examples of this contact would be as follows:

- Kicking, slapping, punching
- Tripping
- Holding child face down to the ground
- Any contact/hold that may restrict breathing/airways
- Forcing limbs against their joint

In all incidents where physical restraint has been used, the following actions must be taken:

- The management team (highest authoritative member of Woodlands) must be informed as soon as possible.
- The management team is responsible for ensuring parents are informed as soon as possible
- Staff involved must complete a written record as soon as possible and always within 12 hours of incident taking place

Risk management

Any child who has needed to be restrained or who has challenging behaviour which might make this necessary 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.