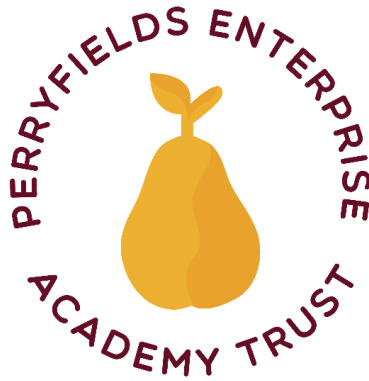


Perryfields Enterprise Academy Trust

Physical Contact and Intervention Policy



Perryfields Enterprise Academy Trust	
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SUMMARY OF CHANGES	
Section	Detail
Front page	Removed wording re-Covid-19 restrictions
Acceptable forms of physical intervention	Additional bullet point re first aid
National Legislation Guidance and Initiatives	Additional link to DfE's guidance on reasonable force in schools

Perryfields Enterprise Academy Trust

Policy on Physical Contact and Restrictive Physical Intervention

Introduction

This policy reflects the values, ethos and philosophy of Perryfields Enterprise Academy Trust (PEAT) in relation to the physical contact and interventions. It provides guidance on the use of physical contact in, everyday routine activities and behaviour management. It should be read in conjunction with the policy on Behaviour Management.

The Policy on Physical Contact and Intervention is a working document and as such it reflects both the practices that are carried out and those to which the school is striving.

The policy is agreed upon by the whole staff and presented to the Trust Board of Directors for adoption by Local Governing Bodies. A copy of the document is available for interested parties.

Rationale

It is acknowledged that within the setting of the school physical contact is both unavoidable and frequently appropriate. As an emergency reactive strategy physical intervention may also be unavoidable due to the complex learning difficulties of learners.

All staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours might be communicating. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

Aims

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To ensure staff are protected from accusations of rough or inappropriate handling by providing clear written guidelines.
- To provide clear, unambiguous guidance for staff working at the school.
- To make clear our practices to parents/carers and other interested parties.

Implementation

All staff and visiting professionals are expected to follow the school's policies and practices relating to physical contact and interventions and it is the duty of all staff to ensure adherence. The Senior Leadership Team in each school should ensure that all staff are aware of specific individual guidelines and programmes.

Equal opportunities

The race, ethnicity and cultural background as well as the interests, strengths and needs of individuals must be considered in deciding on appropriate teaching content and strategies.

Touching and holding learners

Control is only one reason why learners may be touched or held. Physical contact between learners and care giving adults is sometimes necessary. Staff should respond to learners in ways which give appropriate expression of care and to provide comfort when a learner is distressed. However staff should take care that their conduct is not likely to be misinterpreted by the learner or others. The following guiding principles are recommended.

The level and type of contact should reflect the individual, educational, social and medical needs of the learner. Some level of physical contact is likely to occur in all teaching activities as well as in aspects of personal care such as using the toilet, dressing / undressing routines and when administering enteral feeds. The age and gender of the learners and the gender of the staff must be considered in all aspects of privacy and personal care. It is desirable to have staff of the same gender to undertake personal care of an intimate nature, e.g. when using the toilet and changing, with the older learners. However this is not always possible.

When learners initiate a request for physical contact staff should pay due regard to the chronological age of the learner in deciding how to respond. However care must be taken to ensure that their response does not give the learner the feeling that they have been rejected as a person. Some learners may need to be specifically taught about appropriate and inappropriate touch.

When physical expression of affection is appropriate it should be given in the company of other people.

Acceptable forms of physical intervention

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons, for example:

- to comfort a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age);
- to gently direct a pupil;
- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc);
- in an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils;
- in rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted.
- to administer first aid

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

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

Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participants neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular pupil. (Should a pupil appear to enjoy physical contact this must not be sought via Restrictive Physical Intervention.)

Control and direction through physical contact

Often a learner can be held in a way that does not constitute restraint, in order to ensure their safety and welfare. For example, when crossing, or walking alongside a road, or when using physical contact such as an arm around the shoulder to guide someone back to their seat. The difference between physical control through touch (sometimes referred to as touch control) and restraint is, the degree of force used, the intention behind the action and the way it is perceived by others.

Physical intervention

Physical intervention is the positive use of reasonable force (no more force than is needed) in order to avert danger by preventing or deflecting a learner's actions, or by removing an object that can be used to cause harm. Force is usually used to control or restrain. Control is passive physical contact whereas a restraint is holding using force. All members of staff at Perryfields Junior School should ensure the use of force is reasonable, proportionate, necessary and no more force than is necessary is used.

Careful consideration and planning is required to prevent the repeated or over use of physical interventions. Any Physical Interventions used are clearly documented within an individual's Personal and Social Support Strategy and are only to be used as a last resort. In rare cases some physical interventions should be seen as an emergency strategy, used only to keep the learner and others safe at that moment. The incident should then be carefully reviewed and strategies put in place which may include a planned physical intervention.

Staff are expected to engage in physical interventions to prevent injury to, the learner, other learners and adults. The legal framework allows for physical interventions to be used to protect property.

Staff are not expected to routinely use physical interventions to protect all property within the school. The decision whether or not to use physical intervention to protect property will be a matter of professional judgement. All property can be replaced, however it would not be in the learners best interest if they were encouraged to think that their behaviour was acceptable due to non-intervention by staff.

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.

The definition of physical force also includes the use of mechanical devices (e.g. splints on the pupil prescribed by medical colleagues to prevent self-injury), forcible seclusion or use of locked doors. It is important for staff to note that, although no physical contact may be made in the latter situations, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

Please note the following directions.

- Physical interventions should only be used when there is no safe alternative.
- If there is the need to plan to use physical interventions this must be written into an individual's personal and social support strategy.
- Every incident of physical restraint must be written up and shared with a member of the Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible.
- Whenever possible there should be at least two members of staff present if physical interventions are used.
- Staff must only use strategies that they have been trained in. These strategies are designed to minimise the risk of injuring or causing any pain to the learner.
- Staff will regularly need to use their professional judgement e.g. it is appropriate to lift a young small child from the floor and guide them back to where they should be but the same action with an older / bigger learner would put all involved at risk of injury.
- The following actions are never acceptable, slapping, pinching, shaking, squeezing, pulling hair, poking, pushing.
- Controlling or guiding a learner's actions by holding their clothing is only ever acceptable for the briefest period of time in order to prevent injury, e.g. if a learner suddenly attempts to run into the road. The hold should be changed as soon as possible.
- It is never acceptable to physically restrain a learner who is experiencing difficulties with their behaviour, by the use of specialist seating equipment or other specialist equipment unless this has first

been agreed by parents/carers and the Senior Leadership Team, e.g. some learners have harnesses that do restrict freedom of movement when being transported and this is for their safety.

- In some circumstances, it is acceptable to use a buggy or wheelchair off site, which has been supplied by home, for an ambulant learner who is happy to travel in such a way. This is to enable them to access the community safely. This should always be checked with a member of the Senior Leadership Team first.
- It is acceptable to restrict a learner's liberty by preventing them from leaving the school site, in order to protect their safety. Learners have free access to classes and most communal areas, e.g. Library, Music Room. Access to rooms which may present a safety risk if the learner was alone are restricted, e.g. Cookery room, Kitchen.
- Staff are not expected to accept being repeatedly hit or kicked by a learner and should always consider if moving away would stop the behaviour or a physical intervention be used. It would not be in the learners best interest if they were encouraged to think it was okay to repeatedly hit an individual due to non-intervention by staff.
- Staff should not physically intervene or verbally respond to spitting. (DFES Circular 10/98)

Preventing the need to use physical interventions

Physical interventions should only ever be used as a last resort. A positive approach to working with learners who exhibit challenging behaviour is necessary. (See Policy on Behaviour Management).

A range of strategies are used to prevent escalation in difficult situations and every effort is made to use a variety of calming techniques when a learner is showing signs of presenting known problematic behaviours.

Developing a Positive Handling Plan

If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This Plan will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing. The plan will include:

- involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why.
- a risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens .
- a record to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used.
- techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used.
- identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil.
- ensuring a system to summon additional support.
- take medical advice about the safest way to hold a child with specific medical needs.

Physical measures of control

If a learner's behaviour frequently puts themselves or others at risk of injury an individual programme must be devised that clearly states the planned interventions. These programmes are shared with parents / carers and regularly reviewed. Physical interventions remain a last resort where possible.

During and after any incident involving the use of physical interventions the safety of the learner is paramount. If there are any concerns regarding the possibility of injury, medical assistance must be sought. As soon as possible following an incident it must be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and recorded in writing.

Support for staff and learners

It is recognised that any incident of a severity that requires any physical intervention will be distressing for all staff involved. Even when alternative strategies avoid the need to use physical interventions staff can be placed in very stressful situations including those that involve attacks upon their person. It is acknowledged that different people require different forms of support.

Staff are encouraged to speak to another member of staff as soon as possible after the incident if they feel it would be helpful and certainly before leaving school for the day. Staff may need time away from a learner who has extremely challenging behaviour and should feel able to make this need known. They may request or be required to review and reflect on the incident with a designated member of staff as indicated on the Incident Report Form. The Senior Leadership Team must be kept well informed in order to monitor and evaluate strategies or institute strategies for an individual.

Wherever possible the young person(s) involved in the incident should have the opportunity to review and reflect at an appropriate time afterwards.

Training for staff

All staff working with learners are trained in line with guidelines on the use of physical intervention and restrictive physical interventions. (Essex STEPS) Specialists within and from outside the school provide training and advice to school staff.

All staff working with the learners are trained in Moving and Handling on an annual whole school and individual basis according to need.

Positive approaches to working with people with learning difficulties and challenging behaviour.

The possible use of any physical interventions should be viewed in the light of the school's behaviour management policy and practices.

Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

- Behaviours which cause concern and need to be monitored should be recorded on a Monitoring of Behaviour form (available in the staffroom).
- All incidents of behaviour which put the learner or others at risk of injury or cause injury must be recorded on an incident report form (copies available in the staff room). Any use of physical interventions must also be recorded on the school incident report form. If a physical restraint is used this should be recorded on the incident form and written in the log book (in the Headteachers office) by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. A minor injury to a learner or member of staff should be recorded in the school's accident book. More significant injuries are reported on the Accident Report and Investigation Form (available from the main office).
- All incident forms are monitored by a member of the senior leadership. Suggestions for further actions and strategies to be put in place are clearly written on the incident form and shared with staff working with the learner.
- Incidents, use of physical interventions or physical restraint and if strategies/changes have been put in place are plotted on a table format for each learner so any changes can be monitored.
- Following an incident all staff involved should have the opportunity to share their thoughts, views and ideas for actions for the future.
- Following an incident, learners for whom it is appropriate are encouraged to share their thoughts, views and ideas in a way which is appropriate for them and at an appropriate time.
- Parents/Carers are informed if a Restrictive Physical Intervention has been used to support their young person.

Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we can avoid the need for complaints. All disputes which arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to the Complaints, Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.

Resources

A range of resources are available in school. Staff should consult with a member of the Senior Leadership Team for advice or the accredited trainers in Physical Intervention (Step On and Step Up approved by Essex County Council).

References

Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties
DFES/DH Joint Guidance 2003

Section 550A of the Education Act

DFES Circular 10/98

Chris Wells Letter

National Legislation Guidance and Initiatives

Section 550A of the Education Act 1996

DfEE circular 10/98 the use of force to control and restrain learners

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/guidanceonthelaw/1098/summary.htm>

Guidance for Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings,
DFES IRSC/Safe Practice Guidance

DFES Guidance Ref.DFES/0027/2004 'Safeguarding Children in Education'

Childrens Act 2004 <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/2004/20040031.htm>

DFES Guidance Ref.LEA/0254/2003 'Guidance on the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention for Learners with Severe Behavioural Difficulties

DFES Guidance Ref: LEA/0242/2002 'Guidance on the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who display extreme behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders'.

Health and Safety at Work Act and subsequent legislation 1974 and Management Regulations 1999

Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies, July 2013

Code of Practice: Mental Health Act, 2008

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Handling People with Special Needs (training pack produced by Centaur)

The DfE's non-statutory guidance on the [use of reasonable force in schools](#).

Review of the policy

The policy will be reviewed in line with whole school procedures.