

RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION IN SCHOOL

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This policy is adapted from the HCC model policy CS402.

In Adeyfield School we believe that students need to be safe, to know how to behave, and to know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. Only for a very small minority of students will the use of physical intervention be needed. On such occasions, only acceptable forms of intervention are used.

Definition of “restrictive physical intervention”

“Restrictive Physical Intervention” (RPI) is the term used to describe interventions where the use of force to control a person’s behaviour is employed using bodily contact. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has to use “reasonable force” to control or restrain students in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria.

- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence (*this applies even if the child is below the age of criminal responsibility*)
- To prevent a child from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a child from causing serious damage to property (*including the child’s own property*)

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 (eg splints on the student 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.

Legal defence for the use of force is based on evidence that the action taken was:

- Reasonable, proportionate and necessary
- In the best interest of the young person

When the use of restrictive physical interventions may be appropriate in Adeyfield School

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. All staff should focus on de-escalation and preventative strategies rather than focusing solely on reactive strategies. However there are other situations when physical handling may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain students may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well-being of all staff and students are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

Who may use restrictive physical intervention in Adeyfield School

The following staff (as well as the teachers employed at the school) are authorised by the Headteacher to have control of students, and **must** be aware of this Policy and its implications. However, non-inclusion on this list does not mean that an adult is necessarily barred from using physical intervention. If the Head has lawfully placed an adult in charge of children then that adult will be entitled to use restrictive physical intervention

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and that removing other students and themselves from risky situations may be the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the students.

Authorised staff

- Teachers
- Support Staff

Planning for the use of restrictive physical interventions in Adeyfield school

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.

When considering the use of restrictive physical intervention there are only 3 components that can be judged as wrong.

- A negative impact on the process of breathing
- Pain as a direct result of the technique
- A sense of violation

Elevated risks

The following can result in a sense of violation, pain or restricted breathing

- The use of clothing or belts to restrict movement
- Holding a person lying on their chest or back
- Pushing on the neck, chest or abdomen
- Hyperflexion or basket type holds
- Extending or flexing of joints (pulling and dragging)

The following can result in significant injury:

- Forcing a child up or down stairs
- Dragging a child from a confined space
- Lifting and carrying
- Seclusion, where a person is forced to spend time alone against their will (requires a court order except in an emergency)

The principles relating to Restrictive Physical intervention are as follows:

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions
- Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the legal criteria for its use are met
- Staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the student's and/or other students' best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion. The student will be warned, at their level of understanding, that Restrictive Physical Intervention will be used unless they cease the unacceptable behaviour
- Staff will use the minimum force necessary to ensure safe outcomes
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses
- As soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the student to regain self-control
- A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy
- Escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual student will always be taken into account.
- In developing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs), consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each student's circumstance
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing students and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

Acceptable forms of physical intervention in Adeyfield School

- There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical intervention (PI) with students for a variety of reasons, for example:
 - to comfort a student in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age);
 - to gently direct a student;
 - for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama, etc);
 - First aid and medical treatment
 - in an emergency to avert danger to the student or students;
 - in rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted.

- In all situations where physical contact between staff and students takes place, staff must consider the following:
 - the student's age and level of understanding;
 - the student'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 student. Should a student appear to **enjoy** physical contact this must not be sought via Restrictive Physical Intervention.

Developing a positive handling plan in Adeyfield school

If a student is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention may be a likely result, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This Plan will help the student 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 or carers and students 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 student'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 student
- ensuring a system to summon additional support
- identifying training needs

Guidance and training for staff

Guidance and training are essential in this area. We need to adopt the best possible practice. In Adeyfield School this is arranged for all staff at a number of levels including:

- awareness of issues for governors, staff and parents,
- behaviour management techniques for all staff
- managing conflict in challenging situations - all staff

Training in practical techniques of Restrictive physical intervention may be required for staff where there is a significant likelihood of them needing to intervene physically due to the nature of the student (or students) that they are working with. Where there is an identified need for such training, staff will be trained by an approved instructor. (NB there is no legal requirement for staff to be trained in the use of practical techniques so staff may exercise their legal right to physically intervene even if they have not had such training. However, they would still need to demonstrate that their intervention was reasonable and proportionate).

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 Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.