

The Potteries School

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POLICY: Physical Intervention

COMPILED	IMPLEMENTED	COORDINATED	REVIEWED
10/01/2017	10/01/2017	Andy Joynson	15/09/2026

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

PRODUCED IN REFERENCE TO:

WAG 097/2013 'Safe and Effective Intervention – Use of reasonable force and searching for weapons'

Introduction

Our ethos focuses upon personal relationships and conflict resolution and thus physical intervention is only to be used as a last resort and that every attempt is made to de-escalate situations in order to avoid such intervention. It is a method of taking control of a situation and minimising the risk to a learner and others. It is assumed that prior to a physical intervention that other strategies would have been tried e.g. talking the learner down, time out or diversion. To support a learner means asserting control by 'guiding' them out of a situation or away from a potentially conflict that may escalate to dangerous levels is allowed to continue. These strategies will be recorded on incident forms to indicate that physical intervention was only used when other methods failed.

All school support staff are trained in managing disruptive behaviours and physical intervention techniques focusing upon preventative skills, breakaway techniques and isolated and supportive holding practice. These methods emphasise that when confronted with aggression and violence, it is essential for staff to create options for action and to communicate these options to the learner. Knowledge of these options can prevent unnecessary escalation of an incident and can help staff to calmly and confidently cope with challenging behaviour that can in turn have a reassuring and calm influence on learners. Training focuses upon preventative and de-escalation techniques as well as physical intervention. It enables staff to be confident in using good interpersonal skills, knowledge and adopt a positive attitude to support learners. Physical intervention techniques are not a substitute for good communication and awareness skills.

To ensure a minimum level of competence is acquired before using the techniques, the MAYBO course nationally accredited and all support staff complete a mandatory three-day session. This must be renewed annually in refresher training to ensure that a high level of skill and understanding is maintained. Any support staff that do not achieve certification or do not attend the required annual update will not be allowed to use any of the skills or techniques until they have successfully completed a full course.

Planning for Learners

As part of the assessment and planning process for all learners, consideration must be

given to whether the learner is likely to behave in ways which may place themselves or others at risk of injury or may cause damage to property. If such risks exist, consideration must be given to the strategies that will be adopted to prevent or reduce the risk. This process will be informed from pre-placement information, educational plans and formal communication with social workers supporting the learner. These strategies may include physical intervention.

Definition of Physical intervention

There are four broad categories of physical intervention:

Restraint: Defined as the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering a learner. This means any measure or technique designed to completely restrict a learner's mobility or prevent a learner from absconding, for example:

- Any technique that involves a learner being held on the floor (under no circumstances may 'prone facedown' techniques be used in the school);
- Any technique involving the learner being held by two or more people;
- Any technique involving a learner being held by one person if the balance of power is so great that the learner is effectively overpowered;
- The locking or bolting a door in order to contain or prevent a learner from leaving.

The significant distinction between the first category restraint and the others (holding, touch and presence) is that restraint is defined as the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering a learner. The intention is to overpower the learner and completely restrict the learner's mobility. The other categories of physical intervention provide the learner with varying degrees of freedom and mobility;

Holding: This includes any measure or technique which involves the learner being held firmly by one person, so long as the learner retains a degree of mobility and can leave if determined enough;

Touching: This includes minimum contact in order to lead, guide, usher or block a learner; applied in a manner which permits the learner quite a lot of freedom and mobility;

Presence: A form of control using no contact, such as standing in front of a learner or obstructing a doorway to negotiate with a learner; but allowing the learner the freedom to leave if they wish.

Who may use Physical Intervention?

Staff may only use techniques that are approved by the school or delivered in training and should comply with the following principles:

- Not impede the process of breathing - the use of 'prone facedown' techniques must never be used;
- Not be used in a way that may be interpreted as sexual;
- Not intentionally inflict pain or injury or threaten to do so;
- Avoid vulnerable parts of the body, e.g. the neck, chest and sexual areas;
- Avoid hyperextension, hyper flexion and pressure on or across the joints;
- Not employ potentially dangerous positions.

Criteria for using Physical interventions

There are specific criteria for the use of restraint and other forms of physical intervention, such as holding, touching and physical presence. This is what the law tells us:

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, replaced Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 and enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- - committing any offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil);
- - causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
- - prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

We need to bear in mind:

- Restraint, which is the form of physical intervention used with the intention of controlling a learner physically, may only be used in the situations detailed above;
- Other forms of physical intervention, such as holding, touching or presence are less forceful and restrictive than restraint and may be used to protect learners or others from injury which is less than significant or to prevent damage to property which is less than serious;
- Restraint may not be used to force compliance or as a punishment where significant harm or serious damage to property are not otherwise likely;
- Before restraint or *any other* form of physical intervention is used, staff must be satisfied that it is necessary because there is a risk of injury or damage to

property and that:

- The injury or damage is likely in the predictable future;
- The intervention is immediately necessary;
- The actions or interventions taken will be as a last resort;
- That any intervention used is the minimum necessary to achieve the objective.

Notifications

If physical intervention has occurred with a learner, the Headteacher and learner's social worker must be notified within one working day. If a serious incident or the police/emergency services are called, the Headteacher must be notified and consideration given to whether a notifiable event has occurred. The social worker should make a decision about whether to inform the learner's parent(s).

Medical Assistance and Examination

Where physical intervention has occurred, the learner, staff and others involved must be able to call on medical assistance and learner must always be given the opportunity to see a Registered Nurse or Medical Practitioner, even if there are no apparent injuries.

If a Registered Nurse or Medical Practitioner is seen, they must be informed that any injuries may have been caused from an incident involving physical intervention. Whether or not the learner or others decide to see a Registered Nurse or Medical Practitioner it must be recorded, together with the outcome.

Recording

All forms of Physical intervention should be recorded in the Physical Intervention Record kept in the School classroom. The learner's Risk Management form should be reviewed to incorporate strategies for reducing or preventing future incidents. The learner must be encouraged to contribute to this review and, if a health care professional is involved with the learner, that person must approve any new strategies. The Headteacher should regularly review incidents and examine trends and issues emerging from this to enable staff to reflect, learn and inform future practice and, where necessary, should ensure that procedures and training are updated.

REVIEW

This policy and procedures will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure continued compliance with The Education (Independent Schools Standards)

Regulations 2014, the Independent School Standards (Wales) 2024 and relevant guidance issued by the DfE and Welsh Government.

This document will be next reviewed on 14/09/2027.