



## **Thornhill Primary School Restraint Policy**

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Date of Next Review	Autumn 2020

Thornhill Primary School encourages pupils to make positive behaviour choices. However, pupils sometimes do make the wrong choices. On rare occasions this may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff.

This policy has been written with DFE 'Use of reasonable force' advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies September 2018.

### **Our Restraint Policy is based upon the following principles:**

- Physical intervention is used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed.
- Use of physical contact would be limited, only minimal contact would be used.
- Physical intervention would only be used to ensure the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Incidents are recorded and reported to the Head teacher.
- Parents are informed of each incident.

### **The Legal Framework**

Section 93 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 allows 'teachers and other persons who are authorised by the Head teacher, who have control or are in charge of pupils, to use such force as is reasonable in order to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- causing injury to him/herself or others
- committing an offence or damaging property
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order & discipline

## **Definition of Reasonable Force and Restraint**

The DFE guidance (2013) on the 'Use of Reasonable Force' defines and explains these terms in the following way:

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

School staff must always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil. All members of staff who can use reasonable force have a legal power to use it. This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Head teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying pupils on an organised visit. The DFE Guidance 2013 on 'Use of reasonable force' states that schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow and instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, trip or a visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

- use force as a punishment - it is unlawful to use force as a punishment.

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Head teachers and authorised staff can use such force, as is reasonable given the circumstances, to conduct a search for the following 'prohibited items': knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images and any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property. Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

### **Our Approach**

We aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort. We always aim to deal with behaviour concerns through a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our Behaviour Policy (2017).

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate. Staff need to exercise their own professional judgement in situations which arise within the above categories.

Staff act within our school's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Once again it is stressed that physical intervention must only be used when all other strategies have failed to have the desired effect on a pupil's behaviour.

NB It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- When comforting a distressed pupil
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- To give first aid.

Staff are aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in loco parentis and have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They therefore take reasonable action to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. This being said staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

## **Use of Physical Restraint or Intervention**

Physical restraint is applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allowing the pupil to regain self-control. It never takes a form which could be seen as punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint i.e. only applying force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below. In all circumstances, alternative methods are used as appropriate with physical intervention or restraint a last resort.

In the exceptional circumstances when physical restraint or intervention becomes necessary, staff:

### **DO**

- Summon help / involve another member of staff if possible
- Continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- Use simple and clear language
- Tell the pupil what s/he must do for them to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax the restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

### **DON'T**

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking even if the pupil does not reply
- Act in temper
- Allow a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil
- Involve other pupils in the restraint
- Use physical restraint or intervention as a punishment
- Touch or hold the pupil in a way that could be viewed as sexually inappropriate conduct
- Twist or force limbs back against a joint
- Bend fingers or pull hair
- Hold the pupil in a way which will restrict blood flow or breathing e.g. around the neck, Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

## **Actions After an Incident**

Physical restraint often occurs in response to a highly charged emotional situation and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. The Head teacher must be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate

member of the teaching staff debriefs the pupil concerned: the debrief includes consideration of the circumstances that precipitated the incident and the opportunity to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided. Any other individuals involved in the incident are also offered support.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it will probably be necessary to address the situation through the development or review of an individual behaviour plan (IBP), which may include a risk assessment, an anger management programme and possible involvement of external agencies.

All incidents are recorded immediately on a Restraint Recording Form. All sections of the report are completed so that any patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed. In the event of any future complaint or allegation this record provides essential and accurate information. A copy is filed in the child's appropriate file and a central copy is kept by the Head teacher.

A member of the teaching staff contacts parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

### **Risk Assessments**

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning (recorded on an IBP) addresses:

- Strategies to be used prior to intervention
- Ways of avoiding 'triggers' if these are known
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- The school's duty of care to all pupils and staff

### **Complaints and Allegations**

This clear physical intervention and restraint policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation under our Complaints Procedure.

If following preliminary investigations, it is deemed necessary, the Head teacher will contact the LADO in line with our Child Protection Policy and Procedures. It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply. We will review

this policy bi-annually. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in School Settings

The school must make every effort to meet with the child's parents/carers to inform them of the situation and to arrange a further meeting to discuss how the school will support the child in the future. This initial meeting must be accompanied with a letter.

1. Sample Letter: If the parents/carers cannot be contacted.

Dear

I would like to inform you that \_\_\_\_\_ was involved in an incident today and needed physical intervention to manage the situation. I would like to invite you into school to discuss the incident. This might include writing / revising an IBP (Individual Behaviour Plan) in case further intervention is needed in the future. Please get in touch with me as soon as possible so that this may be arranged.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Julia Lawson  
Head teacher Thornhill Primary School