

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY

CROSCOMBE CHURCH of ENGLAND VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

We are a Church of England School and this policy has been written with reference to our Christian foundation.

1 The Legal Framework

Physical Restraint should be limited to emergency situations and used only in the last resort. Under the Children order 1995 it is only permissible as described under the heading “Physical Control”.

Article 4 of the Education Order 1998 clarifies powers that already exist in common law.

It enables teachers and other members of staff in the school, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence;
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil him/herself);
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

(Examples of possible situations are given in Appendix 1)

2.1 Definition of Restraint at Croscombe Church of England School

Physical restraint is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child harming him/herself or others or seriously damaging property.

2.2 General Policy Aims

Staff at our school recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure pupil safety/well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline.

2.3 Specific Aims of the Restraint Policy:

- to protect every person in the school community from harm;
- to protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful;
- to provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal with violent or potentially violent situations.

3 Why use Restraint?

Physical restraint should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child’s action or perhaps by removing a physical object which could be used to harm him/herself or others. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the School’s policy on behaviour, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Staff should be 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 should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure pupils’ safety and well-being.

Failure to physically restrain a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

3.1 Alternative Strategies

There are some situations in which the need for physical restraint is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (e.g. if a child is about to run across a road). However in many circumstances there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as

- the *broken record* in which an instruction is repeated until the pupil complies;
- use of a distracter, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective;
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened;
- other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high);
- the employment of other sanctions consistent with our Behaviour Policy.

3.3 Use of Physical Restraint

Physical Restraint should be 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 should never take a form which could be seen as punishment.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint although there is no absolute definition of this as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom this is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

There are some forms of physical intervention which may involve minimal physical contact such as blocking a pupil's path or the staff member physically interposing him/herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in some circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective: physical restraint should be the last resort.

When physical restraint becomes necessary:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why;
- use the minimum force necessary;
- involve another member of staff if possible;
- tell the pupil what he/she must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition);
- use simple and clear language;
- hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow;
- relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance.

DON'T

- Act in temper (involve another member of staff if you fear loss of control);
- involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the pupil;
- attempt to reason with the pupil;
- involve other pupils in the restraint;
- touch or hold the pupil in sexual areas;
- 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.

3.4 Actions after an Incident

Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. **The headteacher 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 should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents/carers informed.

If the behaviour is part of an on-going pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural Individual Education Plan (IEP) which may include an anger management programme or other strategies agreed with the SENCO.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately on the Pupil Restraint Report Form (attached). All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available. The headteacher will contact parents/carers as soon as possible after the 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.

4 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 will address:

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, holds to be used if necessary);
- involvement of parents/carers 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.

5 Complaints

A clear Restraint Policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents/carers, should help to avoid complaints from parents/carers. 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, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and Social Services Department under child protection procedures.

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

Signed

Date