



# Safe Touch, Physical Intervention and Restraint Policy

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Approved by Advisory Board: October 2022

Linked with other policies:

- Safeguarding including Child Protection
- Behaviour
- Exclusions
- Complaints

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Day".

### Version Control

Version	Date of review/change(s)	Page and paragraphs affected	Summary of update
V1	September 2022		No changes

## Safe Touch Guidelines

### Aims at All Saints School

We believe that children have the right to independence, choice and inclusion, and we seek to provide opportunities for personal growth and emotional health and wellbeing. Children learn who they are and how the world is by forming relationships with people and things around them. The quality of a child's relationship with significant adults is vital to their healthy development and emotional health and wellbeing. Our policy takes into account the extensive neurobiological research and studies relating to attachment theory and child development that identify safe touch as a positive contribution to brain development, mental health and the development of social skills. At All Saints School, we have adopted an informed, evidence based decision to allow safe touch as a developmentally appropriate intervention that will aid healthy growth and learning as a part of a nurturing school ethos. Safe touch will only be used when appropriate and will take into account the individual needs and preferences of each student.

### Different Types of Touch

There are five different types of touch and physical contact that may be used, these are:

#### 1. Casual / Informal / Incidental Touch

Staff use touch with students as part of a normal relationship, for example, comforting a child, giving reassurance and congratulating. This might include putting an arm out to bar an exit from a room, taking a child by the hand, patting on the back or putting an arm around the shoulders. The benefit of this action is often proactive and can prevent a situation from escalating.

#### 2. General Reparative Touch

This is used by staff working with children who are having difficulties with their emotions. Healthy emotional development requires safe touch as a means of calming, soothing and containing distress for a frightened, angry or sad child. Touch used to regulate a child's emotions triggers the release of the calming chemical oxytocin in the body. Reparative touch may include stroking a back or gently squeezing an arm.

#### 3. Contact Play

This is used by staff adopting a role similar to a parent in a healthy child-parent relationship. This will only take place when the child has developed a trusting relationship with the adult and when they feel completely comfortable and at ease with this type of contact. Contact play may include an adult chasing and catching the child or an adult and child playing a game of building towers with their hands.

#### 4. Interactive Play

This structured play follows clear rules and is operated under close supervision by staff. It will only ever take place when all participants are in agreement and completely understand the rules. This sort of play releases the following chemicals in the brain: Opioids - to calm and soothe and give pleasure; Dopamine - to focus, be alert and concentrate; BDNF (Brain Derived Neurotropic Factor) - a brain 'fertiliser' that encourages growth. Interactive play may include throwing cushions to each other or using soft foam bats to 'fence' each other.

## **5. Positive Handling (Calming a Dysregulated Child)**

Trained staff will move or restrain a child when:

- Behaviour is unacceptably threatening, dangerous, aggressive or out of control;
- In order to avoid harm to self or others or damage to property;
- To avoid an offence being committed and / or a breakdown of good order and discipline.

This will always be a last resort and using techniques taught as part of the Norfolk Steps Training.

### **Steps to Take Before Positive Handling**

Prevention strategies and calming measures will be employed and the following action should be taken before a restraint is used.

- Conversation, distraction, coaxing skills, gentle persuasion or redirection to other activities (e.g. touching the child's arm and leading him / her away from danger, gently stroking the child's shoulder);
- Encourage the child to help him/herself feel more secure by wrapping a blanket tightly around him/herself or holding on tightly to a large cushion or stuffed toy;
- Put distance between the child and others - move others to a safer place;
- Calmly remove anything that could be used as a weapon, including hot drinks, objects, furniture
- To prevent a child continuing to pose harm in a dangerous situation, advise others to leave, but remain with the child yourself;
- Keep talking calmly to the child, explain what is happening and why, how it can stop, and what will happen next;

Use first aid procedures in the event of injury or physical distress when safe to do so.

### **Who Can Use Positive Handling?**

Staff using positive handling techniques will have been fully trained in the Norfolk Step On and Step Up techniques.

There are some situations where those without training might find it reasonable to use a degree of force. Everyone has the right to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so. In an emergency, for example, if a child was in immediate risk of injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff would be entitled to intervene.

## Use of Reasonable Force and Physical 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 students.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student 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 students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School staff should 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 student.

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 Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

The DFE Guidance 2013 on 'Use of reasonable force' (advice for Headteacher's, staff and governing bodies) 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 student behaving in a way that disrupts a school event, trip or a visit;
- prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

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

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, Headteachers 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.

## All Saints School's approach to physical restraint

We aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in a minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our Behaviour and Reward policies.

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 student 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 as a last resort.

When physical restraint becomes necessary and ALL other approaches have been tried:

### DO

- Tell the student what you are doing and why
- Tell the student what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Relax your restraint in response to the student's compliance
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow

### DON'T

- Manage on your own – request support using the walkie-talkie or call for help
- Act in temper (involve another staff member if you fear loss of control)
- Involve yourself in a prolonged verbal exchange with the student
- Stop talking even if the student doesn't respond
- Involve other students
- Use physical intervention

## 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 student. **The Headteacher or deputy Headteacher should 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 staff should always be involved in debriefing the student involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents or carers contacted to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss the incident. Parent / Carer views should be entered onto the CPOMs (Child Protection Online Management System) incident form using the 'restraint' category.

After any incident involving restraint a debrief session will be offered to the staff / additional adults and student(s) involved and informal support will continue to be offered to those involved for as long as required.

### **Recording the incident**

All behaviour incidents, where restraint is needed, are to be recorded from September 2021 on the electronic CPOMS recording system. This should be completed immediately after the incident.

Information to be included all of which is incorporated into the restraint category:

- Name of student
- Who is reporting the incident
- Date and time of the incident
- Clear recording of timeline, including for how long each stage involved
- Names of the other staff involved
- Names of other witnesses
- How the incident began
- What behaviours were witnessed
- What de-escalation techniques were used prior to physical controls
- If a restrictive physical intervention was used, what technique was used and when and by whom
- Post incident support and debrief
- Student views following the incident
- What parents' / carers views were when they were informed
- What action has been taken and has the behaviour management plan been updated or risk assessment created.
- If the Police were involved
- If there has been internal or external exclusion. FTEX (Fixed Term Exclusion) or PEX (end of placement)
- What post incident support was given to the student
- What post incident support was given to the member(s) of staff involved
- If an individual risk assessment is required following the incident
- If the incident was resolved and if not what the next steps are to be

On CPOMS this will be signed and date stamped and will be sufficient evidence, meaning an additional 'bound book' will not be required. In the event of any future complaint or allegation this record provides essential and accurate information.

### **Risk Assessments:**

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it will be necessary to address the situation through the development or review of a report card which may include a risk assessment, an anger management programme and possible involvement of the school counsellor or other external agencies.

If we become aware that a student 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.

- 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
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- The school's duty of care to all students 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 which can be found on the school website [www.allsaintslessingham.co.uk](http://www.allsaintslessingham.co.uk)