

# Giffards Primary School

## Physical Contact With Pupils in School

including use of reasonable force/positive handling

**Agreed by Governors**

July 2020

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_

**Review Date:**

July 2022

## GIFFARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

### GUIDANCE ON PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS IN SCHOOL including use of reasonable force/positive handling

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Dfe guidance on [Use of reasonable force advice](#)– July 2013

Dfe use of [searching screening and confiscation](#) updated January 2018

Positive Behaviour policy

#### Rational

This policy is intended to clarify when physical contact with pupils is appropriate and to provide clarification on the use of physical force.

#### Touching and Holding Children

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:

1. Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
  2. When comforting a distressed pupil;
  3. When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
  4. To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
  5. To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
  6. To give first aid.
- Touching pupils is inevitable - it can give welcome reassurance or comfort to the child. However, teachers must bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued.
  - Control is not the only circumstance when there is a physical contact between staff and children. It is not intended that this guidance should deter appropriate physical contact between care-providing adults and children. Staff should respond to children in a way that gives expression to appropriate levels of care, and to provide comfort to ease a child's distress. **However, it is recognised that staff need to ensure that any physical contact is not misinterpreted by a child.** The following guiding principles are suggested:
  - The level and type of physical contact should reflect the educational and social needs of the pupil e.g. physical contact is likely to occur in some PE and drama activities, or if a child has been injured.

- There is recognition also that there will be increased physical contact with younger children, especially in Foundation Stage where a child may need help. **Staff should endeavour not to be alone with a pupil in such a situation.**
- Physical contact should not respond or lead to expectations or anxieties of any form i.e. it should not become habitual. Specific consideration should be given to the needs of pupils in school who may have suffered abuse or neglect.
- Although a pupil asking a member of staff for physical comfort should not be responded to automatically, he or she should not be rejected without explanation.
- There should be no general expectations of the physical expression of affection or comfort. Staff should endeavour not to be alone with a pupil in such a situation (Male staff need to be particularly conscious of this).

### **Control and Direction through Physical Contact**

- An adult may insist on holding a pupil's hand to ensure that he/she is controlled and safe when crossing the road.
- Pupils may be successfully re-engaged in their educational activities by a hand on the shoulder or by leading them back to their seat, similarly a pupil may be diverted from destructive behaviour. The latter could include diversion from a fight or argument.
- It is appropriate to use such physical prompts and guidance when positive verbal prompting has been unsuccessful.

### **Physical Restraint**

#### **What is reasonable force?**

1. 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.
  2. 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 student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
  3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is necessary.
  4. As mentioned above, schools generally use appropriate force to control pupils and to restrain them. 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.
  5. 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.
  6. 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 pupil.
- Physical restraint is the positive use of force in order to protect a child from hurting her or himself, others, or seriously damaging property.

- On RARE occasions there is no alternative to restraining pupils in their own and others interests and safety. In such instances no more than minimum necessary force should be used. Such interventions should only be made when they are likely to succeed.
- Ideally, more than one adult should be present.  
Physical restraint is normally only necessary to prevent a pupil
  - a) Causing harm to him or herself
  - b) Causing harm to others
  - c) Seriously damaging property
  - d) Committing some criminal act which risks harm to people or property

### **WHEN VERBAL COMMANDS WILL NOT CONTROL THE BEHAVIOUR**

- Physical contact and restraint should never be used in anger and every effort should be made to avoid injury to the child. Teachers are not expected to restrain a child if by doing so they put themselves at significant risk.
- When restraining, gender or cultural differences should be taken into account.
- All incidents where restraint has been necessary, should be clearly recorded, copies given to the Headteacher, one to be retained in SEN files (where applicable), by person who carried out restraint and on Child's file stating:
  - a) the date and time the restraint occurred
  - b) why restraint was necessary
  - c) how restraint was carried out
  - d) who restrained the child
  - e) how long this restraint lasted
  - f) who was present during the period of restraint
  - g) any marks noted on the child as a result of the incident and how they occurred
  - h) action taken (e.g. treatment) in relation to any marks occurring as a result of the incident

The pupil's parent/carer should be informed when physical restraint has been necessary.

See appendix A attached– Reporting format.

### **Restriction of Liberty**

- A pupil attempting to leave a room or the school premises should only be physically restrained if they are considered to be at risk of harming themselves or others. Pupils should never be locked in a room and should not be required to remain in a building for an unreasonable length of time without relief. If a pupil is being required to wait in a room while their parent, social services or the police attend, members of staff should remain with them.
- If a child has been physically restrained to prevent them running away the restraint should not extend beyond holding with both arms engaged and employing controlled use of the weight of the body. The child should not be rugby tackled because this would entail forceful knocking over and possible injury.

## Hitting Children

- **Staff should never hit or strike children.** If a pupil is assaulting a member of staff due force may be used in self-defence. Due force can be described as the minimum force necessary to prevent or deflect the assault.

## Searching Children

### In conjunction with the Dfe document on [searching screening and confiscation](#)

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’

School staff can search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees

Headteacher’s and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item – these are

- Knives and weapons
  - Alcohol
  - Illegal drugs
  - Stolen items
  - Tobacco and cigarette papers
  - Fireworks
  - Pornographic images
  - Any article that is likely to be used to commit an offence cause personal injury or damage to property
- If a pupil is suspected of concealing a particular item a search should only take place in the presence of the Headteacher or another senior member of staff. The search should be conducted by a member of staff of the same sex as the pupil where possible. Searchers must not include intimate touching or strip searching.
  - Where possible, consent should be sought first, in the case of suspicion around the items listed above a search can be used without consent. If not listed above then if a child is unable to give consent their parent or the police should be contacted.

## Children with SEN

- A child who requires complex or repeated physical management should have a written handling policy/agreement which has been signed by the parent/carer.

## Appendix A to Physical Control with Pupils Policy

<b>Giffards Primary School Report on use of Physical control</b>	
Name of Pupil	Name; Age:
Date, time and school location the restraint occurred	
Why was physical control necessary <i>Brief outline of incident and including methods employed to avoid restraint where applicable</i>	Was this – <b>highlight options below</b> <b>Passive physical contact</b> ( such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path) <b>Active physical contact</b> ( such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom) <b>Restraint</b> ( to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control)
How was physical control carried out	
Who physically controlled the child	
How long did the physical control last	
Who was present during the period of physical control	
Any marks noted on the child as a result of the incident and how they occurred	
Any marks/injuries sustained by the member of staff as a result of the incident and how they occurred	
Action taken (e.g. treatment) in relation to any marks occurring as a result of the incident	To the pupil:
	Member of staff:
Other action taken ( e.g Sanctions as a result of incident)	
Have parents been contacted/informed Pls include copies of letters/notes taken as part of informing parents	
Signed (person who physically controlled)	Name:
	Signature
Signed ( Headteacher/SLT)	Name:
	Signature
Copies to be retained on Child's file/SEN file if applicable/by Headteacher and staff member	