



Physical Intervention policy

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1. Aims

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, we are committed to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff. The purpose of this policy is to make clear the position of the school with regards to necessary physical interventions and to safeguard the wellbeing of pupils and staff when a situation or incident requires the use of physical intervention. This policy forms an integral part of the school's behaviour policy and aims to ensure that all staff, governance committee members, pupils and their parents are fully aware of:

- The circumstances in which physical intervention may be necessary
- The manner in which physical intervention may be applied
- Those persons authorised to physically restrain our pupils.

In our school we aim to create a calm environment to minimise incidents that may require any physical intervention. All staff adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to promote a safe environment for pupils and staff. Staff will work in partnership to:

- Find out why a pupil behaves as he or she does
- Understand the factors that influence a pupil's behaviour
- Identify early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that are developing.

This approach helps to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It reduces the incidence of extreme behaviours and therefore ensures that the use of physical intervention is rare.

2. Legislation, statutory requirements and statutory guidance

This policy is based on legislation and advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- [Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2024](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024](#)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusionSuspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units 2023>
- [Use of reasonable force in schools](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Catholic Values

As a Catholic school, the Gospel values are at the heart of our school. We want our children to leave St Thomas More **happy** with who they are; **confident** in their abilities; **resilient** in the face of challenge; **respectful** and welcoming of diversity; **compassionate** and empathetic; **ambitious** for the next steps on their life journey, which they will approach with **strong moral values** centred on our **faith** and above all, being a living embodiment of Gospel values.

4. Reasonable Force

School staff have a power to use force and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.

What is reasonable force?

The term **Reasonable Force** covers the broad range of actions used by most school staff at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.

Force is usually used to either **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 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.

Who can use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force, this power applies to any member of staff at the school.

When can reasonable force be used?

Reasonable force may be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive pupils from the classroom where they have refused an instruction to do so
- Prevent a pupil from behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- Prevent a pupil from 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 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 specific 'prohibited items'. This is covered in detail in the school's behaviour policy.

5. Procedures

In all circumstances where physical intervention is or may become required, members of staff should ensure that assistance is requested from another member of staff (ideally a member of SLT) before intervention, although it is understood that circumstances may lead to the need for intervention prior to the assistance arriving.

No member of staff is required to employ any physical intervention strategy if they are not comfortable or confident to do so effectively.

No member of staff should intervene physically if they have reason to believe that to do so would worsen the situation/incident that is taking place.

The decision to use physical intervention will be taken in the context of the level of risk presented by the behaviour, the seriousness of the incident and the relative risks of the use of physical intervention compared with any available alternative. The use of physical intervention will take into account the characteristics of the pupil, including their age, gender, SEN, physical needs or disability, developmental level or cultural issues.

Staff considering handling, use of reasonable force or restraint must provide the pupil with the opportunity

to alter their behaviour/actions before employing a physical intervention strategy and should continue to make instructions to the pupil and details of their intended interventions clear.

If the situation is such that any teacher or authorised person risks injury in the event of intervention, they should not attempt to intervene but summon assistance from a colleague, or if necessary the police and remove the rest of the class/group to a place of safety, should there be a risk to their safety.

Where physical interventions are needed to prevent injury to the student, other students or staff, or to prevent serious damage, these should be for the minimum length of time possible and using the least possible force. All staff must consider whether they are using reasonable force. In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate and physical intervention should be a last resort.

When physical intervention becomes necessary, staff will ensure they follow the below “dos” and “don’ts”:

DO

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary for the minimum length of time
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the pupil what s/he 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 staff member 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, lying face down or pulling arms across the child's chest
- Slap, punch, kick or trip up the pupil

6. Planning in order to minimise the need for intervention

Physical intervention really should be a last resort or an emergency action. As a school we:

- endeavour to create a calm environment which will minimise the risk of incidents where the use of physical intervention may be required;
- endeavour to teach pupils how to manage strong emotions and conflict through wider aspects of the school curriculum;
- quickly seek to de-escalate incidents if they do arise;
- only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force;
- ensure that staff are aware of risk assessments and positive handling plans for specific individual pupils.

If we are aware that any of our pupils, in certain circumstances or on some occasions, behave in a manner that might require physical intervention, we will ensure that we plan for this eventuality by:

- Taking steps to ensure adequate management of the pupil, by whenever necessary, taking advice from the our outreach providers and involving the SENCO.
- Completing a risk assessment that involves the pupil and parents so that they are fully aware of any action we might need to take.

- Briefing all staff regarding the situation and any suitable action that may need to be taken.
- Ensuring that only teachers or those persons authorised by the Headteacher to use physical intervention will be available in school or during school activities that the pupils attend.
- Ensuring procedures to allow additional support to be summoned if necessary.
- Ensuring that we have taken medical advice from a person qualified to give that advice regarding 'safe' methods of intervention for pupils with specific health problems.

7. Recording physical intervention

All incidents where staff feel that they have used physical intervention to modify behaviour or conduct should be recorded on CPOMS and a member of SLT informed as soon as possible. Appendix 1 sets out the information that should be recorded on CPOMS, including the follow-up actions.

It is the responsibility of the intervening member of staff to complete a CPOMS entry on the day that the intervention took place. The circumstances and nature of the physical intervention will be held on the record of the pupil involved.

The Headteacher will ensure that parents/carers are appropriately informed.

For the safeguarding of both staff and pupil, any subsequent investigation of the situation/incident should be undertaken by a member of staff other than the one applying the physical intervention.

8. Training

Teachers and LSAs have received positive handling training and the school refer to the 'reasonable force' document. The reasonable force document outlines the circumstances under which physical force can be used, which is defined as being no more than is necessary to prevent harm - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>.

As part of their induction process, our staff are provided with regular training on managing behaviour. Behaviour management will also form part of continuing professional development.

9. Support for staff and monitoring arrangements

Following incidents where physical intervention is used, there will be opportunities for staff to reflect, de-brief and obtain support. The use of physical intervention in school is also monitored in order to promote the well-being of children in our care, and provide a basis for appropriate support. Monitoring can help the school to determine what specialist help is needed for children. The use of physical intervention is monitored and evaluated regularly at Senior Leadership meetings. Individual pupil risk assessments are reviewed annually or more frequently when required.

10. Complaints about the use of physical intervention

The use of restrictive physical intervention can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive use. In the event of a complaint being received by the school in relation to use of force by staff, the matter should be dealt with in accordance with Local Authority guidelines and agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff (see the Trust's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff).

11. Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and procedures.

Appendix 1 - CPOMS Record of physical intervention

Name of the child or young person concerned:

Name of the person using the measure:

Witnesses:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Details of the behaviour leading to the use of physical intervention (factual and chronological: what the child or young person was doing or saying):

Details of any de-escalation methods used to avoid the need to use that measure (what you did – what you said – what you tried):

Humour	Verbal advice and support	Firm clear direction	Negotiation	Limited choices
Distraction	Diversion	Reassurance	Planned ignoring	Contingent touch
Calm talking	Calm stance	Patience	Withdrawal offered	Withdrawal directed
Swap adult	Reminders about consequences	Success reminders	Drink of water offered	Where relevant: Strategies from PSP offered

Why was the measure necessary? (Describe your dynamic risk assessment and why you honestly believed that the measure you chose was in the best interests of the child or young person)

Risk to child/YP concerned	Risk to others	Risk to safe physical environment	Risk to safe psychological environment
Prevention of psychological distress	Prevention of physical harm	Prevention of criminal offence	Temporary loss of competence or capacity

A description of the physical intervention measure used (what you did and what you said – record the key facts/steps taken):

The effectiveness of the measure:

Duration of any measure of physical restraint, restriction or containment in minutes and any time intervals between provisions of active support:

Any consequences of the use of the measure:

A description of any injury to the child concerned or any other person:

A description of any medical treatment offered or administered:

External agencies informed and supporting records:

Agency	Date informed
Medical Referral	
Social Worker	
Health and Safety Report (RIDDOR)	
LADO	
Safer Schools Partnership Support Officer	
Placing Authority	
Responsible Parent* <small>Record of conversation to be logged on CPOMs</small>	
Other:	

Views of the young person and any additional comments: