

# Heathlands School

## Physical Intervention Policy

**Approved by Governing body 12.10.15**  
**Review due October 2017**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Heathlands School we believe that pupils need to be safe, to know how to behave, and to know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. The majority of pupils behave well and conform to the expectations of our school and physical intervention will only be necessary for a very small minority of pupils. On such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used.

Heathlands follows Hertfordshire County Council's Policy on Physical Intervention which takes note of .

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93)
- DfES Circular 10/98
- Use of Force Guidance '*The use of force to control or restrain pupils*' – non-statutory guidance, DCSF 2007 (supersedes Circular 10/98) see [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/piguide](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/piguide)

All school staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to know what options are available for managing behaviour free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention.

Parents need to know that their children are safe at school and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

## 2. DEFINITION OF “RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION”

“Restrictive Physical Intervention” refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has to use “reasonable force” to control or restrain pupils in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria.

- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence (*this applies even if the child is below the age of criminal responsibility*)
- To prevent a child from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a child from causing serious damage to property (*including the child's own property*)

### ***For School only, not Heath House***

- To stop the child from engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school.

There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. However, there are two relevant considerations:

- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it;
- the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

## 3. WHEN THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS MAY BE APPROPRIATE IN HEATHLANDS SCHOOL

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. However there are other situations when physical handling

may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain pupils may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well-being of all staff and pupils are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

#### **4. WHO MAY USE RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION IN HEATHLANDS SCHOOL**

The exercise of effective control and maintenance of good order forms part of the teachers' terms and conditions of employment. In addition the following staff are authorised by the Headteacher to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils.

- ❑ Residential child care staff
- ❑ Classroom support staff

When considering the need to physically intervene staff are not expected to put themselves in danger. Removing other pupils and themselves from risky situations may be the right thing to do.

#### **5. PLANNING FOR THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS IN HEATHLANDS SCHOOL**

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour. The principles relating to the intervention are as follows :-

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions
- Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the legal criteria for its use are met
- staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the pupil's and/or other pupil's best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion. The pupil will be warned, at their level of understanding, that Restrictive Physical Intervention will be used unless they cease the unacceptable behaviour
- only the minimum force necessary will be used
- staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response incident
- every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses
- as soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control

- a distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy
- escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable
- the age, understanding, and competence of the individual pupil will always be taken into account
- in developing Individual Education/Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance
- procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

## 6. ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF CONTACT IN HEATHLANDS SCHOOL

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons, for example:

- to comfort a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age);
- to gently direct a pupil;
- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc);
- in an emergency to avert danger to the pupil or pupils;
- in rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must abide by the guidance on safe working practice and consider the following:

- the pupil's age and level of understanding;
- the pupil's individual characteristics and history;
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present).

Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participants neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints.

Should a pupil appear to **enjoy** physical contact this must not be sought via Restrictive Physical Intervention.

## 6. DEVELOPING A POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN IN HEATHLANDS SCHOOL

If a pupil is identified as likely to need Restrictive Physical Intervention a risk assessment will be undertaken and Positive Handling Plan may be completed. This Plan will clarify factors that influence the behaviour and identify the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing. The plan will include :-

- involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- a risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens

- ❑ consideration of any specific medical needs
- ❑ a **record** to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- ❑ techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used
- ❑ identification of key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil
- ❑ a system to summon additional support
- ❑ identification of training needs

## **7. GUIDANCE AND TRAINING FOR STAFF**

All authorised staff will be made aware of this policy and the procedures for reporting and recording incidents of Restrictive Physical Intervention as part of their induction. The policy can be accessed through the staff room section of the website.

Training in practical techniques of physical intervention may be required for staff where there is a significant likelihood of them needing to intervene physically due to the nature of the pupil (or pupils) that they are working with. Heathlands School is using Herts Steps.

Staff will be trained by an approved instructor of Herts Steps and training records kept in SIMS. The Assistant Head for Pastoral Care has been trained as an Instructor of the Herts Steps approach.

*(NB there is no legal requirement for staff to be trained in the use of practical techniques so staff may exercise their legal right to physically intervene even if they have not had such training. However, they would still need to demonstrate that their intervention was reasonable and proportionate).*

## **8. COMPLAINTS**

By following this policy and by keeping parents and governors informed complaints will be minimised. All disputes which arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.

**ANNEX1.****Positive Handling Plan**

For assessing and managing foreseeable risks for children who are likely to need Restrictive Physical Intervention

**Name of child:** .....

**Class group:** .....

**Name of teacher:** .....

**Name of parents/Carers:** .....

<b>Identification of Risk</b>	
Describe the foreseeable risk (ie what specific behaviours have occurred)	
Is the risk potential or actual? (ie has this happened before)	
List who is affected by the risk	
<b>Assessment of Risk</b>	
In which situations does the risk occur?	
How likely it is that the risk will arise? (ie how often has it happened before)	
If the risk arises, who is likely to be injured or hurt?	
What kinds of injuries or harm are likely to occur?	
How serious are the adverse outcomes?	

**Assessment completed by:** .....

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Agreed Positive Handling Plan and School Risk Management Strategy**

Focus of Measures	Measures to be employed	Level of risk
Proactive interventions to prevent risks		
Early interventions to manage risks		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		

**Agreed by:**

**Date:**

.....  
(Parent/carer)

.....

.....  
(Child - if appropriate)

.....  
(Headteacher)

.....  
(Classteacher)

.....  
(Support Service Member/s)

.....

**Communication of Positive Handling Plan and School Risk Management Strategy**

Plans and strategies shared with:	Communication Method	Date Actioned

**Staff Training Issues**

Identified training needs	Training provided to meet needs	Date training completed



**Evaluation of Positive Handling Plan and School Risk Management Strategy**

Measures set out	Effectiveness in supporting the child	Impact on risk
Proactive interventions to prevent risks		
Early interventions to manage risks		
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		

**ACTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

**Plans and strategies evaluated by:**

**Title:**

.....

.....

**Date:**

.....

*[Adapted from DfES document]*