

These guidelines are intended to conform with, and should be read in conjunction with Section 550A of the Education Act 1996; DFEE circular 10/98 'Guidance on the use of force to control or restrain pupils'; Barking and Dagenham LA "Safeguarding Children Guidance". Neither Section 550A nor the LBBD guidance authorises the use of corporal punishment.

Rationale

This policy should be viewed as part of the school policies on behaviour and child protection. It seeks to offer clear guidelines for the management of incidents which result in physical control or restraint by members of staff.

It is our strong belief that school should provide a friendly safe environment and ***"orchestrate a fully 'joined up' provision, where all children, regardless of their starting point, reach their full potential."*** (The School Mission Statement). We have a positive approach to managing children's behaviour, and promote control through building and maintaining good staff/pupil relationships, and flexibility in dealing with children's needs.

The maintenance of good order is required as part of teacher's 'duty to care' and their duty to act in 'loco parentis'.

Skilful use of personal and professional judgement, together with the promotion of a calm atmosphere, order and predictable routines all contribute to an environment which will enable children to feel safe.

Staff who act professionally and within these guidelines will be supported if a situation arises where physical restraint is necessary.

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to protect children and adults working with them.

Guidelines

1. There are situations when physical contact is appropriate. A pat on the back, a held hand or cuddle are appropriate actions and it is not intended to deter normal physical contact. Staff, however, should be sensitive to children who are not comfortable with such contact, including those who may have Special Educational Needs who may react in an extreme way to physical contact.
2. Physical restraint cannot be part of the rewards and sanctions of our behaviour policy. It is a form of care and control of pupils which staff are allowed to employ when all alternatives have been tried and failed and staff believe it is their duty to intervene as a child is acting in an unsafe manner and/or if the urgency of the situation does not allow for alternative action.

3. The use of Physical restraint should always be a last resort. Other strategies which might be tried include:
 - allowing space/time
 - cajoling
 - talking
 - reasoning
 - diversion
 - humouring
 - distraction
4. There may be occasions when staff find themselves in a confrontational situation when physical contact cannot be avoided, or it may be appropriate to use physical restraint to reduce the level of aggression or danger.
5. Physical restraint is only one form of physical intervention. Physical interventions may take various forms including;
 - Standing between children
 - Blocking a child's path
 - Holding them

❖ The intervention is to prevent a situation developing or to de-escalate it.
6. Where restraint is used it must be in proportion to the circumstances it is trying to prevent.
7. It should involve the minimum reasonable force necessary to achieve the desired result/restore order and should take into account the age, gender and ethnicity of the child, their level of understanding, and seek to avoid restriction of breathing and injury.
8. The duration of the restraint will be the minimum necessary to restore safety.
9. Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 clarifies where and when 'reasonable force' is legally permitted. Guidance can be found in the "Use of reasonable Force" document (published by the DfE in 2013, updated 2025). It can be used by 'authorised persons' on school premises or when he or she has lawful control or charge of the pupil (e.g. school trip) to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do the following:
 - injuring themselves or others
 - causing damage to property, including the pupil's own property
 - engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at school or among pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom, during a teaching session or elsewhere.
 - Committing a criminal offence.
 - There is however, no legal definition of 'reasonable force' It will always depend on the circumstances of the incident.
10. Whenever possible the child should be warned clearly that you are likely to take physical action. Then given an instruction and the opportunity to comply.

11. Handling must avoid the adult touching or holding a child in a way that might be considered indecent or putting their weight on the child.
12. Physical interventions should normally bring a child to a seated position.
13. The presence of another adult to assist and/or witness the intervention and assume responsibility for the well being of the child is always desirable.
14. Ensure that restraint is seen as care and control of pupils and not punishment. It should never be undertaken in anger and members of staff who are uncomfortable with it should not be required to do it.
15. Since the aim of intervening physically is to restore safety and calm to them situation, during an incident staff must seek as far as possible to:
 - calm the child by continually and quietly offering verbal reassurance
 - make it clear that the restraint will stop as soon as the child complies with instructions
 - never give the impression of acting out anger or losing temper or punishing the child
 - refrain from moving the child whenever possible – but move others
 - provide the child with the opportunity to calm down and regain self control without the need for eye contact
 - stay with the child as long as necessary, remembering it can take at least an hour for adrenaline levels to return to normal.
 - Anger by the child towards a member of staff attempting to exercise reasonable control should not be taken personally.
16. Physical intervention can take several forms and might involve:
 - physical intervening between two children
 - standing in a child's way
 - holding
 - carrying
 - leading a child by the hand or arm
 - (in extreme circumstances) holding a child in your lap
17. No other force would be reasonable.

Follow-Up Action

18. As soon as possible after the incident report the matter to the Headteacher. Together compile a detailed account. The 'Numbered and Bound Book' should be completed and include:
 - The name of the child and when and where the incident took place.
 - The names of staff or children who witnessed the incident
 - The reason the 'reasonable force' was necessary
 - How the incident began and progressed, what strategies were used and what was said.

- The child's response and the outcome of the incident
- Details of any injury to child, other children or staff
- **Accident book reference**

19. Reports for minor trivial incidents are not required. Staff should check with the Headteacher and DSL if unsure.
20. In rare circumstances if physical intervention is seen as necessary for a short period the Headteacher will discuss the situation with the child's parents.
21. Parents of all pupils who have been the subject of physical restraint will need to be informed. This will be undertaken by the Headteacher at a face to face meeting. The parents will be given the opportunity to discuss the incident further at a later date if they choose.
22. All recorded incidents will be reviewed afterwards to determine what lessons can be drawn from the incident and what strategies can be put in place to avoid similar situations in the future. This may include; a Behaviour Plan, staff deployment, changes to the daily routine.
23. Should an incident give rise to a complaint from the parent of a pupil against a member of staff, the parent will be provided with the school's complaints policy as well as a copy of Positive Handling.
24. If the matter cannot be resolved informally/formally at school level then the school will consider referral to the LA Complaints Procedures and Child Protection Team.
25. Despite adherence to these guidelines, staff may still find themselves subject to challenges from parents and it is recommended that all staff are members of a professional association/trade union.
26. Staff who are assaulted by a pupil should report the incident to the Headteacher.

Good Practice When Handling an Incident

1. Keep your voice calm and speak slowly to the child.
2. Offer choices and give time for the situation to calm down.
3. Humour can be effective.
4. Maintain a non threatening stance allowing the child some body space.
5. Be calmly assertive giving clear directions. Avoid ultimatums
6. Be aware of your own feelings and how they could affect your objectivity or tolerance.
7. Call for assistance. Having a second person present is a safeguard both as a witness and to assist.