



# WELLGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY AND GUIDELINES ON PHYSICAL CARE AND CONTROL

## **1 Definition**

1.1 Physical care and control is a form of physical contact in which one person imposes his or her will upon another often (but not always) by the use of superior physical strength. It is not a form of corporal punishment which is not allowed in any circumstances, nor should it be confused with other means of influencing pupils' behaviour through physical contact, such as the use of physical prompts to assist a child in acquiring particular motor or other skills.

1.2 Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in *loco parentis* and should, therefore, take responsible action to ensure pupils' safety and well being. Failure to physically control a pupil who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, leads to an accusation of negligence. At the same time staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention.

1.3 In many situations involving physical control it is not possible to provide definitive guidance covering every eventuality and those authorised to use it will be expected to exercise their own judgement and to act reasonably.

## **2 Who can apply physical care and control**

2.1 In accordance with DfES regulations the Head Teacher must authorise staff and others the use physical restraint in the circumstances and in the ways described in this policy document, including teaching staff, school meals assistants and the school caretaker. Voluntary helpers in school, such as parents, are generally not authorised, except when they are accompanying pupils on out of school activities, such as school trips, and have been specifically authorised to do so in preparation for the activity. Team training has been carried out by C. Kirkman, K. Mitchell, and R. Hayes. These staff are therefore authorised to use physical restraint and should be called upon when required.

## **3 Where physical care or control may be used**

3.1 Authorised staff can use physical control when they are on school premises and in charge of pupils and on other occasions when they have lawful control of pupils on behalf of the school, such as on school trips or other out of school activities.

## **4 When the use of physical control is appropriate**

4.1 Physical control may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following

- 1 committing a criminal offence (or what would be a criminal offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility);
- 2 Injuring themselves or others;
- 3 causing damage to property, including their own;
- 4 engaging in behaviour which is prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise.

4.2 It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical control would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the School's policy on behaviour and discipline, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

## **5 Alternative Strategies**

5.1 There are some situations in which the need for physical control is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives (eg is a pupil about to run across a road). However, in many circumstances there are alternatives such as:

Use of assertiveness skills such as the *broken record* in which an instruction is repeated until the pupil complies;

Withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened;

Other techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with later when emotions are no longer running high); and

The employment of other sanctions consistent with the School's policy on behaviour and discipline.

## **6 How to apply physical control**

6.1 Staff are only authorised to use Team Teach techniques in applying control, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the pupil to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent the behaviour should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

6.2 There are some forms of physical intervention, which may involve minimal physical contact, such as blocking a pupils' path or the staff member physically interposing him or herself between the pupil and another pupil or object. However, in many circumstances, direct physical contact may be necessary.

6.3 In all circumstances other methods should be used if appropriate or effective – physical control is a last resort. If it is necessary:-

### **DO**

Tell the pupil what you are doing and why

Use the minimum force necessary

Involve another member of staff if possible

Tell the pupil what s/he must do for you to remove the control (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 control in response to the pupil's compliance

## **DON'T**

Act in temper (involve another staff member if you have lost control of your emotions)

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

Slap, punch or kick

Trip up a pupil

6.4 Physical control should be 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 pupil to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as a punishment.

## **7 Actions after an incident**

7.1 Physical control is likely to occur in response to highly charged emotional situation and there is a clear need for the debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. Senior school staff should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised.

7.2 A member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and, as well as talking through the situation with the pupil, consideration should be given to whether or not the incident merits the involvement of the SENCO or other outside support services in addition to pastoral staff. If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behavioural IEP, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies delivered by the support services. It will also be helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

7.3 Any victims of the incident should be offered counselling and this can be arranged through the Educational Psychology Services which also offers a trauma response service to major crises or incidents.

7.4 All incidents should be recorded within 24 hours of the incident on a Pupil Control Report Form (attached). All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available.

7.5 The Head Teacher or a senior member of staff will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

## **8 School Security**

8.1 A Balance needs to be struck between ensuring that pupils are safe from intruders and other external forces and restriction of liberty, which could be construed as false imprisonment. Pupils should not generally be restrained by locking doors, but if this should occur for good reason, it should not be prolonged and a member of staff should be present at all times.

## **9 Other forms of acceptable physical contact**

9.1 Physical prompts used to shape a pupil's social behaviour, such as placing a hand on a shoulder to encourage the pupil to move to another part of the room, probably accompanied by a verbal instruction, border on physical control and staff will have to exercise their professional judgement in some cases, taking into account the degree of compliance by the pupil to such a strategy.

9.2 There are other occasions when physical contact between staff and pupils may be appropriate, for example in PE activities or other lessons where pupils are practising physical skills and where physical prompting is employed as part of a teaching strategy. At no time should there be any contact with sexual areas.

9.3 Administration of first aid will require physical contact and, in some cases, a distressed pupil may be comforted. In the latter case touching should be restricted to arms, hands and shoulders. In any such case staff should be alert to the implications of the following:

Any history of physical or sexual abuse

Cultural factors

The age and gender of the pupil

9.4 In general, such contact should take place within view of other staff, although exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement, may demand some degree of privacy.

9.5 Carrying out particular procedures, such as the administration of rectal Valium should be carried out by staff trained for this purpose, in accordance with an individual plan for the pupil concerned.

## **10 Maintenance of policy**

10.1 This policy has been agreed by the Senior Management Team and Governors of the School and has been discussed with parents, to whom it is available on request at all times. It is reviewed every two years alongside the School Policy on Behaviour and Discipline. Where appropriate, every attempt is made to harmonise the procedures used with policies developed by Children's Services and the Health Service.

10.2 It forms part of an induction package for all new staff employed by the school.