

	Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy	
	Last reviewed: September 2023	Next review: September 2026
	Linked Governor: Andy Cunningham	SLT Member: Hash Khalil

1 Introduction

Ashlyns School believes that students 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. Only for a very small minority of students will the use of physical intervention ever be needed. On such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used in line with Hertfordshire Steps guidance.

The majority of students behave well and conform to the expectations at Ashlyns. We have responsibility to operate an effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class, and individual students.

All school staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of challenging behaviours and how they are communicated. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour, and they need to be 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 with us, 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” is the term used to describe interventions where bodily contact using force is used to control or manage a child’s behaviour. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has to use “reasonable force” to control or restrain students.

There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. However, there are six relevant considerations in relation to a practical definition for use at Ashlyns School:

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 students.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student 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 needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control students and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom.

5. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students 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 student.

The definition of physical force also includes the use of mechanical devices, forcible seclusion or use of locked doors. It is important for staff to note that, although no physical contact may be made in the latter situations, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

3 When the use of restrictive physical interventions may be appropriate

Restrictive Physical Interventions may be used in the following circumstances:

- 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)
- to remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- to prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others

3.1 Power to search students without consent

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':

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- vapes
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

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 students 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 students are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

4 Who may use restrictive physical intervention?

The following staff are authorised by the Headteacher to have control of students, and must be aware of this Policy and its implications. However, non-inclusion on this list does not

mean that an adult is necessarily barred from using physical intervention. If the Head has lawfully placed an adult in charge of children then that adult will be entitled to use restrictive physical intervention.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and that removing other students and themselves from risky situations may be the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the students.

Authorised staff:

‘Authorised staff’ refers to any teacher who works at the school **and** any other person whom the head has authorised to have control or charge of students, including:

- support staff whose job normally includes supervising students, such as teaching assistants, learning support assistants, learning mentors, lunchtime supervisors and invigilators
- people to whom the Headteacher has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of students, such as paid members of staff whose job doesn’t normally involve supervising students (e.g. catering or premises staff) and unpaid volunteers (e.g. parents/governors accompanying students on school-organised visits);

Students are **not** included in this remit

This power may be used where a student (including. one from another school) is on school premises or in the lawful control or charge of the member of staff – e.g. on a school visit.

5 Planning for the use of restrictive physical interventions

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.
- Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the criteria for its use are met as outlined in section 3.
- Staff will only use Restrictive Physical Intervention when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the student’s and/or other student’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. Where possible, the student 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 to the 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 student 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 student will always be taken into account.
- In developing Individual Education/Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each student's circumstance.
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing students 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 intervention

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

- to comfort a student in distress (as long as this is appropriate to their age)
- to gently direct a student
- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Music, Drama etc)
- in an emergency to avert danger to the student or students
- when a student is being congratulated or praised
- to give first aid
- in rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted

In all situations where physical contact between staff and students takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the student's age and level of understanding
- the student'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. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular student. [Should a student appear to enjoy physical contact this must not be sought via Restrictive Physical Intervention.]

7 Developing a Positive Handling Plan

If a student is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This Plan will help the student and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing. The plan will include:

- involving parents/carers and student 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

- 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 student's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used
- identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the student
- ensuring a system to summon additional support
- identifying training needs

Please refer to Appendix 1 for a Physical Handling Plan Pro-forma

8 Guidance and training for staff

We adopt the best possible practice. In Ashlyns this is arranged for all staff at a number of levels including:

- awareness of issues for governors, staff and parents
- behaviour management techniques for all staff
- managing conflict in challenging situations for all staff

If required, training on practical techniques of physical intervention will be offered for staff where there is a significant likelihood of them needing to intervene physically due to the nature of the student (or students) that they are working with. Where there is an identified need for such training, staff will be trained by an approved instructor.

(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).

9 Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we can avoid the need for complaints. All disputes which arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to the Child Protection policy.

Positive Handling Plan – Ashlyns School

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

Name of student:.....

Tutor group:.....

Name of teacher:.....

Name of parents/Carers:.....

Support service member(s):.....

Identification of Risk	
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	
Assessment of Risk	
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:.....

Position:.....

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)

.....

.....
(Student - if appropriate)

.....
(Headteacher)

.....
(Class teacher)

.....
(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:.....

Position:.....

Date:.....