



PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

Aims

The Mease Spencer Academy follows the PROACT-SCIPr-UK® as the preferred methodology regarding Positive Behaviour Support, as supported by Derbyshire County Council. This is a values-based approach with an emphasis on being proactive – getting it right for the person, rather than being reactive or responding to an episode of challenging behaviour. The aim is to raise the person's self-esteem, improve quality of life, empower them and enable them to live a more independent and fulfilling lifestyle. Physical interventions are minimised through emphasis on sound behavioural support strategies.

This policy aims to give all members of the school community clear guidance so that any physical intervention is carried out in a way that supports these values and principles. In particular, it aims to describe the circumstances in which restrictive physical intervention is an appropriate response and how staff at school will fulfil their responsibilities in those circumstances. We are committed to ensuring and maintaining a safe working environment for everyone at the school and are committed to the Safety and Welfare of all children and young people who attend the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy. This includes ensuring that the culture of the school reflects the overarching policy and guidance.

The Principal should ensure that:-

- A Physical Intervention policy is in place and approved by the Governing Body, in line with the Local Authority Policy and Guidelines.
- The school policy is understood and adhered to by all staff.
- Best practice is kept up to date and modelled by the head teacher.
- All staff know the physical intervention procedures, including who to report to and where and how they should be recorded
- Practice relating to Physical Interventions is monitored.
- Training is available to staff relating to the use of Physical Interventions.

The Governing Body

The Governing body are responsible for ensuring safe practices are in place and are being followed. In particular the Governing Body should ensure that:-

- The school has a formally approved policy on the use of Physical Intervention.
- The policy is adhered to by the whole school community.
- The policy is reviewed regularly, (at least every 2 years) to ensure it remains valid and meets the needs of both pupils and staff.
- They receive and act upon reports relating to the implementation of the policy.
- Regular monitoring of the number and type of incidents recorded is carried out.
- The policy and its implementation is considered when making decisions relating to the school and its community.



The Special Needs Co-ordinator

The SENDCo will ensure that:-

- Risk assessments are in place for individual children as necessary and the use of Physical Interventions is planned wherever possible.
- Risk assessments are circulated and understood by all staff involved with a pupil.
- All incidents where a physical Intervention has been used are recorded and followed up.

All Members of Staff

All members of staff have responsibilities as outlined by the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to comply with this policy.

Members of staff will:-

- Make themselves familiar with and adhere to the schools Physical Intervention Policy.
- Be aware of safe systems of work and risk assessments, including control measures relevant to their area of work.
- Record any incidents of Physical Intervention.

Physical Touch

Physical touch is an essential part of human relationships. At The Mease Spencer Academy we recognise that touch may be used within school to prompt, to give reassurance or to provide support, but this must be used sensitively and appropriately, in line with our Child Protection protocols and the unique needs, characteristics and preferences of the individual.

To use touch/physical support successfully, staff will adhere to the following principles. It must:

- be non-abusive, with no intention to cause pain, injury or use power
- be in the best interests of the child and others
- have a clear supportive purpose for the pupil/young person

Some pupils may find physical touch unwelcome and this right must be respected. Such sensitivity may arise from the pupil/young person's cultural background, individual needs, personal history, age etc. It is important that the pupil perceives the intention of our actions as we intend them to.

With the above in mind and based on the principal that touch will only be used in appropriate situations in school the likely situations where touch will be acceptable are:

- administering first aid
- supporting a pupil in certain PE activities
- giving emotional support
- delivering care

This is not an exhaustive list.

Avoiding the need for Physical Intervention

Positive Behaviour Support involves proactive intervention to address individual needs before problems arise. If proactive interventions are effective, challenging behaviours should become rare.



Behaviour plans are primarily proactive and involve analysis of the function(s) of behaviour and focus on meeting needs and developing skills so that negative behaviours are less likely to occur.

What Is 'Physical Intervention'?

There is a difference between Physical Intervention and Restrictive Physical Intervention. At Hilton primary School these are defined as follows:

Type	Definition	Example
Non-restrictive physical interventions.	Where physical touch is used to support the young person and they have the choice to move away from the touch or where a cause of distress can be removed without the need to touch the young person.	This may include: • guiding/shepherding a person from A to B • leading a pupil gently by the hand • Removal of a cause of distress, such as adjusting temperature, light or background noise. • Redirecting someone away from known behavioural triggers.
Restrictive physical interventions	Where the adult takes control of the young person and their actions to prevent, impede or restrict movement or mobility.	In this school this may include: • Isolating a child in a room • Holding a pupil • Blocking a person's path • Inter-positioning • Holding a pupil's hands or feet • Being contained in a safe area

Strategies to Minimise the Need to Use Force

Staff at The Mease Spencer Academy will do all they can to avoid the use of force to physically restrain pupils in all but the most extreme circumstances. In order to do this the academy will implement the following positive behaviour support strategies to ensure the use of force is minimised:-

- Follow the positive behaviour management strategies as detailed in the behaviour management and discipline policy.
- Ensure all staff adhere to the Physical Intervention policy regarding the use of force as a last resort.
- Use proactive interventions with individuals or groups who are at risk of involvement in dangerous behaviour in an attempt to avoid the need for physical intervention.
- Recognise that challenging behaviours are often foreseeable and have plans and risk assessments in place to deal with these eventualities.
- Monitor all incidents where force is required to ensure any trends are identified. Put plans in place to reduce the risks associated with the use of force.
- Whenever practicable, tell a pupil that force may need to be used before using it.
- Plan for staff development in behaviour management, including positive behaviour support strategies, so that staff have the confidence and skills necessary to manage potentially dangerous situations.



Duty of Care

Staff should be aware that their employment imposes upon them a duty of care to maintain an acceptable level of safety. It is acknowledged that the behaviour of pupils can become dangerous and physical intervention may be required. This is inevitably a high risk action. Guidelines cannot anticipate every situation and, therefore, the sound judgement of staff at all times is crucial. This may mean not getting physically involved if this would put you at direct risk, but could include summoning relevant assistance. It is not acceptable to do nothing.

Who May Use Restrictive Physical Interventions

Only “Authorised staff” may use restrictive physical interventions within The Mease Spencer Academy. The term “Authorised Staff” means any paid worker, or person who has been given lawful control or charge of pupils by the headteacher, either on or off-site. Authorisation may be on a long or short term basis for a specific event e.g. a field trip. Under no circumstances will the school give authorisation to other pupils to be involved in the use of force.

Authorised staff will normally include Teachers, Teaching Assistants and non teaching staff employed by the Academy who, with the authority of the Principal, have lawful control or charge of children and young people. It may include volunteers working at the school on a regular, or irregular, basis.

When May a Restrictive Physical Intervention Be Used

Physical Intervention may be necessary in order to:

- prevent a pupil injuring themselves or others, (e.g. rough play, stopping a young person from running towards traffic),
- prevent a pupil causing serious damage to property,
- prevent a pupil committing an offence (or for any pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be considered an offence for an older person).

These are examples of circumstances when we may consider the use of a restrictive physical intervention;

- a pupil is injuring themselves or others
- a pupil is trying to leave the school site and it is judged that the child would be at risk
- a pupil is causing serious and significant damage to property

Section 93, DCFS guidance “The use of force to control or restrain pupils.

Section 93 also allows the use of force ‘to prevent a pupil from engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline....’

Physical interventions will only be used in exceptional circumstances. The school expects that staff will only use force in circumstances where:-

- The consequences of not intervening were sufficiently serious to justify the use of force,
- Achieving a safe outcome by other means had either been tried and exhausted,
- The risks associated with not using force outweigh those of using force.

The use of a restrictive physical intervention will be the outcome of professional judgements made according to this policy. It will be avoided when possible and not be used for the convenience of staff.

Restrictive physical intervention will *only* be considered if other behaviour management options have proved ineffective or are judged to be inappropriate (or in an emergency situation). Before deciding to



intervene in this way, staff will weigh up, the risk of not intervening against the risk of intervening. Any actions will be carried out in the best interest of the pupil.

NB. Staff deciding that not intervening physically is the safest course of action for them should be aware that simply doing nothing is not an option. The expectation is that as a minimum staff should raise the alarm and summon appropriate assistance.

Any physical intervention on a child or young person should calm the situation and not lead to an escalation of challenging behaviour or greater risk of injury.

The two types of physical interventions likely to be required in school are:-

Emergency/unplanned interventions	Use of force which occurs in response to unforeseen events. <i>This should always be a trigger for a Risk Assessment and planning once it has occurred.</i>
Planned interventions	Any situation that staff might reasonably expect to occur, in which staff employ, where necessary, pre-arranged strategies and methods which are based on a risk assessment. Planned Interventions must be recorded in a Physical Intervention Plan. <i>This could be in an individual plan for the management of the behaviour of a specific pupil but could be generic risk assessments and plans for situations which are likely to occur such as a fight in a playground.</i>

a) Individual Physical Intervention Plans

These are essential when it is known that a young person may behave in a way that will require a physical intervention, (from records from a previous setting or a history of incidents at the school).

In these cases:

- A risk assessment and an individual physical intervention plan are in place, taking account of the needs of the pupil and identifying ways of addressing needs.
- Appropriate support services have been consulted and their advice sought.
- The plan and risk assessment are fully communicated to those in direct contact with the pupil.
- The plan identifies triggers and warning signs of the dangerous behaviour.
- The plan includes positive behaviour support strategies to manage the behaviour without the use of physical interventions
- The physical interventions to be used and the points at which they are to be used are specific.
- A PROACT-SCIPr-UK® instructor has been involved in drawing up the plan
- That parents/carers, staff and pupils (where appropriate) have been involved in drawing up the plan and are clear about the specific actions staff may need to take
- That the pupil's Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disability, have been fully considered. This will include seeking medical advice regarding how restraint could affect a pupil with disability or medical condition.
- The plan is reviewed after every intervention, to ensure it is still appropriate.



b) Planned Generic Physical Interventions

The school will attempt to identify situations where these events may predictably occur, (e.g. fights, rough play, serious disruption of teaching), and will put in place agreed risk assessments protocols to deal with such events. These will be communicated to staff and any necessary training will be accessed.

It is the responsibility of every member of staff to ensure they act in accordance with these plans and risk assessments.

c) Unplanned Physical Interventions

These by their very nature are more difficult to deal with and will certainly involve staff making on the spot decisions about if and how to intervene.

In emergency or unplanned situations staff will need to carry out a dynamic risk assessment based on the circumstances at the time, professional judgement, this policy and any training received.

Staff are not expected to intervene physically against their better judgement, nor are they expected to place themselves at unreasonable risk. They must take steps to minimise risks. For example, by removing other pupils and calling for assistance.

Staff must never use physical restraint out of anger or frustration.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should focus on the significant risks involved in carrying out a Physical Intervention and the actual circumstances, therefore, it is impossible to cover all eventualities in a policy. Risk Assessments will be carried out by competent staff, authorised by the Principal, and may involve a Behaviour Support Teacher or other specialist staff.

There are many things to consider in both a planned and a dynamic risk assessment and the following are examples of factors which must be taken into account when evaluating the risk and in determining the control measures to be employed. The list is not exhaustive;

- Any known SEN including; social, emotional, communication, physical or medical needs,
- The age, relative physique, and known medical conditions of both the adult and the child or young person;
- The presence of a second adults available to assist, monitor and witness the physical intervention;
- The availability of a second, or other adult;
- Spectacles, hearing aids, jewellery and clothing worn by the child or young person;
- The adults capacity to act calmly and systematically;
- The location of the incident and the potential for the physical intervention to be carried out safely;
- The potential outcomes of not intervening;
- Whether other techniques not involving force have been tried,
- The presence of other pupils/bystanders who could escalate risk to staff or any child.



Methods of Restrictive Physical Intervention

When a restrictive physical intervention is justified, staff will use “reasonable force”. This is the degree of force “warranted by the situation”. It will be ‘proportionate to the circumstances of the incident and the consequences it is intended to prevent’. Any force used will be the minimum degree and time needed to achieve a safe outcome.

The physical intervention must:

- not involve hitting the child or young person
- not involve “punitive” acts such as deliberately inflicting pain on the child or young person
- not restricting the pupil’s breathing, e.g. throat or chest holds or pressing the child or young person’s face into soft furnishings
- avoid the genital area, buttocks or breasts of the pupil
- avoid the adult putting weight upon the child or young person in any way
- avoid holding joints or pulling on joints.

During any incident of physical intervention adults must, seek to:

- Minimise the need for, or length of, any physical intervention
- Lower the child or young person’s level of anger or distress during the physical intervention by continually offering verbal re-assurance and avoid fear of injury in the child or young person
- Cause the minimum restriction of movement of limbs consistent with the level of risk to safety and welfare
- Take account of the potential for accidental injury during the physical intervention by using a method appropriate for the environment in which it is taking place
- Work together as a team, with one member taking the lead
- Exclude any other pupil from assisting with the physical intervention
- Avoid moving the child or young person during the physical intervention. This is only justifiable in situations when remaining in the original location is more dangerous.

In circumstances where force is necessary and there is no alternative, the following basic points should be considered when undertaking a physical intervention;

- Stabilise or redirect as quickly and as safely as possible;
- Hold clothes instead of skin;
- Do not hold on a joint
- Avoid pressure on vulnerable areas such as neck, diaphragm and stomach;
- Avoid pressure on areas which will restrict blood flow;
- Avoiding contact with sexual areas;
- Be sensitive to the pupil so that control can be returned to her/him as soon as possible.



What to Do After the Use of a Restrictive Physical Intervention

Recording Events and Actions

After an event it is important that accurate and detailed records of incidents of physical intervention are made on CPOMS when:

- a) Any incident which caused injury or distress to a pupil or member of staff (where an injury is involved the schools accident reporting guidance must also be followed);
- b) Any incident which is sufficiently serious in its own right to require an incident record to be completed (even though there was no apparent injury or distress). Any use of restrictive physical interventions will fall into this category.
- c) Any incident where a written record is needed to be able to justify the use of force. (This is relevant where the staff involved feel the judgement was finely balanced).
- d) Any incident where a record will help the school to identify and analyse patterns of pupil behaviour or will help to inform future training.
- e) Any incident which involved other agencies e.g. the police.

If more than one member of staff is involved, all should record the physical intervention. The report will include:

- The name(s) of the pupil (s) involved;
- The name(s) of the staff involved;
- When and where the incident took place;
- The name(s) of other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident;
- The reason why physical intervention was necessary;
- How the incident began and progressed, why the physical intervention was used, details of the pupil's behaviour, what the member of staff said and did to defuse the situation, the physical intervention used, how it was applied and for how long;
- The pupil's response and the outcome of the incident;
- Details of any injury suffered by anyone and subsequent medical attention given
- Details of any damage to property;
- A description of action taken after the incident;

The Principal or a senior member of staff should be informed of any incident of physical intervention as soon as possible.

Witness Statements

Where a physical intervention has been used statements will be taken from witnesses. This will be carried out by the Principal or a senior member of staff. This should be carried out as quickly as possible so that witnesses do not have the opportunity to influence each other's statement and added to CPOMS.

Follow Up Action

The pupil and staff involved in an incident of physical intervention will have an opportunity to discuss the matter with the Principal or an appropriate senior member of staff.

Any lessons learned as a result of this discussion will be used by the school to update behaviour plans and risk assessments.



Parents and carers of pupils involved in an incident of physical intervention will be informed of what has happened to their child and offered an opportunity to discuss this with the Principal or a senior member of staff.

Any member of staff involved in an incident of physical intervention may need time to recover and regain their composure. They should also be given the opportunity to discuss how the incident of physical intervention has affected them personally with an appropriate colleague.

For planned physical interventions the risk assessment should be reviewed. This should result in a number of actions aimed at meeting needs and reducing the risk of incidents and harm to other pupils and staff, such as:

- preparation of individual plans to address a range of needs
- avoidance of known triggers
- addressing environmental factors and teaching skills.

Handling Complaints

Complaints about physical contact or intervention will be considered in the light of existing statutory routes of investigation. These are:

- Safeguarding (Local Authority advice);
- Disciplinary Procedures (School policies/Spencer Academies Trust advice).

The Principal or a senior member of staff will consult with the School's Safeguarding Co-ordinator, and Authority's Child Protection Officer. If there are no grounds for continuing with either of these procedures the complaint will be dealt with through the Governing Body's normal Complaints Procedure.

Monitoring

The Principal and Governing Body will review the implementation of the Policy on Physical Intervention at appropriate intervals. The Physical Intervention Policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years.

Julia Hart, September 2025

