



# Physical Intervention Policy

**Introductory Statement:**

**Our approach to best practice**

and legislation

unavoidable

St. Peter's recognises that there is a need, reflected in common law, to intervene when there is an ~~obvious~~ risk of safety to its pupils, staff <sup>or</sup> and property. We are committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare ~~will~~ deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour, and only use physical intervention as a last resort, in the interest of safety ~~for others~~ and it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff. This policy applies to all staff in the school. The best practice regarding physical intervention outlined below should be considered alongside other relevant policies in the school, specifically the Code of behaviour, the anti-bullying and health and safety policies. In the following situations staff must judge whether or not physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate:

- Risk to the safety of staff, pupils or visitors; ✓
  - Where there is a risk of serious damage to property; ✓ or
  - Where a pupil's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline; ✓ or
  - Where a pupil is committing a criminal offence. ✓
- This judgement will take into account the circumstances of the incident. All staff should be aware that the use of physical intervention in response to a clear or developing danger of injury ~~will always be more justifiable than~~ the use of force to prevent damage or misbehaviour. ✓ *↳ will be viewed differently to*
  - Staff ~~will use~~ <sup>must use</sup> physical intervention or restraint of pupils <sup>only</sup> as a last resort to maintaining ~~the~~ safety <sup>environment</sup>. If pupils are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation. ✓
  - Staff ~~will~~ <sup>must</sup> understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment which is generally calm and supportive especially when dealing with pupils who may have emotional and behavioural needs which may increase their despair and aggression. ✓
  - All staff ~~will~~ <sup>must</sup> understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child, which lie beneath the behaviour as well as to the behaviour itself.

**Our Practice regarding specific incidents**

- Where possible staff intervening with children will seek assistance from other members of staff at as early a stage as possible since single-handed intervention increases the risks of injury to both parties and does not provide a witness. ✓
- Where possible all staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a pupil ~~will~~ have a responsibility to provide a presence, and to offer support and assistance should this be required. *The minimum number of staff needed to hold a child safely is two.*
- A pupil's behaviour may be adversely affected by the presence of an audience. Wherever possible, the audience will be removed, or if this is not possible, the pupil will be removed from the audience. The pupil and member(s) of staff will withdraw to a quiet, but not completely private, place (e.g. two members of staff should be present or a door left open so that others are aware of the situation). ✓
- Staff will tell the pupil being restrained, in a calm and gentle manner that the reason for the intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the pupil calms down, she/he will be released. ✓

**Physical Intervention/Restraint Approaches**

The following approaches are regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances:

and based on the child's history of behaviour as documented eg in their IEP.

- Holding for security and to reduce anxiety, where there is potential risk, even if the pupil is not yet out of control. This is best used when the pupil is anxious or confused. Its purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation. Staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted by the pupil as aggression.
- Physically interposing between pupils. *where it is safe to do so.*
- Blocking a pupil's path. *where it is safe to do so.*
- Pushing if restricted to situations where reasonable force is used to resist a pupil's movement, rather than a forceful push that might cause the pupil to fall over.
- Pulling a pupil to reduce harm to themselves or others.
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm.
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand *on their* ~~in the centre of the~~ back.
- Containing a child in a room on their own while monitoring them at all times.
- In extreme cases using restrictive holds.

The following approaches are regarded as ~~unreasonable~~ *exceptional* and should not be used *only if absolutely necessary and strictly proportionate:*

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict a pupil's ability to breathe
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping a pupil
- Holding a pupil by the hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground

(It is for the courts to decide what is "Reasonable Force". Policy should not attempt to limit the lawful use of force in exceptional circumstances.)

## Recording an incident

- All incidents that result in **non-routine interventions** will be recorded in detail on Aladdin (the school's software system).
- A record of the incident will be recorded written within 24 hours of the incident's occurrence by the staff member involved in the original incident. Similarly, notes will also be made by any other members of staff involved (i.e. as witnesses or additional providers of support).

The non-routine interventions notes will contain the following information:

- The name(s) and the job title(s) of the member(s) of staff who used reasonable force
- The name(s) of the pupil(s) involved
- When and where the incident took place
- Names of staff and pupils who witnessed the incident
- The reason that force was necessary ✓
- The progress of the incident including:
  - Behaviour of the pupil which led up to the incident
  - Any attempts to resolve the situation
  - What was said by staff and pupil
  - The degree of force used *(proportionate use of force)*
  - How it was applied
  - How long it was used for
- The pupil's response and the eventual outcome
- Details of any injuries suffered by either staff or pupils
- Details of any damage to property

- Details of any medical treatment required (an accident form will be completed) ✓
- Details of any follow-up, including contact with the parents/carers of the pupil(s) involved
- Any other relevant details e.g. the involvement of any other agency, e.g. the Police

Pupil witnesses may also be asked to provide a written account if appropriate. ✓

Routine incidents of physical intervention, usually for pupils with identified needs as set out in the pupil's Individual Education Plan; Individual Behaviour Plan will need to be recorded as follows:

- Name of child
- Date
- Name of member of staff who intervened
- Name of any witnesses
- Brief description of the reason for intervention ✓
- Brief description of action taken
- Details of any follow up with parents

+ Necessity  
+ Proportionality

stake pupil

Post-Incident Review

**Debriefing Arrangements** Usually 1) immediate debrief and 2) root cause analysis

- The pupil and the member of staff will check for any sign of injury after an incident. First aid will be administered to anyone who requires it.
- The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise her/him. When the pupil regains complete composure, a senior member of staff (or her/his nominee) will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain the reason for its occurrence. Where possible, the pupil will be given an opportunity to explain things from her/his point of view. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish the relationship between the pupil and the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.
- In cases where it is not possible to speak to the pupil on the same day as the incident occurred, the debrief will take place as soon as possible after the pupil returns to school.
- All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff (or her/his nominee) will provide support to the member of staff involved.
- The Principal will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity of any incidents where physical intervention or restraint was used. The Principal (or his/her nominee) will initiate the recording process if not already underway and review each incident to ensure that any necessary lessons are learned.

**Training Needs of Staff**

In extreme cases where it is known that a pupil will require physical intervention, appropriate training will be provided for relevant staff. Staff involved will identify their training needs in this area.

↳ This is Leadership's job under HSA law & guidance

**Authorisation of staff to use physical intervention**

We recognise that most of the time physical intervention will be used infrequently, that is, as a last resort to maintaining a safe environment. ✓ Therefore, staff will only use reasonable physical interventions if they feel there is a safety risk to the child, other children or if they feel property could be damaged. ✓

**Arrangements for Informing Parents**

Parents will be informed of the school's policy regarding physical intervention in the following ways:

- At the outset of the introduction of this policy, all parents/carers will be informed about the policy. ✓
- Staff who work with particular children who have learning, physical disabilities or other unique needs special needs may need to use specific techniques routinely to manage challenging behaviour. Such arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers in advance on an individual basis. All interventions will be routinely recorded. ✓
- Parents will be informed after a non-routine incident where physical intervention is used with their child. ✓  
*When? how? perhaps expand this.*

### **Related Policies/Documents**

- Child Protection- This policy forms part of the Child Protection Risk Assessment ✓
- Code of Behaviour ✓
- Health and Safety ✓✓
- Risk assessment for aggressive and/or threatening behaviour ✓✓

### **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed as necessary

### **Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on February 26<sup>th</sup> 2019