

Horndale County Infant and Nursery School

Scholars Path, Newton Aycliffe DL5 7HB



Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

Written: January 2025

Review: January 2026

Approved by Chair of Governors February 2025

PREFACE

The Department for Education and the Department of Health (DoH) have responded to the issue of managing children who present with challenging behaviour by giving guidance to promote good practice. This includes the following documents:

- 'Use of Reasonable Force' Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies' (DfE 2012)
- 'Guide for Heads and school staff on behaviour and discipline' (2012)
- 'Ensuring good behaviour in schools' (2012)
- 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other staff'. Guidance for Local Authorities, Head Teachers, School Staff, governing Bodies and Proprietors of Independent Schools' (2011)
- 'Guidance on the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who Display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disabilities and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders' (2002)
- BILD Physical Interventions A Policy Framework (1996, 2008)
- BILD Code of Practice for the use and reduction of restrictive physical interventions. Kidderminster: BILD (2010)

Similarly the Durham Local Authority has produced a policy that makes a clear, unambiguous statement about the practice of Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPI) within educational establishments. The LA policy describes the context and circumstances in which it may be appropriate to use different forms of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI).

In keeping with the Department for Education guidance and the LA policy this policy and guidance, and its accompanying appendices, are designed to help schools protect children and staff.

This policy is organised into sections covering the following:

- introduction
- aims
- rationale
- definition of terms
- principles
- implementation
- review
- appendices

INTRODUCTION

This policy statement is intended as a supporting guide to our school's behaviour management policy, outlining what is acceptable practice and what is not.

The vast majority of pupils in our school behave well and conduct themselves in such a manner as to bring credit to themselves, their parents or carers, the school and the County. However, a small number of pupils may, on occasion, not meet the standards of behaviour and conduct the school expects of them for a wide variety of reasons.

To address these circumstances the school has developed a Behaviour Policy which:

- sets high expectations for the behaviour of all those within the school community;
- promotes a positive school ethos and a safe and secure learning environment;
- fosters mutual respect amongst staff, pupils, their parents and/or carers; and
- encourages in pupils the development of a positive self-concept/self-esteem

The School Behaviour Policy recognises the achievements and positive behaviour of pupils and ensures that these are recognised, shared and celebrated. It also recognises that reprimands and sanctions may need to be applied.

However, there may be circumstances where, when de-escalation and preventative strategies have failed, some form of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) may be unavoidable.

The School acknowledges the difference between restrictive forms of intervention, which are designed to prevent movement or mobility or to disengage from dangerous or harmful physical contact, and non-restrictive methods to manage behaviour.

Restrictive Positive Handling techniques are never used in isolation

RPI will usually be used as a response to an emergency. However, the School acknowledges that, in some circumstances, it may be considered in the best interests of a pupil to accept the possible use of RPI as part of a broader therapeutic or educational strategy. Where such approaches are planned, the School considers it important that they are based upon risk assessment; endorsed by partner agencies and parents or carers; and are included within the pupil's Positive Handling or Care Plan. However, any use of RPI must operate within the legal and ethical framework made explicit within this policy.

For the use of RPI by a teacher or other authorised person to be justified, it has to be demonstrated that it is warranted by, and in proportion to, the situation. Consideration should be given to the age, health, emotional state, etc., of the pupil. Every possible step should have been taken to prevent the situation, and to try to avoid the use of any RPI. Any force required should be reasonable and kept to a minimum.

School staff are vulnerable to child abuse allegations if they use any form of RPI, but particularly physical control, and 'get it wrong', or are perceived to have done so. This may mean that the parents or carers and/or the pupil object to the application of the physical control. On the other hand, staff are also vulnerable to accusations of a failure of duty of care if they do not apply any form of RPI and, as a consequence, a child suffers harm.

In such circumstances, staff need a clear frame of reference within which they should work. This policy describes mandatory principles; provides advice to staff within which they must operate and further develop their own practice which makes the use of such interventions as safe and secure as possible, for pupils and all staff.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies of the school relating to interaction between adults and pupils, and has been informed recent guidance from the DfE. It is intended to

provide pupils, parents and carers, staff, Governors, visitors, and the LA with a clear statement about the use of RPI within the school.

AIMS

It is the aim of this policy to:

- ensure that any use of RPI within the school reflects current legislation and case law;
- ensure that any use of RPI within the school reflects joint guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and DoH, the LA and professional Codes of Practice;
- develop and sustain an ethos/culture and practice in school which protects the dignity and safety of both pupils and staff;
- create and maintain a safe and secure learning environment;
- promote a shared understanding that although always the last resort, Physical Control is an option that staff, authorised by the Headteacher, may have to take;
- enable staff in school and staff working in health and social care settings to adopt consistent practices in the use of RPI, based upon a common set of principles; and
- achieve outcomes that reflect the best interests of pupils whose behaviour is of immediate concern and others affected by the behaviour requiring intervention.

RATIONALE

Positive personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in the school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged, however, that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of RPI may be required.

This policy recognises the need to make a clear, unambiguous statement about the practice of RPI within the school.

It describes the context and circumstances in which it may be appropriate to use different forms of RPI.

It recognises that RPI may at times be necessary, after all proactive and preventative approaches have been exhausted.

This policy recognises that pupils and staff have a right to work in a safe environment which promotes considerate and safe behaviour and one where there is respect for all.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Physical contact with children occurs in providing physical prompts, giving support in PE, and at times in supplying reassurance. The term Restrictive Physical Intervention does not apply to such situations.

Staff should, however, be aware that **any** physical contact with a child may be misconstrued by the child, colleagues or other observers. Support of emotionally distressed or physically injured children often involves some physical contact. Contact should be the minimum necessary to comfort and reassure the child.

If staff believe their actions may have been misconstrued they should use the school's recording systems to report it.

The School considers it is important that staff use and understand the terminology used in all Durham educational establishments in respect of the continuum of Restrictive Physical Interventions.

Set out below is the glossary of terms which staff and others will find useful.

Physical Presence

Describes a situation in which staff stand close by or in front of a pupil momentarily, or temporarily in the way of a pupil. Physical presence is a means of both communicating authority and re-establishing safety and security.

Restriction of Access or Exit

Describes a situation in which staff stand in doorways or corridors to restrict a pupil's movement, or a room fitted with door catches beyond the reach of the pupil. It is a means of preventing pupils accessing dangerous environments, or leaving a room when it is judged it would be prejudicial to the maintenance of a safe and secure learning environment for them to do so.

Time Out

Describes the removal of a pupil from an environment where he/she may be gaining reinforcement to maintain a behaviour to an area or room less likely to reinforce it with the purpose of enabling the pupil to regain self control.

In Durham LA any area or room used for time out must be unlocked and be monitored by staff at all times.

Isolation

Describes the separation of a pupil from his/her peers and his/her supervision by a member or members of staff with the purpose of providing him/her with continuous focused supervision and support. **Pupils isolated from their peers and supervised by staff must not be in locked rooms.**

Seclusion Describes the forcible confinement and segregation of a pupil from his/her peers in situations that are unsupervised by staff. **In Durham LA seclusion is not permitted in its schools.**

Physical Diversion

Describes a means of deflecting a pupil from destructive and/or disruptive behaviour, for example, by holding a hand, placing a hand on the forearm, putting an arm around a shoulder or guiding by placing a hand on the back. It involves little force but serves to reinforce staff attempts to reason with the pupil.

Physical Control

Describes the positive use of reasonable minimum force to divert a pupil from committing a criminal offence, harming himself/herself or others, seriously damaging property or disruptive behaviour which prejudices the establishment and maintenance of a safe and secure learning environment. Physical control is normally limited to holding a pupil in a standing or sitting position.

Case law deals with the question of reasonableness in relation to force. Within schools the question is likely to be decided on the following basis:

- did the member of staff act within the power of the Act? and
- what did the member of staff believe the circumstances to be at the time of the incident?

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Principles Within the Legislation:

Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 sets out the powers which teachers and other staff have to use reasonable minimum force to physically control pupils.

It allows those teachers and other members of staff who are authorised by the Head Teacher to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- (i) committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility;
- (ii) injuring themselves or others;
- (iii) causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property); and engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school
- (iv) or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

(Section 550A of the Education Act 1996, Circular 10/98, Para 9)

Any form of corporal punishment in schools is illegal, and this ban is absolute

In considering issues in respect of the use of RPI, this school will have cognisance of the following:

- The Children Act 1989, guidance and regulations, which state: "physical control should be used rarely and only to prevent a child from harming himself or others or from damaging property. Force should not be used for any other purpose, or simply to secure compliance with staff instruction".
- Further advice on pupil behaviour and discipline which is given in DfEE Circular 9/94 and the advice on restraint is given in Paragraphs 115 to 117 of the Circular.
- Circular 10/95 entitled 'Protecting Children From Abuse' which stresses that schools have pastoral responsibility towards their pupils and should recognise that pupils have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. Schools should have procedures for handling suspected cases of abuse of pupils which should be based upon procedures laid down by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (Durham LSCB: www.durham-lscb.gov.uk)

SCHOOL PRINCIPLES

Everyone attending or working in this school has a right to:

- recognition of their unique identity;
- be treated with respect and dignity;
- learn and work in a safe environment; and
- be protected from harm, violence, assault and acts of verbal abuse.

Pupils attending this school and their parents/carers have a right to:

- individual consideration of pupil needs by the staff who have responsibility for their care and protection;
- expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies;
- be informed about school rules, relevant policies and the expected conduct of all pupils and staff working in school;
- be informed about the school's complaints procedure.

Within this school the following must guide practice:

- Challenging behaviour can usually be prevented by the careful management of the school environment and the considered deployment of staff.
- Any use of RPI should be consistent with the legal obligations and responsibilities of the school and its staff and the rights and protection afforded to pupils under law.
- RPI should only be used in the best interests of pupils, and in conjunction with other strategies, designed to support pupils learn alternative non-challenging behaviours.
- The use of RPI must **not** be used with intent to:
 - (i) punish;
 - (ii) cause or threaten hurt;
 - (iii) oppress, threaten, intimidate or bully; or
 - (iv) secure compliance with staff instruction.
- Within the continuum of RPI, physical control **should only** be used:
 - (i) with minimum and reasonable force;
 - (ii) rarely and exceptionally;
 - (iii) as a last resort where all other courses of action have failed; and
 - (iii) with the minimum degree of intrusion required to resolve the situation.

Staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example, by:

- (iv) holding a pupil around the neck or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe;
- (v) slapping, punching or kicking a pupil;
- (vi) twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- (vii) tripping up a pupil;
- (viii) holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear; or (vi) holding a pupil face down on the ground.

(Section 550A of the Education Act 1996, Circular 10/98, Para 23)

- Any use of physical control should be justifiable and reasonable and informed by risk assessment. (See Circular 10/98 Para 8, and Appendix 1 within this document).
- Staff must always adhere to School policy and guidance when using RPI.
- Preventative/de-escalation techniques must have been exhausted.
- The School will not use seclusion.
- The School will agree its policy and guidance on the use of RPI with its Governing Body and the LA.
- All pupils and their families and representatives will have ready access to an effective complaints procedure.
- The School will facilitate LA compliance with the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 if employees or pupils are injured while using techniques in the use of physical control by comprehensive reporting.
- All involved pupils and staff will be provided with opportunities for debriefing as soon as possible following an incident.

IMPLEMENTATION

Authorised Staff

In this school all teachers are authorised to use RPI but only non-teaching support staff specifically authorised by the Headteacher to do so may use RPI. Authorisation is not given to volunteers or parents.

The Headteacher is responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given, in what circumstances and settings they may use RPI and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. The Headteacher will ensure that those authorised are aware of, and understand, what authorisation entails. Those the Headteacher has not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where RPI is needed, for example to contact an authorised member of staff.

Supply staff will not be authorised unless they are familiar with this school's policy and have undertaken training.

The Headteacher will maintain a list of those who have been authorised and those for whom training has been provided. This list will be updated at least annually.

Staff from the Authority Working Within the School

Support Services may have their own policies for the use of RPI but their staff will, whilst on school premises, be expected to be aware of and operate within the policy of this school.

Training

Training for all staff will be made available as part of the school's staff development programme.

Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour

Staff consistently use positive strategies to encourage acceptable behaviour and good order.

Every effort will be made to resolve conflict positively and without harm to pupils or staff, property, buildings or the environment in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Escalating Situations

The 1996 Education Act (Section 550A) stipulates that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere (this includes authorised out-of-school activities);
- self-injuring or placing himself or herself at risk;
- injuring others;
- causing damage to property, including that of the pupil himself or herself; and
- committing a criminal offence (even if the pupil is below the age of criminal responsibility).

Types of Incidents

where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury;

- (a) where there develops an increasing risk of injury, or significant damage to property;
- (b) where a pupil is behaving in a way that is significantly compromising good order or discipline.

Examples of situations which fall within one of the first two categories are:

- a pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil;
- pupils are fighting;

- a pupil is engaged in increasingly at-risk behaviour;
- a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing injury, damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- a pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself; and
- a pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations which fall into the third category are:

- a pupil persistently refuses to comply with a directive to leave a classroom in an escalating situation; and
- a pupil is behaving in a way that is **seriously** disrupting a lesson.

Acceptable Measures of Physical Intervention

The use of any RPI can only be deemed reasonable if:

- it is warranted by the particular circumstances of the incident;
- it is delivered in accordance with the seriousness of the incident and the consequences which it is desired to prevent;
- it is carried out as the minimum to achieve the desired result;
- the age, understanding and gender of the pupil are taken into account;
- it is likely to achieve the desired result.

Wherever possible assistance should be sought from another member of staff before intervening.

Restrictive Physical Intervention may involve staff:

- physically positioning themselves between pupils - **physical presence**
- blocking a pupil's path - **restriction of access or exit**
- escorting a pupil or shepherding a pupil away - **physical diversion**

In extreme circumstances, trained staff may need to - **physical control** hold a pupil.

Recording

Where RPI have been used to manage a pupil, a record of the incident **may** need to be kept. Where physical control has been used a record of the incident **must** be kept.

This record should be made in a school incident book (see Appendix 4 within this document) which will include:

- name of pupil;
- date, time and place of incident;
- a brief description of the incident and actions taken.

The Incident Book report must be completed as soon as possible after the incident, normally prior to staff going off duty and be signed by all staff involved, and the Headteacher.

In addition, specific details of the use of physical control must be recorded on a Major Incident Report (MIR, see Appendix 2 within this document). Reporting will include:

- how the incident developed;
- attempts made to calm the situation;
- names of any staff or pupils who witnessed the incident;
- the outcome of the incident including any injuries sustained, by any pupil or member of staff;
- any damage to property which has resulted;
- whether/how parents have been informed; and
- after investigation, a summary of actions taken.

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a senior colleague when compiling a report. After the review of the incident, copies of the MIR will be placed on the pupil's file.

Where staff have been involved in an incident involving physical control they should have access to counselling and support. Within the school, this will be made available through the Headteacher. Staff may also contact Counselling through the school's SLA.

Action After an Incident

The Headteacher will ensure that each incident of the use of physical control is reviewed and investigated further as required. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedures.

Complaints

The availability of a clear policy about RPI and early involvement of parents should reduce the likelihood of complaints but may not eliminate them.

Any complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Allegations against Staff Procedure.

The Chair of Governors will be informed of complaints but other governors will not be involved as a complaint may require further action on their part.

Monitoring of Incidents

Whenever a member of staff has occasion to use physical control this will always be recorded and documented. Monitoring of incidents will help to ensure that staff are following the correct procedures and will alert the Headteacher to the needs of any pupil(s) whose behaviour can only be contained by the use of physical control.

This process will also address patterns of incidents and evaluate trends which may be emerging.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Assessment is the process of identifying the hazards present in the workplace and then evaluating the extent of the risks involved, taking into account whatever precautions are already in place and seeking to alleviate them. It is important to be clear what is meant by hazard and risk. A **Hazard** is something with the potential to cause harm. The **Risk** is the likelihood that harm will occur.

The purpose of Risk Assessment in respect of the pupils in schools is in effect no different from that relating to the building, its fixtures, fittings, equipment and grounds. It is to protect and minimise the risk of harm to the pupils, staff and others; to reduce the incidence of serious and/or extended damage to property; and to ensure that safe working practices are clearly identified and recorded.

Risk Assessment need not be a necessarily difficult or technical process. In most cases school staff will already be aware of the main hazards and will have taken measures to control them. However, it is a legal requirement for Risk Assessments on vulnerable pupils to be done formally and the results written down and brought to the attention of the staff.

Knowledge of the pupils is the crucial factor in respect of Risk Assessment. Whilst most staff will have a very good knowledge of the potential difficulties when working with the schools' pupils, schools' recording systems are an important source of information. As a consequence the diligence with which all staff use the established recording systems impacts on the quality of Risk Assessments. Other sources of information may include reports from safeguarding and child protection issues (Children and Adults Services) and verbal information passed to school.

The process of Risk Assessment of pupils should include the following:

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| Identifying Hazards | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Have you identified any potential or actual hazards arising from the pupil's behaviour?</i> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Are the risks to this pupil, children, school staff or others?</i> |
| Assessing Risk | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>In which situations do risks occur?</i> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Is injury or harm likely to arise?</i> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>How serious are these adverse outcomes likely to be?</i> |
| Exploring Risk Reduction Options | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>What are your risk reduction options?</i> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>What are the benefits and drawbacks for each option?</i> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>How will they affect the risk?</i> |
| Deciding Risk Management Measures | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Which measures prevent risk?</i> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Which measures manage risk?</i> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Which measures cope with adverse consequences?</i> |

- Sharing Plans and Strategies**
- Who needs to know and why?*
 - How will you inform them?*
- Staff Training Issues**
- Can you and other staff implement the plans and strategies?*
 - What training is needed?*
- Evaluating Impact and Effectiveness**
- Is the pupil supported effectively?*
 - Are the risks prevented and managed?*
 - Are adverse outcomes addressed?*
 - What action will be taken as a result of this evaluation?*
 - When will the next review and evaluation take place?*

Risk Assessment is a continual process and subject to change. It is the responsibility of all staff to conduct their own Risk Assessments as any "situation" develops. Risk Assessments on vulnerable pupils should be regularly reviewed.

Risk Assessment			
Pupil:		Date:	Assessment completed by:
Identification of Hazard			
Description of foreseeable hazard		Potential	
		Actual	
List of those affected by hazard			
Assessment of Risk			
In which situation does the risk usually occur?			
How likely is it that the risk will arise?			
If the risk arises who may be injured or hurt?			
What kind of injuries or harm may occur?			
How serious are the potential adverse outcomes?			
Risk Reduction			
Measures	Possible Options	Benefits	Drawbacks
Proactive interventions to prevent risks			
Early interventions to manage risks			
Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes			
Agreed 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			
Strategy agreed with:			
Strategy communicated to:			
Training needs:			
Evaluation of Strategy			
Measures Set Out	Effectiveness in Supporting Student		Impact on Risk
Proactive interventions to prevent risk			
Early interventions to manage risk			

Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		
<p style="text-align: center;">Future Action</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Date:</p>		

De-escalation Techniques: (staff should always adopt a non-threatening posture, number other strategies used i.e. thus indicating the order of their use)

- *verbal advice/support *planned positive distraction, what? *negotiation *negotiation/limits/consequences
- *re-assurance *positive touch, who? and how? *time out offered/directed *other: (describe)
- *tactical ignoring *distraction *change of adult

Length of time de-escalation techniques employed:

Justification for use of physical controls: (tick and delete as necessary)

- prevent/ interrupt injury to student/students/staff/others
- prevent/ interrupt serious damage to property
- prevent/ interrupt disruptive behaviour prejudicial to the safe & secure learning environment
- prevent/ interrupt absconding if judged prejudicial to student's safety/welfare
- interrupt disruptive behaviour prejudicial to the safe & secure learning environment

Nature of physical controls used:

Seq.	Hold	Min.	Staff involved	Position
1				
2				
3				
4				

Post incident measures undertaken to ensure student calmed, and final outcome: (must be completed)

Response and view of the student: (must either be completed by the student/agreed with the student and counter-signed by him, or the response of the student described)

Student Signature:.....

Details of any resulting injuries: (to whom, and action taken as a result e.g. medical treatment, if none, write none)

Injury form completed: YES/NO (delete)

Accident Book: YES/NO (delete)

Any other relevant information: (include details of damage to property, etc, if none, write none)

Senior Manager reported to..... **Time**..... **Date**.....

Parents/Carers informed: YES/NO (delete) **If not record reason:**.....

Name of Member of Staff who informed Parents:.....

Head Teacher's comments : (including any implications for future management)

Signature:

Date:

Copied to:

APPENDIX 3

MONITORING

Head Teachers

Head Teachers should monitor any use of Restrictive Physical Interventions by examining:

- the frequency of their use;
- the justification for their use;
- their nature;
- their users; and
- the views of students concerning them.

Head Teachers must ensure that:

- the need to use Restrictive Physical Intervention is minimised;
- Restrictive Physical Intervention is used only in the appropriate circumstances; and
- only the appropriate degree of Restrictive Physical Intervention is used in particular situations.

Head Teachers must also:

- report on the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention to the School's Governing Body;
- report specifically on the use of Physical Controls;
- take appropriate action over issues of concern of either a general or specific nature; and
- make available on request the Major Incident Record File and Incident Book to the Authority's Officers.

Governors

Governors should monitor the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention within the school ensuring that:

- the incidence of the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention is reported to them termly;
- incidents comply with school policy;
- trends are recognised; and
- action is taken to reduce the use of Physical Control.

