



Morpeth First School Behaviour Safety Intervention Policy

Review Date	Reason for changes	Completed by
Spring 26	New policy	E Jefferson

Morpeth First School has a disciplinary approach based on positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviour. We are committed to ensuring pupils are safe, happy and learning in a calm and positive environment. We are committed to promoting positive behaviour and also ensuring that children are clear about the school rules they are expected to follow at all times. We do, however, recognise that due to many possible reasons, children may not follow the rules and at times this might lead them into behaving in a way that may be detrimental to their own safety and welfare, or to that of others. At these times, staff may find it necessary to physically intervene in a situation in order to keep the child or others safe.

The Department for Education states that, *“All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force in certain circumstances.”* According to Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, *“Reasonable force may be used to prevent or stop a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others, committing a criminal offence, damaging property, or doing something that prejudices discipline at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.”*

Restrictive physical intervention will never be used punitively and only in the best interest of pupils. Should the situation require it, any physical intervention will be used as a last resort and be the least restrictive and for the least amount of time necessary to maintain safety.

Focus on De-escalation

It is important to note that, at all times, the staff response will be a focus on de-escalation in order to minimise the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions. This will include allowing children to access safe spaces and the use of calm, consistent conversation that reiterates the need for safety and promotes empathy in line with the school's relational policy. Classroom environments may be altered, as may communal spaces if required. Staff will promote the use of self regulation strategies, such as breathing techniques and physical movement, to attempt to diffuse a situation wherever possible. Some children will have an individual behaviour plan and risk assessment containing a tailored approach for that specific pupil.

Types of Physical Intervention and when these may be used

There are two kinds of physical intervention that might be used:

- Positive contact
- Physical intervention

This policy explains when and how each of these might be used by Morpeth First School staff. It has been written within the guidelines established by the Department for Education in the document, '*Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies*'. This states that 'all school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force' under the Education Act, 2006.

Positive Contact

We believe that to deny pupils all physical contact with adults is to deny a basic human need, and an expression of care and concern for all pupils. However, physical contact must be appropriate for the age, understanding, and gender of the child and must never threaten or be sexually inappropriate. Staff must be sensitive to:

- cultural backgrounds
- the need to maintain pupils' personal space
- be aware of pupils who have been sexually abused and will either seek physical contact or positively avoid it. Physical contact may not be appropriate for these pupils.

Situations where positive physical contact may be appropriate (this is not an exhaustive list and staff are required to use professional judgement regarding the circumstances within a particular situation):

- when a pupil needs to get comfort or reassurance e.g. following an accident or personal crisis.
- when a pupil needs encouragement to attempt a new challenge e.g. to climb on to a piece of apparatus.
- when there is a need to take urgent action to avoid an incident or injury.
- A child's SEND needs.

Staff should take reasonable safeguarding measures when they are left alone supervising/talking with/teaching small groups or individual pupils (such as leaving the door open).

The Use of Physical Intervention

When should physical intervention be used?

According to guidance, as stated above, restrictive physical intervention and reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing serious damage to property including the pupil's own property

- engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order at the school, or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

Staff have a right to defend themselves against physical attack, and do everything possible to diffuse the situation before such an attack occurs. In the event that it is necessary to defend themselves against physical attack, minimum force for maximum effect should be used. Situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate are:

- When action is necessary in self-defence e.g. when the pupil attacks another pupil or adult.
- Where there is an immediate or imminent risk of injury to another child or an adult e.g. when pupils are fighting, or there is rough play or misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- Where there is immediate risk of significant damage to property – when a pupil is about to vandalise property.
- Where behaviour jeopardises good order and discipline e.g. where a pupil absconds from the classroom or school buildings. (Note – this only applies if the pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)
- A pupil persistently refuses to leave an area and this is likely to cause harm to their wellbeing, or their safety cannot be secured if they remain in that area (e.g. somewhere they cannot be supervised).
- Behaviour which seriously disrupts a lesson.

Physical intervention may need to be used when;

- There is clearly no alternative approach which would work in the circumstances i.e. there is an immediate urgency to resolve the situation.
- Defending or protecting.
- When all de-escalation strategies have failed.

All school staff are familiar with the school's policy and have a clear understanding about when restrictive physical intervention is appropriate. Staff are expected to use professional judgement when considering whether the use of restrictive physical intervention is an appropriate response. Staff are expected to consider a number of factors at this stage, most importantly the perceived risk of physical intervention versus the perceived risk of no physical intervention. At all times staff should take account of the pupils' level of understanding.

After the use of physical intervention a serious incident form should be completed by the appropriate member of staff, the parents/carers of the child involved should be informed as soon as practicably possible and a restorative conversation held with both the child and the member of staff who has used the intervention.

Training

All staff are permitted to use physical intervention, when necessary, to maintain the safety of the pupils. A small number of staff will undertake an approved restraint training course to ensure the safety of pupils where, in a very small number of situations, a higher level of intervention is required. In certain circumstances, advice will be sought from outside agencies for a child with specific SEND needs where physical intervention may be required more frequently due to the needs of the child. A record of staff who have undergone training will be kept updated.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

The Governors have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented and updated regularly.

Head teacher

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for the day to day implementation of this policy, including the dissemination of information relating to this policy and the organisation of staffing, resources and any staff training required. They are responsible for monitoring the frequency and the reasons for intervention through the scrutiny of serious incident report forms and reporting to Governors as part of the annual safeguarding review.

Staff

Staff are responsible for ensuring that any intervention is appropriate in the circumstances. Where physical intervention has been used, staff are required to log this on a serious incident form.

This policy is available via the school website or on request from the school office. It will be reviewed annually, or earlier if circumstances or legislation require.