

Use of Physical Intervention

Signed by the Chair of AAC;

Date;

Policy Review;

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This policy is written in accordance with the provision defined in ‘Use of Reasonable Force - Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies’ (DFE July 2013).

This policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff who come into contact with pupils within Medeshamstede Academy. It is designed to explain the school’s arrangements for care and control and maintenance of good order of the school. The policy is informed by the practice and philosophy of PRICE Safe Schools and all staff at the school who lead interventions will have the opportunity to be trained in PRICE Safe Schools techniques.

This policy was prepared after staff discussion in Medeshamstede Academy. All staff and parents have access to the policy and are invited to comment and contribute to it.

1. Purpose

The primary purpose of physical intervention practice is **always** to ensure the safety and happiness of the children and to optimise their learning.

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the behaviour support strategies employed by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required.

All children and young people need to be safe and aware of how they should behave. Some (generally only a few and very occasionally) lose control and need someone else to supply it. Increasingly behaviour support at Medeshamstede Academy is seen in terms of **emotional regulation or dysregulation**; the ability to manage, or allow others to help manage, your own emotions and in turn the communication of emotions through appropriate behaviour. Therefore, it becomes the duty of staff to put in place strategies to either **support pupils to manage their own behaviour** or to teach the strategies that children will need.

All children have positive behaviour support plans (PBSP), focussing upon specific areas of concern and ensuring a consistent approach to teaching specific skills. Pupils need to know that we are able to manage their behaviour and environment safely and confidently. Our pupils respond well to the school rules and

expectations. We hope that situations in which physical intervention may be needed. However, for those pupils for whom a physical intervention has occurred, or where a physical intervention may be employed, reactive strategies will be identified in their PBSP. Parents/carers are consulted/informed of this plan to ensure a consistency of approach across settings.

In most circumstances physical interventions will be employed reactively. However, occasionally it may be considered to be in the best interests of the pupil to accept the use of a physical intervention as part of a therapeutic or educational strategy, for example as part of an agreed strategy to help a pupil who is learning to control their aggressive behaviour. (Please refer to Appendix 1). In these circumstances we will generally be trying to prevent the development of 'patterned' behaviour where a child escalates behaviour, consciously or unconsciously seeking the physical intervention.

This policy seeks to ensure that staff at Medeshamstede Academy clearly understand their responsibilities in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is required. It is essential that staff are well-informed and appropriately trained to deal with these difficult situations and understand fully the rationale and implications of the school's guidelines. They have to be clear about the options open to them when all the normal systems have failed or when there is a clear emergency. They need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical interventions; they need to know that we will offer support if they are challenged.

Parents need to know that their child and those who are teaching her or him are safe and free from disruptive influences or danger. They also need to know that they will be properly informed if their child is the subject of physical intervention; they need to know the nature of the intervention and the rationale for its use.

2. Principles

All staff and pupils at Medeshamstede Academy have a right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Work in a safe and healthy environment and be protected from harm
- Receive adequate information, support and training

All staff and pupils at Medeshamstede Academy should:

- Follow the school's code of conduct, rules and policies

Parents of pupils attending Medeshamstede Academy have a right to:

- Expect staff to undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with school policies

- Be informed via the school website about school rules, policies and expected conduct for all
- Be informed via the school website of the school's complaints procedure

3. **Appropriate Physical Contact**

Medeshamstede Academy staff have a duty of care to act at all times in a manner which reflects positively on their professional status.

Whilst it is recognised that there are situations in which appropriate physical contact occurs in the school setting between staff and pupils, it must be understood that to undertake any form of physical intervention places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to those circumstances described in this policy. Staff therefore have a responsibility to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

Reasonable force may only be permissible when it is necessary to prevent a pupil from:

- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing serious damage to property
- Committing a criminal offence
- Engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in the classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere
- Preventing a child from leaving the premises when they are about to put themselves at risk.

Where no other form of control is available and where it is necessary to intervene

ACCEPTABLE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

Reasonable force is not defined legally in isolation. It must be justified as appropriate by the circumstances. We use only the minimum force that is needed to restore safety or appropriate behaviour; and we take account of the age, understanding and gender of the pupil.

Acceptable forms of intervention in this school include:

- Leading or guiding a pupil by the hand or arm, or small person shepherding (PRICE technique)
- Holding a pupil who has lost control until they are safe
- Physically moving between and separating two pupils
- Use of reasonable force to remove a weapon or dangerous object from a pupil's grasp

- Where there is immediate risk of injury, any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force' - for example to prevent a pupil running into a busy road or hitting or hurting someone
- Using more restrictive holds in extreme circumstances

In order to maintain boundaries and good order within school, pupils may be escorted in a non-restrictive manner. This may be walking alongside providing touch support guidance and reassurance (such as PRICE small person shepherding technique). This would be identified in positive behaviour support plans.

It is also acceptable for doors to have double or high locks to ensure pupil safety, or for external doors to be locked for security purposes, if a member of staff is always with the pupils in such circumstances.

Staff may move, defend themselves, lead, restrain or block someone, bearing in mind the whole time their own safety as well as that of others and of the child who is the subject of any restraint or other intervention.

It is **unacceptable** and likely to be illegal or grounds for disciplinary action for staff to use any physical intervention designed to cause pain or injury including:

- Any form of corporal punishment, slapping, punching or kicking
- Holding by the neck or collar, or otherwise restricting the ability to breathe
- Holding by the hair or an ear
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a pupil or holding an arm out at neck or head height to stop them
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground or sitting on them
- Shutting or locking a pupil in a room, except in extreme situations whilst summoning support (Guidance at school is that an adult should stay with a child in an enclosed space, adopting a passive non-directive approach and be available to the child to resolve the situation. If the adult's presence is further dysregulating the child, the adult should remove themselves from the space but under no circumstances to lock the door. The adult should continue to monitor and be ready to offer the child access to resolution at any point. At all times, the safety and well-being of the child is the primary consideration).
- Staff should also avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered inappropriate.

Physical interventions are not, in general, used to achieve a search of clothing or property even if we had good reason to believe that a weapon or dangerous drugs were being concealed.

4. Authorised Staff

All teaching staff at Medeshamstede Academy are authorised, within the content of this policy and the legal position indicated, above, to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils.

In addition, all members of the support staff who have lawful control or charge of pupils at Medeshamstede Academy are also authorised to use reasonable force. Supply staff will be advised on an individual basis at the discretion of the headteacher, but it would be exceptional for a member of the supply staff to be authorised.

5. Training Support

It is the duty of the headteacher to ensure sufficient appropriate training is provided for all authorised staff, teaching and non-teaching, in order to operate this policy. Responsibility for co-ordinating this training will be the responsibility of the Assistant Principal.

Members of staff will not be permitted to undertake the use of reasonable force without knowledge of the school's policy. New staff will be fully trained prior to authorising their participation. Training will include clarification of the circumstances when physical intervention should be used.

Staff involved in incidents of physical intervention will be offered the opportunity to access personal support, including counselling, at their request to the headteacher.

6. Recording and Reporting

All incidents of physical intervention must be reported, recorded, monitored and evaluated. The school has a statutory obligation to keep a record of all physical interventions, and the records also enable staff to monitor patterns in behaviour or changes in need.

Following a physical intervention, and as soon after an incident as possible, staff should complete the following forms as necessary:

- Record of physical intervention (Physical management reporting form)
- Accident / incident form

The 'accident / incident' and 'physical intervention' forms are a statutory obligation.

Incidents of physical intervention will always be reported to parents/carers. This may be by telephone call, of which a record will be made or the parent/carers preferred method of communication as detailed on the PBSP.

The recording procedure should be carried out as soon after the incident as possible, and if necessary after the staff involved have had time to recover emotionally. The forms should be completed by the member of staff who led the intervention and read by all members of staff involved, to ensure the report reflects objectively what has happened and can be used as part of a repair and reflection procedure for the pupil (if appropriate) and offer a concise evaluation of the incident. The records should be used to inform future strategies and to evaluate behaviour support plans and intervention plans that may be in place.

Once the recording forms have been completed; the pupil's PBSP should be reviewed.

A PBSP is to be compiled for every pupil. Following the first incidence of a physical intervention the reactive strategies section which contains a brief overview of the strategies used in any particular circumstance will be completed. The principle is that there can be one emergency intervention and after that, all interventions are effected in line with the plan. The form should be completed by the behaviour lead (as appropriate) and members of the pupil's class team, containing:

- A detailed account of behaviours that may cause concern
- Possible triggers, primary and secondary strategies to use and if necessary the physical interventions that are most appropriate to use.

The completion of this form should involve the pupil (as appropriate), behaviour lead, class team and parents/carers.

If further physical interventions occur the PBSP should be reviewed and amended as appropriate. Any amendments should involve the pupil (as appropriate) and parents/carers.

7. Planning for physical intervention

Where we think a pupil might require physical restraint we plan in advance as per the child's PBSP. This planning includes helping pupils to avoid provoking situations, helping them find success and minimise frustration, and develops upon our own skills. It also helps us see better where we can head off difficulties when we spot them early enough. The plan will include:

- Involving the parents and the pupil to gain their views and to ensure that they are clear about what specific action the school might need to take
- A risk assessment that considers carefully the likely outcomes to the pupil and others of undertaking intervention/not undertaking intervention

- Managing the pupil (eg reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, at what stage and what type of holds to be used)
- Identifying key staff who should know exactly what action to take. Any member of staff who may have to use a physical intervention should always be fully briefed about the child in question and it is best if they are well known to the child
- Ensuring that additional support can be summoned if appropriate
- Identifying training needs and updates

The school recognises that there may be ‘one-off’ instances in which a child loses control and the principle that we apply is that there **should only be one emergency**. After a single incident within one school year a positive behaviour support plan will be composed to plan intervention in detail, share knowledge formally with parents and staff and equip all concerned with training and de-escalation strategies.

Appendix 1

Proactive use of restrictive physical intervention

In most circumstances, restrictive physical interventions will be used reactively.

Occasionally, it may be considered in the best interests of the child or adult to accept the possible use of a restrictive physical intervention as part of a therapeutic or educational strategy that could not be introduced without accepting that reasonable force might be required. For example, the best way of helping a child to tolerate other children without becoming aggressive might be for an adult to 'shadow' the child and to adjust the level of any physical intervention needed according to the child's behaviour. Similarly, staff might be sanctioned to use a restrictive physical intervention, if necessary, as part of an agreed strategy to help a person who is gradually learning to control their aggressive behaviour in public places. In both examples, the physical intervention is part of a broader educational or therapeutic strategy.

Where this approach is employed it is important to establish in writing a clear rationale for the anticipated use of the restrictive physical intervention and to have this endorsed by a multidisciplinary meeting which includes, wherever possible, family members (or those with parental responsibility) and an independent advocate. In schools, the possible use of restrictive physical interventions, as part of a broader educational or therapeutic strategy, will be included within the pupil's positive behaviour support plan.