

# Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy



This policy should be taken as part of the overall strategy of the **Northleaze After School Play Club** and operated within the context of our vision, aims and values.

## Rationale

This policy is based on Department of Education Guidance. 'The Use of Reasonable Force to Control or Restrain Pupils' (2008). Advice for Head Teachers and Governing Bodies.

Effective behaviour management strategies are in place to ensure that the need for the use of restrictive physical intervention is kept to a minimum. The NAP staff will ensure that Behaviour Management Programmes are in place for any child or young person where there is an identified risk and restrictive physical intervention may be required.

## Guidelines

- If practical before intervention, a calm warning or instruction to stop should be given and every effort should be made to achieve a satisfactory outcome without physical intervention.
- Reasonable force should only be used when all other options have been exhausted.

## **In all circumstances help must be sent for, even when immediate intervention is necessary.**

- Staff should avoid touching/holding a child in a way that might be considered inappropriate.
- Force, where used, should always be reasonable. It should be used only to control or restrain and never with the intent to cause pain or harm. It must, therefore, be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.
- In any action, due regard has to be taken to the age, understanding and gender of the child.
- All use of restraint should be reported immediately after the incident. NAP Club should have a separate logbook for incidents of restraint. If there was any injury, the incident was in any way "hazardous", or any member of NAP club staff put at risk, an Incident Form should be completed as well.
- Parents/carers to sign Incident Form on the date of the incident.
- School to be informed.

## Reasonable Force

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. That will always depend on the precise circumstances of individual cases. To be judged lawful, the force used would need to be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force used should be the minimum required to achieve the desired result. Use of force could not be justified to prevent trivial behaviour.

## **Northleaze After School Play Club accepts and understands that in accordance with the law corporal punishment is forbidden.**

Any form of physical punishment to children is unlawful as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint. It is particularly important that staff understand this both to protect their own position and the overall reputation of the Club.

## Special Educational Needs

Those exercising the power to use force must also take proper account of any particular special needs [SEN] and or disability that a child might have.

- Not to treat a child with additional needs less favourably.

## **Examples of Situations**

Examples of situations that particularly call for judgements of this kind include:

- A child attacks a member of NAP Club staff, or another pupil
  - Children are fighting, causing risk of injury to themselves or others
- A child is committing, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage to property
- A child is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or an object.
  - A child absconds from a class or tries to leave the NAP Club other than at the authorised time.

In these examples use of force would be reasonable [and therefore lawful] if it was clear that the behaviour was sufficiently dangerous or disruptive to warrant physical intervention of the degree applied and could not realistically be dealt with by any other means.

## **Deciding If Use of Force Would Be Appropriate**

The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use should always depend on the circumstances of each case and – crucially in the case of children with SEN and or disabilities – information about the individual concerned. Decisions on whether the precise circumstances of an incident justify the use of significant force must be reasonable.

Typically, such decisions have to be made quickly, with little time for reflection.

Nevertheless, staff need to make the clearest possible judgements about:

- The seriousness of the incident, assessed by the effect of the injury, damage or disorder which is likely to result if force is not used. The greater the potential for injury or serious disorder, the more likely it is that using force may be justified.
- The chances of achieving the desired result by other means. The lower the probability of achieving the desired result by other means, the more likely it is that using force may be justified
- The relative risks associated with physical intervention compared with using other strategies. The smaller the risks associated with physical intervention compared with other strategies, the more likely it is that using force may be justified.

## **Situations Where Staff Should Not Normally Intervene Without Help**

Sometimes an authorised member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help unless it is an emergency.

## **Physical Contact**

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a child, parent/carer or observer. Touching pupils, including well intentioned gestures such as putting a hand on a shoulder, can, if repeated regularly, lead to serious questions being raised. As a general principle, staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with the children, they are responsible for. The Playleader and other staff do have however, the right to use reasonable physical force to restrain pupils in certain circumstances.

Where physical contact may be acceptable there may be occasions where a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent/carer would give.

Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.

Where a member of staff has particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, they should seek the advice of the Playleader.

Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with children from time to time in the course of their duties. Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.

### **Post Incident Support**

Serious incidents that require the use of force can be upsetting for everyone concerned and may result in injuries to the pupil or to staff. Immediate action should be taken to provide First Aid for any injuries and to access medical help for any injuries that go beyond First Aid. It is also important to ensure that staff and children are given emotional support.

A letter to parent/carers informing them about the use of force can also be used to engage them in discussing the incident and for setting out subsequent actions and support. Parent/carers should be involved in agreeing appropriate support arrangements, which may include a Behaviour Support Plan. This plan would also include strategies to prevent and deal with any recurrence of behaviour that could lead to the use of force.

Playleader and Staff will also need to consider:

- To help the child and staff develop strategies to avoid such crisis points in the future and inform the relevant staff about these strategies and their roles
- Ensure staff and children affected by an incident have continuing support for as long as necessary in respect of physical consequences, support to deal with any emotional stress or loss of confidence and opportunity to analyse, reflect and learn from the incident.

### **Dealing with Complaints and Allegations**

Parent/carers and pupils have a right to complain about actions taken by NAP Club staff. This might include the use of force. If a specific allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, then NAP Club needs to follow the **Safeguarding Procedure**. Other complaints should be dealt with under the NAP Club's Complaints Procedures.

### **Staff training**

All parent/carers must be made aware of this policy. All members of staff will be expected to read this policy. A training log will be kept of who and what training in Behaviour Management and the use of restrictive physical intervention has taken place.

Date to be reviewed: July 2028

Date amended: July 2025

Date signed off: July 2025

Signed: Jools Granville

Signed: Kathleen Williams