

**Sherard Primary School**

**Use of Force and appropriate contact Policy**

**Introduction**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour and Discipline Policy 21-22. The purpose of this policy is to state Sherard Primary School's philosophy towards restrictive physical intervention within the relevant legal and statutory framework. To set out guidance to staff and parents as to what forms of RPI are permissible and when they should be considered. To ensure that the use of RPI is minimised and clear reduction strategies exist for when RPI is necessary. RPI will always be used as a last resort and following the implementation of strategies and support which are set out in the Behaviour and Discipline Policy 21-22 such as positive behaviour support strategies.

"Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is an approach that is used to support behaviour change in a child or adult with a learning disability. Unlike traditional methods used, the focus is not on 'fixing' the person or on the challenging behaviour itself and never uses punishment as a strategy for dealing with challenging behaviour. PBS is based upon the principle that if you can teach someone a more effective and more acceptable behaviour than the challenging one then the challenging behaviour will reduce"

(Challenging Behaviour Foundation)

This policy also sets out when safe physical handling and positive handling may be used.

**Physical Contact**

Staff at Sherard Primary school form close relationships through their work with children. At times children need safe contact with familiar and consistent adults to ensure they can grow confidently and feel self-assured. Children sometimes need comforting and may need to be offered physical reassurance this is especially true within our pre-school, foundation stage and Seahorses. At Sherard Primary school we believe friendly physical contact to comfort and reassure is important when providing good quality care for young children. Good practice in our early years settings include a good and full understanding of child protection. Our early years practitioners are also responsible for promoting the development of young children including developing secure attachments and emotional security.

**Acceptable Physical Contact**

If a child requires comforting following an accident, upset or when separating from a parent then a cuddle or positive physical reassurance will be given.

It may be necessary when separating from a parent/carer to physically remove/transfer a child to a member of staff with parental consent. If this continues to be an area of difficulty then a plan will be made with parental involvement to support the child.

Sitting a child on an adult's knee may be used with the child's consent if the child requires comforting.

Any activities instigated by children themselves which are not appropriate such as kissing will be explained to the children as not being appropriate within the setting.

### Physical Contact in Play

When initiating, engaging with or leading play acceptable physical contact from staff may be used in order to enrich a child's learning opportunity through play. For example children may be assisted on equipment such as bikes, helping them to jump, bounce, hop etc. Any contact with children will be on their terms and with their willing participation in the play. Adults at Sherard will be sensitive to the child's feelings, body language and non-verbal cues as they may not always be able to communicate how they feel verbally.

### Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

"All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force, this power can also apply to unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on school trips"

(Use of Reasonable Force- Department for Education 2013)

Children with behavior difficulties and/or special educational needs may sometimes behave in ways which people can find challenging. On some occasions these behaviours may be dangerous which could potentially result in harm to others or damage to property. Such behaviours may be unpredictable and can be frightening for all involved including the child displaying the behaviour.

Staff at Sherard Primary school will consistently reinforce that any negative behaviour is not acceptable and will consistently challenge it. The methods of challenging negative behaviour which staff employ will be differentiated to the individual needs and level of abilities of the pupil and will take into account the level of risk and the context in which the behaviour is taking place in.

Children with behaviour difficulties or special educational needs who consistently show challenging behaviour will have an individual behaviour plan in place as well as a risk reduction plan. These will be consistently reviewed with staff working in partnership with parents in order for approaches to be joined up from school to home.

Staff are trained in diversion and distraction techniques in order to manage any escalating inappropriate behaviour. Positive behaviour management and scripts set out in our Behaviour and Discipline policy will be followed. As will current behaviour plans which are in place for individual children, which will detail positive behaviour strategies. If de-escalation strategies, diversion and distraction attempts have been unsuccessful then staff will manage the risks to physical or emotional harm to other pupils and staff or the risk of significant damage to property in a calm way. Strategies they employ may include:

- directing children to a safe place with appropriate supervision in place
- remove other pupils from the situation
- call for assistance
- Restrictive Physical Intervention – if risk of not physically intervening is greater than the risk of intervening. **Reasonable, necessary and proportionate** criteria is applied to every situation.

**At Sherard Primary School restrictive physical intervention is used as a last resort when other strategies have failed.** The majority of the time consistent application of the schools Behaviour and Discipline policy and positive behaviour management techniques are able to resolve conflict.

## Use of Force Policy

“Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

In a school, force is used for two main purposes- to control pupils or to restrain them. The decision of whether or not to intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on individual circumstances”

(Use of Reasonable Force- Department for Education 2013)

At Sherard Primary School we ensure that all physical intervention is reasonable, proportionate and necessary. We ensure minimum force necessary is used in order to maintain safety, and prevent injury.

“Reasonable force may be used to:

- Remove disruptive pupils from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or trip.
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behavior that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff, another pupil, themselves or to stop a fight.
- Restraining a pupil at risk of harming themselves.”

(Use of Reasonable Force- Department for Education 2013)

### **Sherard Primary School would never use force as a punishment as this is unlawful.**

De-escalation strategies will continue to be used and applied prior to using Restrictive Physical Intervention. However there may be some occasions as detailed above where the only option is to use RPI in order to keep children or adults safe and to prevent injury.

Staff will complete on the spot dynamic risk assessments in order to assess risk before completing any RPI. Where possible RPI will always be used with two members of staff, however this may not always be possible and neglecting to act may be neglecting our duty of care.

### **Powers to Search children**

At Sherard Primary School the headteacher or authorised staff may use reasonable force to search children if looking for the following “prohibited items”.

- Knives and Weapons
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Stolen Items
- Tobacco and Cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic Images
- Any item which has been used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

## Use of Force Policy

There is no national regulatory body for the use of physical interventions and therefore there is no 'approved' list of techniques or holds. Certain techniques have been identified as posing a far greater risk of injury or death and under no circumstances should these techniques be used. The techniques in question are 'Face-down, prone restraints'; the 'seated double embrace'; the 'double basket-hold'; and the 'nose distraction method'.

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil. Staff are trained in the basic techniques which would usually be applied if RPI is used, there are also several members of staff within school who have been trained in specific techniques should extreme cases arise.

Children **must** always be offered first aid following any use of restrictive physical intervention even if at first there are no apparent injuries following the restraint.

### Reporting Physical Intervention

Where Restrictive Physical Intervention has been used to control or restrain children parents will always be informed within 24 hours of the incident. Any RPI will be recorded using a physical intervention incident report. A de-brief with parents and staff will be completed within 24 hours and recorded within the report. Included in this is time for reflection to make an action plan for any future recurring incidents. If children have individual behaviour plans then at this point they will be updated. Any injuries to the child themselves, other children or members of staff will be reported using body maps. All reports must be signed and dated by all members of staff involved in the RPI.

Any complaints regarding the use of force will be thoroughly and appropriately investigated.

"Where a member of staff has acted within the law- that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder then this will provide a defence for any criminal prosecution or other civil or public action."

"Where a complaint is made then the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true and not on the member of staff to show that he/she acted reasonably."

(Use of Reasonable Force- Department for Education 2013)

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