ROSSETT ACRE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Physical Intervention Policy

Name of School:	Rossett Acre Primary School
Member of staff responsible:	Head Teacher
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1. Introduction

Rossett Acre Primary School fully recognises the importance of safeguarding children and playing a full and active part in protecting children from harm. It is the objective of Rossett Acre Primary School to maintain consistent and safe practices in the use of handling, reasonable force and restraint

(i) This policy is based on statutory and non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It is intended to provide clarification on the use of force to help school staff feel more confident about using this strategy when they feel it is necessary and to make clear the responsibilities of school leaders and governing bodies in respect of this.

(ii) This advice replaces "The use of force to control and restrain pupils – Guidance for schools in England".

EXPIRY/REVIEW DATE This Policy will be reviewed each year to reflect updated government guidance and the developing needs and profile of the school.

This policy should be used in conjunction with:

- Red Kite Learning Trust Child Protection Policy 2025-26
- School Staff Code of Conduct
- Rossett Acre Primary School Relational Approach and Behaviour Policy
- Whistle Blowing Guidance

2. Relevant guidance and legislation:

- Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools: guidance for schools in England (DfE 2025)
- Use of reasonable force Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DFE July 2013)
- Education Act 2011 Part 2 (Discipline)
- Behaviour in Schools; Guidance, advice for headteachers and school staff (DFE, September 2022)
- Keeping children safe during community activities, afterschool clubs and tuition: non statutory guidance for providers running out of school settings (DFE, April 2022)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Children Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- DfE: Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- DfE: Positive Environments where children can flourish: A guide for inspectors about physical intervention and restrictions to liberty.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to make clear the position of the school with regards to necessary physical interventions and to safeguard the well-being of children and staff when a situation or incident requires the use of physical intervention. This policy is drawn up under Section 550A of the 1996 Education Act to clarify the powers of teachers and other staff who have lawful control or charge of children to

prevent children committing a crime, causing injury or damage to themselves, other people or property or causing disruption. This policy applies when a member of staff is on the school premises or has charge of a child elsewhere e.g. fieldtrip or activity out of school.

School staff have a legal power to use force, and lawful use of the power will provide a defence to any related criminal prosecution or other legal action.

(i) Suspension should not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.
(ii) Senior school leaders should support their staff when they use this power.

For clarity, Rossett Acre **does not** have a 'no contact' policy, and subsequent requests from parents or members of staff not to use reasonable force, as set out in this policy will not be granted. This would be in direct opposition to the statutory duty of care for safeguarding that members of staff working in schools must abide by.

4. Definition of Terms:

Handling – refers to any physical intervention applied by a member of staff where it necessary to make physical contact with a child in order to manage their conduct, or ensure their own or others safety. Handling strategies may be restrictive or non-restrictive and include shepherding, guiding, supporting, blocking, confining, holding and, in the most extreme cases, restraining.

Use of Reasonable Force – There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use 'reasonable force' to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between children or blocking a child's path, or active physical contact such as leading a child by the arm out of the classroom. (KCSiE 2024 Paragraph 166)

Control - The term control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between children or blocking a child's path, or active physical contact such as leading a child by the arm out of a classroom.

Restraint - is the positive application of force in order to actively prevent a child from causing significant injury* to him/herself or others or seriously damaging property. *Significant Injury would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning. It must be shown that on any occasion where physical restraint is used there were strong indicators that if immediate action had not been taken, significant injury would have followed

Restrictive Interventions - Any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, freedom or liberty to act independently. Restrictive interventions may include the use of equipment, medication or seclusion. Restrictive interventions may or may not involve the use of reasonable force. This would constitute a 'significant incident' and the school may follow emergency procedures.

5. Applying reasonable force

(i) The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions that may be used by school staff at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.

(ii) Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

(iii) 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

(iv) As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.

(v) Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, including but not exclusive of for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention or a learner is actively damaging property.

(vi) 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.

6. Who can use reasonable force?

Ideally only members of staff who hold a current Physical Intervention Qualification (Team Teach – Positive Behaviour Training Level 1 or 2) will engage in any form of physical intervention.

In some extreme circumstances any member of staff may use reasonable force to prevent children committing an offence, causing injury or damage to themselves, other people or property or causing disorder. Reasonable force covers a range of interventions that involve physical contact with children. However, the staff member should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of their professional colleagues.

N.B. No member of staff should feel obliged to intervene and should only use physical intervention if they feel confident to do so. They must, however, send for immediate assistance.

Staff authorised by the Headteacher to search are vigilant about possible biases (conscious or unconscious) affecting decisions to carry out or escalate searches. A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable to search for legally prohibited items, but not to search for items banned under the school rules only, as outlined in the *DfE 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation in School guidance.* Where possible the decision to carry out a search is made in collaboration with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) before taking place. Data from the record of searches is analysed by the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Chair of Local Governing Board to identify any groups that have been disproportionately subject to searches.

In summary

(i) All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

(ii) This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying children on a school organised visit.

(iii) Specific staff, based on school role have received additional specialist training in Positive Handling. Whilst it is favourable that if any physical interaction must occur, this is controlled by a Team Teach trained member of staff

7. When can reasonable force be used?

(i) Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, as a form of self-defense or from causing disorder.

(ii) In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.

(iii) The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

(iv) The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children 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 a school trip or visit
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground
- Preventing the intentional damage or destruction to school or other children's or staff member's property

Schools cannot:

• Use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

8. Communicating the school's approach

(i) Every school is required by law to have a behaviour policy and to make this policy known to staff, parents and pupils. The governing body should notify the Headteacher that it expects the school behaviour policy to include the power to use reasonable force.

(ii) There is no legal requirement to have a policy on the use of force, but it is good practice to set out, in the behaviour policy, the circumstances in which force might be used.

(iii) Schools do not require parental consent to use force on a child.

(iv) Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil, or prevent them taking action needed to prevent a pupil causing harm.

(v) During induction the use of physical intervention is discussed to ensure that staff, pupils and parents are clear about when force might be used, the school will reduce the likelihood of complaints being made when force has been used properly.

9. How to Physically intervene

9.1 Minimising the need for Physical Intervention

In most circumstances Physical Intervention really should be a last resort or an emergency action. Therefore, all staff should:

• endeavour to create a calm environment which will minimise the risk of incidents where the use of physical intervention may be required;
• endeavour to teach children how to manage strong emotions and conflict through opportunities for SMSC and wider aspects of the school curriculum;
• quickly seek to de-escalate incidents if they do arise;
• only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force, for example training staff in Trauma Informed Practice.
• be aware of risk assessments and positive handling plans for specific individual pupils.

9.2 In what way can staff physically intervene?

Staff considering handling, use of reasonable force or restraint should wherever practicable, provide an opportunity for the child to alter their behaviour / actions before employing a physical intervention strategy. Give slow and clear instruction, tell the child who is misbehaving to stop and what will happen if he or she does not. The teacher or other person should continue to communicate with the child throughout the incident and make it clear that physical contact will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary

In all cases the force used must be **PROPORTIONATE** to the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. The method of physical intervention employed must use the **MINIMUM REASONABLE FORCE FOR THE MINIMUM LENGTH OF TIME**.

There are a number of ways in which you can physically intervene, and you must choose the strategy appropriate to the situation and presenting least risk to yourself, the child and other persons. Appropriate actions include:

• **Shepherding or** guiding; using body positioning and positive gestures to move a child away from harm. This may include the placing of a hand on the back (between the shoulder blades) and using reasonable force to actively move them from one place to another.

• **Blocking or Interposing**; placing yourself between the child and their objective (e.g. another child) thereby preventing the potential injury damage or disruption to good order.

• **Holding and Leading**; gripping the child appropriately (e.g. by the forearm / upper arm) to prevent them from injury, damage, etc. In cases of resistance from a child, it may be necessary to employ holding to effectively achieve shepherding and, hence you are actively leading them away.

• **Restraining;** used only in the most extreme cases. Essentially, restraining is a more extreme version of holding, may require more than one adult and may last significantly longer than other strategies.

However, the same care must be taken to restrain a child appropriately. It should be carried out by staff who have been trained to use Physical Intervention.

ASSISTANCE should be sought before any physical intervention, whenever possible. The child should be told that assistance has been sent for.

Any other children who are at risk should be removed from the vicinity.

The use of Physical Intervention should be avoided in a one-to-one situation – adult witnesses are important.

9.3 In what ways must staff NOT Physically Intervene?

The purpose of physical intervention is essentially to maintain good order and ensure the safety of all individuals, therefore it is never appropriate to employ a physical intervention strategy if you are not in control of your own emotions. Physical interventions must never be employed in anger or frustration. If you find yourself angry or frustrated by the situation at hand you must step back and allow someone else to manage the issue.

Sometimes a member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help, for example when dealing with a physically large child or if the member of staff believes he or she may be at risk of injury. In these circumstances the member of staff should remove other children who may be at risk and summon assistance from colleagues. The member of staff should inform the child that he or she has sent for help.

It is never appropriate to use physical intervention strategies as a punishment

Just as there are a number of acceptable intervention strategies, there are also a number of actions it is completely inappropriate to take.

Staff should **NEVER**:
- hold a child around the neck or collar/hood, or in a way that might restrict breathing
- slap, hit, strike, punch or kick (while it is entirely possible that in the course of an intervention e.g. breaking up a fight you may be hit yourself, you must not strike a child)
- twist or force limbs against a joint (it is not okay to deliberately inflict pain e.g. arm up a child's back)
- trip
- hold or pull by the hair or ear
- hold a child face down on the ground
- Make contact with sexually sensitive areas of the body (where at all possible contact should be restricted to arms, shoulders and the back as previously described).

N.B. Staff must avoid holding / touching a child in any way that may be considered indecent.

9.4 Guidance for managing your intervention

It is required for schools to speak to parents about serious incidents involving the use of force and to consider how best to record such serious incidents. It is up to schools to decide whether it is appropriate to report the use of force to parents.

At Rossett Acre

- Records are kept on of any physical interventions on Abor and CPOMS
- Debrief is conducted with child and family
- Debrief is conducted with staff with subsequent planning and updates planned for, in appropriate
- A discussion held with the DSL over the requirement for a risk assessment to be undertaken and/or reasonable adjustments made to reduce risk.

In deciding what is a serious incident, teachers should use their professional judgement and also consider the following:

- The pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- The degree of force used
- The effect on the pupil or member of staff
- The child's age

9.5 Recording a Physical Intervention

The recording of a physical intervention should be standardised to support accuracy and availability of information. The following steps should be applied in all cases:

(i) All records of physical intervention should be completed and sent to the Deputy Headteacher (DSL) via Arbor and CPOMS.

(ii) The member of staff who initiated the intervention is the person who completes the documentation/ report/write up of the incident. Details and witness statements can be contributed to the initial report if required.

(iii) The report must be completed before the end of the working day, and ideally before a member of staff leaves the school site. This ensures that should the report be needed for safeguarding purposes, it is immediately available, communicating transparency of process and good practice.

(iv) Before a child leaves the school site, following a physical intervention, clarity should be sought, and a record made of:

- Any specific aspect of the physical intervention that the child is not happy with or wishes to make a complaint about
- Any marks that have been caused by the physical intervention or that were present before the intervention, which may be confused with those potentially gained in the incident.
- Whether a medical check has been offered, done or is required
- Whether a child refused to cooperate with the acquisition of this information

(v) On gaining this information, it should be shared with the Headteacher and then relayed to parents/carers. The relaying of this information should be documented.

(vi) On all occasions parents/carers should be notified if their child has had physical intervention. This should, on all occasions, take place on the day that the physical intervention took place, and at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

(vii) If a child is in the care of the Local Authority (CLA) their Social Worker should be notified, on all occasions, on the day of the incident. This communication should be documented and supported in an email.

(viii) When the child is in a conducive frame of mind, they should be given the opportunity to be debriefed as to the reasons for the intervention, and to develop strategies or contribute to a plan that will reduce the likelihood of a re-occurrence.

(ix) The child, when in a conducive frame of mind, should be given the opportunity to read the report, or have it read to them, so they can make comment on its content and accuracy.

10. Staff training

(i) Schools need to take their own decisions about which staff will require training in the use of force, and what that training should be. Some local authorities provide advice and guidance to help schools to develop an appropriate training programme.

(ii) Rossett Acre Primary School regularly refreshes staff in Physical Intervention and De-escalation in line within the protocol set out by Team Teach. (The schools chosen, accredited training guide).

(iii) When appropriate specific CPD sessions are delivered by appropriated qualified staff in order to further develop the technique and confidence of staff using reasonable force in order to limit the risk or injury to learners and school staff.

(iv) Updates of training are in line with Team Teach guidance.

11. Dealing with disputes

What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?

(i) All complaints about the use of force should be directed firstly to the Headteacher, in line with the stages set out in the Red Kite Learning Trust complaints policy.

(ii) 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 – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.

(iii) When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.

(iv) Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to the "Allegations against adults" guidance where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.

(v) Schools must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.

(vi) If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school should ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.

(vii) The Local Governing Board should always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the teacher.

(viii) As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that schools provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

12. Other permittable physical contact with pupils

There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Examples of where physical touch with a pupil might be proper or necessary:

a) Holding the hand of an anxious child with Special Education Needs when crossing a road or offering reassurance in going to an assembly
b) When comforting a distressed pupil.
c) To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument.
d) To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.
e) To give first aid.
f) Providing intimate care to a child as outlined in their EHCP

13. Family, Child and Staff understanding of Physical Intervention in Schools.

Physical Intervention is an emotive and divisive subject for many philosophical and personal reasons. Within the area of Special Educational Needs and particularly in the management of young people who may present significantly challenging behaviours, it is however, an issue that presents itself with more frequency than in some other areas of education. It is therefore essential that, to prevent a misunderstanding of motive, justification, application or recording, all parties are consistently and fully informed of and understand the policy.

There are processes that will support a full understanding. These processes begin before a child enters the school, to the point where physical intervention may have been used, and beyond when the child is re-entering the learning environment.