Western Downland C of E (VA) Primary School

Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

Name of School:	**Western Downland C of E (VA) Primary School**
Name of Responsible Manager/Headteacher:	**Alice Tubbs Headteacher**
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1 Background

Restrictive physical intervention is when a member of staff uses force intentionally to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a pupil against their will. At Western Downland C of E (VA) Primary School, we are committed to helping pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour through positive relationships, high expectations and an inclusive approach that recognises behaviour as a form of communication.

Our practice is underpinned by relational and trauma-informed principles. We seek to understand the underlying reasons for behaviour and support pupils through co-regulation, the development of self-regulation skills and appropriate environmental adaptations. We strive to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with additional needs and provide a broad, engaging curriculum that promotes success for all learners.

We do this through a combination of approaches including:

- Positive role modelling;
- Teaching an engaging and challenging curriculum;
- Setting and enforcing appropriate boundaries and expectations;
- Building trusting relationships with pupils and families;
- Providing supportive feedback;
- Using preventative and de-escalation strategies wherever possible; and
- Working collaboratively with parents and external professionals where appropriate.

Restrictive physical intervention is not our preferred method of behaviour management and will only be used where absolutely necessary to prevent harm or serious disruption when less restrictive alternatives are not reasonably practicable.

This policy is not intended to refer to ordinary physical contact that may be appropriate in situations such as providing first aid, offering comfort, guiding pupils during practical activities or PE, or supporting pupils with personal care.

2 Principles for the use of restrictive physical intervention

Restrictive physical intervention will only be used where the risks of not intervening outweigh the risks associated with intervention. Staff will always seek to prevent escalation through de-escalation strategies, distraction, offering choices, environmental adjustments and verbal support.

Before intervening, staff will make a dynamic assessment of the situation by considering:

- Is intervention necessary?
- Is it proportionate to the risk presented?
- Is it in the best interests of the pupil and others involved?
- Have less restrictive alternatives been attempted or considered?

- Is it being used only as a last resort, unless immediate action is required to prevent harm?

Any force used will be reasonable, proportionate and applied for the shortest possible time.

Restrictive physical intervention is never used as a punishment or because staff are frustrated or angry.

3 When restrictive physical intervention might be used

The use of restrictive physical intervention may be justified where a pupil is:

1. committing an offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil)
2. causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or
3. prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Restrictive physical intervention may also be appropriate where, although none of the above have yet happened, they are judged as highly likely to be about to happen.

We are very cautious about using restrictive physical intervention where there are no immediate concerns about possible injury or exceptional damage to property.

Restrictive physical intervention would only be used in exceptional circumstances, with staff who know the pupil well and who are able to make informed judgements about the relative risks of using, or not using, restrictive physical intervention; for example stopping a younger child leaving the school site.

The main aim of restrictive physical intervention is usually to maintain or restore safety. We acknowledge that there may be times when restrictive physical intervention may be justified as a reasonable and proportionate response to prevent damage to property or to maintain good order and discipline at the school.
However, we would be particularly careful to consider all other options available before using restrictive physical intervention to achieve either of these goals. In all cases, we remember that, even if the aim is to re-establish good order, restrictive physical intervention may actually escalate the difficulty.

If we judge that restrictive physical intervention would make the situation worse, we would not use it, but would do something else (like go to seek help, make the area safe or warn about what might happen next and issue an instruction to stop) consistent with our duty of care.

Staff take into consideration that the best interests of the child are paramount and this should then be weighed up against the safety and rights of others. To be confident in our judgements, we ensure staff are up to date with recent legislation and guidance of good practice in the area.

Our duty of care means that we might use a restrictive physical intervention if a child is trying to leave our site and we judged that they would be at unacceptable risk. This duty of care also extends beyond our site boundaries: there may also be situations where we need to use restrictive physical intervention when we have control or charge of children off site (e.g. on trips).

We never use restrictive physical intervention out of anger or as a punishment.

4 Who can use restrictive physical intervention

If the use of restrictive physical intervention is appropriate, and is part of a positive behaviour management framework, a member of staff who knows the child well should be involved, and where possible, trained through an accredited provider in the use of restrictive physical intervention. However, in an emergency, any of the following may be able to use reasonable force in the circumstances set out in Section 93 of the

Education and Inspections Act (2006):

1. any teacher who works at the school, and
2. any other person whom the headteacher has authorised to have control or charge of pupils, including:

(a) support staff whose job normally includes supervising pupils such as teaching assistants, learning support assistants, learning mentors and lunchtime supervisors; and

(b) people to whom the headteacher has given temporary authorisation to have control or charge of pupils such as paid members of staff whose job does not normally involve supervising pupils (for example catering or premises-related staff) and unpaid volunteers (for example parents accompanying pupils on school-organised visits) but not prefects.

All staff receive appropriate training in behaviour management, de-escalation strategies and safeguarding. Where there is a foreseeable likelihood that staff may need to use restrictive physical intervention, the school will ensure they receive appropriate accredited training, such as Team Teach, together with regular refresher training. Records of staff training are maintained and monitored by the school.

5 Planning around an individual and risk assessment

Where there is a foreseeable likelihood that restrictive physical intervention may be required, the school will undertake an individual risk assessment and develop a behaviour support plan in collaboration with parents, the pupil where appropriate and relevant professionals.

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) may be more vulnerable to emotional dysregulation due to factors such as sensory overload, communication differences, anxiety, pain or changes to routine. The school will seek to understand these factors and make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 to minimise distress and reduce the likelihood of restrictive intervention becoming necessary.

Behaviour support plans will identify preventative strategies, environmental adaptations, communication approaches and agreed responses that promote inclusion and safety.

6 What type of restrictive physical intervention can be used

We all have a duty of care towards pupils. This duty applies as much to what we do not do as what we do. We have a responsibility to intervene where necessary to protect pupils and others from harm, using the least restrictive and proportionate response available.

Any use of restrictive physical intervention must be consistent with the principle of reasonable force and should use the least restrictive option available.

Restrictive physical intervention is used solely to maintain safety and is never used as a form of punishment or to secure compliance.

Staff must not use techniques that:

- Interfere with breathing or restrict the airway;
- Create a risk of positional asphyxia;
- Apply pressure to the neck, throat, chest or abdomen;
- Hold a pupil around the neck or collar;
- Twist or force limbs against joints;
- Pull hair or ears; or
- Deliberately restrain a pupil on the ground.

If a pupil independently moves to the ground during an incident, staff will immediately reassess and release the hold where it is safe to do so.

The school does not include seclusion as part of its planned behaviour support strategies. In the exceptional event that seclusion is the only safe response to an immediate emergency involving serious risk of harm, the pupil will be continuously supervised and supported, the measure will end as soon as it is safe to do so, and the incident will be fully recorded, reviewed and reported.

7 Recording and reporting

Every incident involving restrictive physical intervention will be recorded as soon as possible, ideally on the same day.

Records will include:

- The names of all pupils and staff involved, including witnesses where appropriate;
- The time, date, location and approximate duration;
- Antecedents and likely triggers;
- De-escalation strategies attempted before intervention;
- The reason intervention was considered necessary;
- The type and duration of intervention used;

- Any injuries sustained or medical attention required; and
- Post-incident support, follow-up actions and any recommended amendments to behaviour support plans or risk assessments.

Parents or carers will normally be informed verbally on the same school day by telephone or another agreed method of communication. Where appropriate, this will be followed by written documentation, and a copy of the incident record will be made available on request.

Following any incident, staff will review whether existing plans require amendment in order to reduce the likelihood of future restrictive physical intervention.

8 Post-Incident Support

Restrictive physical intervention can be distressing for everyone involved. Once the situation has been safely resolved and all parties are calm, appropriate opportunities will be provided for pupils and staff to reflect on the incident.

Debrief discussions aim to repair relationships, understand triggers, identify successful preventative strategies and inform future planning. Where appropriate, a member of staff not directly involved in the incident may facilitate this process.

9 Monitoring

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will review incidents of restrictive physical intervention regularly and at least termly. Monitoring will include consideration of:

- Frequency and patterns of use;
- Repeated interventions involving individual pupils;
- Effectiveness of existing behaviour support plans;
- Staff training needs;
- Trends relating to time, location or context;
- Equality considerations, including pupils with SEND or protected characteristics; and
- Opportunities to further reduce reliance on restrictive physical intervention through preventative practice.

Findings will be reported to governors and used to inform policy review, staff development and continuous improvement.

10 Concerns and complaints

The use of restrictive physical intervention is distressing to all involved and can lead to concerns, allegations or complaints of inappropriate or excessive use. In particular, a child might complain about the use of restrictive physical intervention in the heat of the moment but on further reflection might better understand why it happened. In other situations, further reflection might lead the child to feel strongly that the use of restrictive physical intervention was inappropriate. This is why we are careful to ensure all children have a chance to review the incident after they have calmed down. If a child or parent has a concern about the way

restrictive physical intervention has been used, our school's complaints procedure explains how to take the matter further and how long we will take to respond to these concerns.

Where there is an allegation of assault or abusive behaviour, we ensure that the headteacher is immediately informed. We would also follow our child protection procedures. In the absence of the headteacher, in relation to restrictive physical intervention, we ensure that the deputy headteacher is informed. If the concern, complaint or allegation concerns the headteacher, we ensure that the Chair of Governors is informed.

Our staff will always seek to avoid injury to the pupil, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally. This is not to be seen as necessarily a failure of professional technique but a regrettable and infrequent side effect of making sure the service user remains safe.

If parents/carers are not satisfied with the way the complaint has been handled, they have the right to take the matter further as set out in our complaints procedure.

The results and procedures used in dealing with complaints are monitored by the governing body.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body or sooner if required following changes in legislation, statutory guidance or school practice.