

Morpeth First School

Restraint Policy

Rationale

At Morpeth First School, we believe that physical restraint should only be used as a last resort. It is only used when dealing with a situation where a child is putting others or himself / herself into danger or flouting our behaviour policy to an unacceptable degree. We recognise that there are times when restraint may be necessary and this policy sets out agreed criteria. It saddens us that we need to consider such action but it should be remembered that it is law that we have such a policy. Restraint is only relevant for a tiny minority of pupils in exceptional circumstances.

Documents that have been referred to in formulating this policy

The Criminal Law Act 1967, The Children's act 1989, DFEE Circular 10/98 and planning and Recording physical interventions in school (2003).

Definition of restraint

Restraint occurs when a member of staff uses physical force intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will. Physical contact with pupils may occur under other circumstances such as giving support in PE and supplying reassurance. Staff should not be inhibited in providing such contact when it is professionally appropriate.

When may pupils be restrained?

Restraint should be avoided when possible. Other methods of managing the incident in line with our behaviour policy should be used first. Restraint may be justified to prevent a pupil:

- Injuring others (e.g. staff or other pupils)
- Injuring themselves
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline in school
- Damaging property

If a pupil is attempting to abscond from a building, staff should only restrain a pupil if the pupil is putting him/herself at risk by doing so. We will use our professional judgement and experience in judging the best response. This will vary according to the situation and level of staffing available, e.g. if a pupil is in sight, if a child is taking 'time out', if the child is no longer visible or has a previous record of absconding. Appropriate responses would include talking quietly to the child to calm them with the aim of bringing them back into school, monitoring the child from a distance, contacting the parent or carer, phoning the police.

There are times when a child may not want to come into school. In Reception classes we have a policy of allowing parents/carers to stay with their child until he/she is settled where appropriate. At other times and with older children, in agreement with parents, children will be met by a member of staff in specific areas (eg reception or entrance door) and will be led into class. Occasionally further restraint may be needed.

What should happen before restraint is used?

If staff feel that a situation is developing into one that requires restraint, the following steps should be followed *where possible*:

- Get the assistance of another member of staff
- Send another child for the Head or Deputy
- Talk to the pupils in a quiet and calm manner. Remain in control and offer choices
- Don't lose temper or become involved in a shouting match
- Warn the pupil that restraint may have to be used

How should pupils be restrained?

Any restraint used must be consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force'. The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances and should constitute the minimum necessary to achieve the desired result. Pupils should be held by loose clothing where possible. Physical intervention could take several forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between pupils;
- Blocking a pupils path;
- Holding;
- Pushing;
- Pulling;
- Leading a pupil by the arm;

- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or
- *In extreme circumstances* using more restrictive holds.

Staff should not

- Hold a pupil in a way that may restrict breathing.
- Slap, punch or kick a pupil.
- Twist or force limb against a joint.
- Trip a pupil up.
- Hold a pupil by the ear or hair.
- Hold a pupil face down on the ground.

Who should restrain pupils?

Ideally only members of the teaching staff may need to use restraint. Equally, all Learning Assistants and Supervisory Assistants, who are *confident* and *secure* with the notion of restraint may restrain a pupil.

All members of staff have the right to defend themselves against an attack.

What should happen after a child has been restrained?

Staff should notify the Headteacher, or in her absence another senior member of staff as soon as possible after the incident. Staff must then formally record what happened using the Restraint Incident Report Form as soon as is practically possible. This incident form will also be sent To the Health and Safety Office at Northumberland County Council if it is felt the incident is sufficiently serious. Incidents which are felt to be racially motivated should be reported according to the 'Tackling Racism and extremism Policy'.

Any injury sustained by a member of staff should be recorded in the Accident book held in the office, more serious injuries should be recorded on a Violent Incident Form (VI) available online. The Headteacher or class teacher where appropriate, will contact the parent/carer on the same day to discuss the matter. Pupils will be given the opportunity to give their account of the incident once they have calmed down.

The Headteacher will carefully assess each case and decide the action needed after an incident. A fixed term exclusion, or in more serious cases, a permanent exclusion may be appropriate.

Staff will need to carefully consider whether it is appropriate to consult their own professional association.

Who will be notified of this policy?

All parents will be notified of this policy through a summary of it. The summary will be placed on the School's website.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date of next review 2018

Signed _____ Date _____

Chair of Governors