



**Lightwoods School**

# **Policy Library**

**TITLE:**

**Physical Intervention**

L097

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## Lightwoods Primary School

### Physical Restraint Policy

#### Definition

The Education Act, 1997, added a section to the 1996 Act to clarify when teachers may use physical force to restrain a pupil. Restraint occurs when a member of staff uses physical force intentionally to restrict a pupil's movement against his or her will. It is to be used only in exceptional circumstances. There is no legal definition of "reasonable force", so it is not possible to set out comprehensively when it is reasonable to use force; or the degree of force that may reasonably be used. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the case.

It is good policy that physical restraint is used only:

- Rarely
- As a last resort
- Where another course of action would be likely to fail
- When staff have good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary

Physical Restraint must not be used to:

- Punish
- Gain pupil compliance with staff instructions
- Cause or threaten hurt
- Oppress, threaten, intimidate or bully

#### Authorisation of Control

The Head teacher will identify people, other than teachers, whom they wish to authorise to have control or charge of pupils and therefore be able to use force if necessary.

Authorisation may be on a permanent or long term basis because of the nature of the person's job, or short term for a specific event, such as a school trip.

#### When may physical restraint be used?

The main reason for the use of restraint is to keep people safe. Restraint is unlikely to be appropriate in the case of some older students and it may also increase the risk of injury to both staff and pupils.

The main grounds for restraint (Criminal Law Act, 1967; The Children Act 1989) are:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility).
- Injuring themselves or others.

- Causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property).
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

A pupil absconding from school should not be restrained unless there is evidence that he or she is at serious risk. Members of staff are not obliged to restrain a pupil if it is against their better judgement. It may be more appropriate to summon help.

When it is known in advance that restraint may be necessary, an individual strategy should be devised following consultation with parents and medical advice. Where it is known that a pupil is particularly sensitive about physical contact, staff will be informed in advance through the Special Needs Register.

The police should be called if there is a threat of violence which cannot be contained. All telephones in school accept outgoing 999 calls. However, unless circumstances are extreme, a senior member of staff should be contacted so that a decision can be taken at that level.

### Who may restrain students?

Everyone has a right to use reasonable force to prevent an attack against themselves or others, whether they are formally authorised or not. At Lightwoods Primary School, only adults employed by the school may use physical restraint.

### How should students be restrained?

Restraint must be reasonable and in proportion to the circumstances. Warning of intended restraint should be given, when practicable, in a non-threatening manner. Restraint should never be used as a substitute for normal disciplinary measures. Normal disciplinary measures do not include physical contact. Restraint, however, might involve holding, separating, pushing or pulling individuals; it should not involve the more restrictive or percussive forms of force.

### Forms of Control Explained

#### Obstructing

Obstructing is when a staff member may use their physical presence to obstruct a situation. Obstructing must be used in the general context of trying to engage the pupil in distraction about his/her behaviour, its implications and discontinued if the pupil physically challenges it (when a decision needs to be made as to whether some other form of permitted intervention is still justified).

#### Holding

To be used to discourage unwanted behaviour. This should involve no more than a hand placed on an arm or shoulder of a pupil by one or both hands and/or possibly the flat of the hand against a pupil's back in order to guide him/her to some other place. This may be necessary to avoid external danger (e.g. holding a pupil's hand when crossing a road), to divert

a pupil from destructive or disruptive behaviour or to discourage destructive or disruptive behaviour.

“Holding” is distinguished from “physical restraint” largely by the manageable degree of force applied. Holding is intended to discourage. Physical restraint is intended to prevent.

### Physical Restraint

This is the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering a pupil to prevent significant injury to themselves or others or serious/significant damage to property. The proper use of restraint requires judgement, skills and application of non-harmful methods of control.

### Procedure for Physical Restraint

1. Try to give a clear warning, i.e. “Look, you’re giving me no choice.....”
2. Try to offer an alternative escape route from the situation by calming down and talking things through – in fact this must stand all the way through the incident.

**NOTE: DO NOT DISCUSS THE ISSUE THAT LED TO THE INTERVENTION WHILST HOLDING THE PUPIL.**

3. Once physical intervention is necessary, it is important that it happens quickly, smoothly, confidently and successfully.

**NOTE: THIS SHOULD OCCUR UNDER THE CONSIDERED AND CALM CONTROL OF THE MEMBER(S) OF STAFF INVOLVED.**

4. The intervention should be proportionate to the circumstances and staff involved. Staff will need to make an instant risk assessment of the situation. Involving the considerations stated previously in the policy.
5. When circumstances justify the use of restraint, staff can restrain a pupil in a seated position, in a standing position, in a seated ground position or in a kneeling position.

When following out these forms of restraint the following guidance may be adopted:

- It is easier if one member of staff takes the lead and direction. Only one member of staff should do the talking at any one time.
- With two people present, where possible, approach the pupil face-on and take an arm each. They should now move to the pupil’s side, reducing their space for movement.
- Beware of kicks, knees, head butts, bites etc. Staff should lean slightly away from pupil. If the pupil starts to spit, they should be told to stop, if they persist, staff can hold the pupils face forward, using the L shaped palm method.
- Staff should take hold just above the wrist, on the long bones, front of the shoulder and upper arm. Check positions of hold constantly and communicate with each other

and the pupil. Reassure the pupil that you will relinquish control when the pupil has gained sufficient composure and self control.

- Try not to move the pupil long distances. The greater the distance = higher potential for injury for all.
- If sitting, aim for a well-padded office chair with no arms. Staff should consider this before intervention.
- It may be necessary to lower the pupil to a kneeling position on the floor, follow the same processes.
- Arms should never be to the side or across the back.
- **NEVER PLACE A CHILD FACE DOWN ON THE FLOOR!**

Staff will be expected to exhaust all behaviour management strategies (where possible) before using physical intervention.

#### What should be done after an incident of restraint?

A senior member of staff should be informed immediately and a pupil incident report must be drawn up in liaison with involved colleagues and the pupil given the opportunity to discuss the incident and have their input recorded. Incident Reports need to be monitored and evaluated to identify incident patterns or trends developing. The Headteacher or a senior member of staff will decide when and how to inform parents.

Further action should be considered in accordance with school policies on positive behaviour and health and safety.

#### All incidents must be reviewed to try to establish:

- Cause
- Appropriateness of action taken
- Whether and how procedures need amending

Lightwoods Primary School has the following members of staff trained in physical restraint:

- Mrs. S. Farnell – Pre-School Manager
- Mrs. N. White – Administration Assistant and Receptionist
- Miss Vanessa Salt – Learning Support for Special Needs