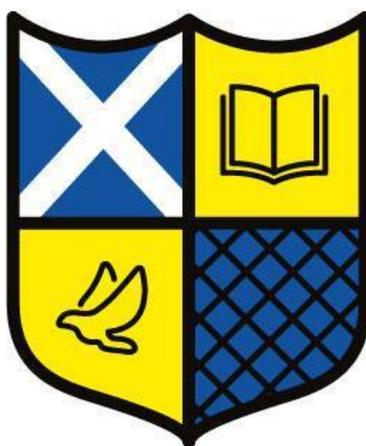


St. Andrew's CE Primary School

Physical Intervention / Control Management Policy



Approved by:	Teaching and Learning Committee
Last reviewed on:	November 2025
Next review due by:	Autumn 2026

Physical Intervention/Control Management

November 2025

At St Andrew's Primary, we recognise that there are rare occasions when a child may need to be physically held/controlled with 'reasonable force' (authorised by section 550A of the Education Act 1996; Education Inspections Act 2006). This policy details the agreed school procedures/practices for physical holding of our children, based on advice within 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings' (adapted and updated in 2015 by the Safer Recruitment Consortium from an original IRSC/ DfE document) and 'Use of Reasonable Force' advice (DfE: reviewed July 2015). Both these publications provide the wider context to this policy.

This policy should be read alongside the following documents: Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Additional Educational Needs Policy, Behaviour Policy, Accessibility and Equalities Plan, Intimate Care Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy, and Dealing with Allegations Against Staff Policy.

1. Policy Statement

At St Andrew's, we recognise that the vast majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the St Andrew's community values and vision and show caring and responsible behaviour. The well-being, welfare and safety of all pupils and staff at St Luke's Primary school is of paramount importance.

It is acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of 'reasonable force' may be required. Positive handling and physical intervention will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk. We recognise that children whose presenting behaviour necessitates the use of 'reasonable force' to manage it are often extremely vulnerable and are often highly stressed/anxious. We understand behaviour as communication and would see it as our responsibility to help and make adjustments for a child whose behavioural response was so extreme.

Positive handling/physical intervention uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming themselves, others or property. The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm s/he might cause. Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school:

- (i) Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and
- (ii) are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations**

2. Definitions

No legal definition of “reasonable force” exists however for the purpose of this policy and the implementation of it in St Andrew’s Primary School, the clarification provided in the DfE guidance document ‘Use of Reasonable Force’, 2013 [reviewed 2015] is used:

What is reasonable force?

- The term ‘reasonable force’ covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- 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 student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- ‘Reasonable in the circumstances’ means using no more force than is needed.
- 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
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury.

It is acknowledged that in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injury as an accidental consequence of the intervention.

Different types of physical contact with pupils:

1. Positive Physical Contact (*positive touch policy)

At St Andrew’s Primary we recognise that appropriate positive physical contact with young children is often reasonable and appropriate.

2. Physical Intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the arm or shoulder where the pupil is compliant.

3. Physical Control/Restraint

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. It is important to note that the use of ‘reasonable force’ should be seen as a last resort. All such incidents must be recorded and be stored in an accessible way. If at all possible, more than one member of staff should be present if physical restraint is necessitated. The level of compliance from the pupil determines whether or not the interaction is an intervention or a control/restraint.

Ask parents and carers if we can hold/carry/pick up

4. Authorised staff

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006). Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 permits adults who have lawful charge or control of children to use reasonable force to control or restrain them. Beyond school staff this may include:

- representatives from outside agencies
- other adults who may be working with children either on school premises or accompanying them on out of school activities, eg during field trips or on school journeys.

Wherever possible physical restraint should only be used by those with appropriate training. At St Andrew's, the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion, SENCo, Welfare team and INA's are appropriately trained (Spring 21 and more recently the Behaviour/Inclusion Lead Sept 25). However, it is acknowledged this may not always be possible and physical restraint may be used as an emergency measure by someone without appropriate training to ensure the safety of children in their care. Any physical intervention should be conducted making reasonable adjustment for students with SEN or disabilities. In this instance, someone with appropriate training should be called for immediately.

The 1996 Education Act (Section 550 A) stipulates that: A member of the staff of a school may use, in relation to any pupil at the school, such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of preventing the pupil from doing (or continuing to do) any of the following, namely:

- committing any offence,
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself),

or

- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise.

This applies where a member of staff is on the school premises and elsewhere at a time when, as a member of school staff, that adult has lawful control of the children concerned, for example, on a school trip. The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the adult concerned. Whether the force used is reasonable will always depend on the particular circumstances of the case. The use of force is reasonable if it is proportionate to the consequences it is intended to prevent. This means the degree of force used should be no more than is needed to achieve the desired result. (DfE guidance document 'Use of Reasonable Force', 2013).

Individual members of staff cannot be required to use physical restraint. However, as teaching and non-teaching staff work in 'loco parentis' and should always operate with an appropriate 'Duty of Care', it might be argued that failing to take action (including a failure to use reasonable force) may in some circumstances breach that duty. (DfE guidance document 'Use of Reasonable Force', 2013).

In all but rare circumstances, the Assistant Head teacher, Senco, Welfare team and INA would be the adults involved in dealing with a child whose behaviour warranted physical intervention. If none of these people were available, then adults should try, in the first instance, to distract the child / remove themselves and any children away from the child needing physical intervention but if this is not possible then all staff (in terms of their duty of care) are authorised to use physical intervention to protect themselves, others and maintain discipline.

4. Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviour and Escalating Situations

Staff consistently use strategies to encourage positive behaviour and good order, in line with St Andrew's Behaviour Policy. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts positively.

Staff should be able to justify that strategies other than force have been attempted and proved ineffective or would have been impractical. Furthermore, staff should recognise that restraint is only

a small part of a wider spectrum of positive behaviour management strategies that may include use of space, safe environments, diversions, calm stances and postures, non-threatening facial expressions, low tone, volume and pace in communication, careful use of words, and physical reassurance and prompts.

Consideration of these strategies should be maintained during and after the need for physical contact. As soon as it is safe, any hold or restraint should be gradually relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control. The pupil should be informed about what will happen next and be offered reassurance and encouragement to remain calm. In this way the pupil will be more likely to see the restraint as an act of care.

5. Recording

School keeps a record of all incidents where physical intervention involving the use of force against a child has been necessary. The record should be completed by the end of the working day on which the incident took place. A member of the Leadership Team will be told at the earliest possible time after an incident. A member of the Leadership Team will discuss the incident with any children or staff who were present. In line with our commitment to working with parents, we will ensure parent/s are contacted before the child goes home and we will discuss strategies to prevent the need for physical intervention to happen again.

School will regularly review the number and type of incidents in which physical intervention and/or restraint has been necessary. This will be used to ensure that there is adherence to this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the school.

Risk assessment

When a child's individual behaviour plan indicates the likely use of physical intervention and/or restraint as one of the reactive strategies, a risk assessment must be carried out.

Positive Handling Plan

When the Individual Education Plan and risk assessment indicate the likely need for school staff to hold or restrain a child, the school should record this in a Positive Handling Plan.

The information in the risk assessments will help to inform this plan which will outline:

- Who has been consulted about the plan
- The type of physical intervention to be used
- Which adults are those most likely to use this intervention
Parental consent for the plan
- Head teacher authorisation for the plan
Monitoring Incident.

Where Physical Restraint Is Used the Assistant Head Teacher will monitor records of any incidents in order to:

- Identify any patterns of behaviour resulting in the use of physical intervention.
- Review the levels of staff awareness of and compliance with the school policy.
- Inform staff training needs.
- Explore the relationship between the use of physical intervention and behaviour in school.
- Governor's Behaviour and Safety sub-committee may monitor incidents where physical restraint is used

Action after an Incident

The Head Teacher will ensure that each incident is reviewed, investigated and recorded as stated above. If further action is required, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedures which may include:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Dealing with Allegations against Staff Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy Advice for staff

Advice for Staff

At St Andrew's C. E. Primary School, we believe that physical intervention and/or restraint should be the last resort. In the majority of cases de-escalation and diffusion are the appropriate methods of dealing with situations that might result in a threat to the health and safety of any individuals. On extremely rare occasions it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically with or between pupils.

These include:

- Injury, or risk of injury, to another pupil
- Injury, or risk of injury, to a member of staff
- Serious damage to property

Any intervention should be a last resort and be proportionate, reasonable and appropriate, and be done with the aim to reduce not provoke.

All staff owe a duty of care to pupils. To take no action, where the outcome is that a pupil injures him/herself, or another, including staff, could be seen as negligence. Members of staff facing confrontational situations with pupils are reminded that the following behaviours can either reduce or inflame incidents, and that a brief moment of risk assessment may allow the time to decide on the appropriate action necessary.

Staff are strongly advised not to physically stop pupils from leaving their room. They should give a clear choice, but unless there is a risk of injury should never block a pupil's exit.

- **Remaining calm** – the ability to try and remain calm and appear relaxed is less likely to provoke. A relaxed posture and a non-threatening (CALM) stance, i.e. not toe-to-toe, are recommended.
- **Awareness of Space** – try to be aware of the space around you and avoid stepping into another individual's personal/intimate space. Try to take a step back outside the circle of danger.
- **Pacing and Chasing** – angry people often pace around in tense situations and staff should try to avoid the temptation to follow as they attempt to help them calm down. This can be counter-productive as it may trigger an 'animal chase' response and drive the other person away. Where possible it is preferable for the staff member to stand still, speaking calmly, clearly and confidently – or even sit down.
- **Intonation** - when people are anxious or angry they tend to talk faster, higher and more loudly. In a potential crisis situation staff need to deliberately speak slower, lower and more quietly.

Help Script

- Connect by using pupil's name
- Recognise and name the feelings
- Tell the pupil you're there to help
- You talk and I will listen
- Give direction

Diffusing body language responses

- Social distance
- Intermittent eye contact
- Relaxed body posture
- Sideways stance, step back
- Palms open Calm Stance
- Think of the value of stepping back from a situation, both physically and emotionally:
Allows a more considered response
- Time to make a 'dynamic' risk assessment and seek assistance
- Allow other person 'take up' time to make their own choices

In the event of a serious incident e.g. a fight, staff should:

- Make their presence felt – "Stop fighting. Stop fighting."
- Send for assistance
- Remove the 'fuel' by clearing the 'audience' away
- Be a witness
- Intervene physically if confident and having assessed the degree of risk