

St Mary's Community Primary School

The Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

Introduction

This document provides guidance on the circumstances when Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) can be used and when dealing with pupils presenting with severe behavioural difficulties and the procedures that should be followed when used. This guidance is in line the Welsh Government Guidance on Safe and effective Intervention - use of reasonable force and searching for weapons (March 2013) and refers to the two powers available to schools to help manage pupils' behaviour, as commenced in October 2010.

Staff should be reassured that where they follow this guidance their actions will be supported by their Mrs Booth (Headteacher) and the Welsh Government.

At St Mary's there may be, at times, children with severe behavioural difficulties who present behaviour that may necessitate the use of restrictive physical interventions to prevent injury, damage to property, or the breakdown of discipline. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 clarifies the position about use of restrictive physical interventions by teachers and others authorised by the head teacher to control or restrain pupils. Teachers and other authorised school staff will be reminded that use of physical force must be reasonable and comply with:

- Local authority policies
- The Children and Young People's Plan
- School Behaviour Policy

Terminology

Restrictive Physical Intervention refers to a situation where a member of staff uses force intentionally to restrict a child's movements against his or her will.

School staff refers to anyone employed by Wrexham LA in a school who has control or charge of children.

Child refers to any child or young person attending any Wrexham school.

Parent refers to parents and carers who have parental responsibility for the child.

Principles for the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention at St Mary's

Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used in the context of wider behaviour policies and procedures which promote positive behaviour.

There are occasions when restrictive physical intervention is an appropriate and reasonable response to the risks presented in a particular situation.

Restrictive physical intervention will only be used when there is no alternative, less intrusive, course of action.

Force will not be used as a punishment.

Any use of restrictive physical intervention will be consistent with the Welsh Government Guidance on Safe and effective Intervention - use of reasonable force and searching for weapons (March 2013).

Members of staff will not be required / advised to carry out any form of restrictive physical intervention which will put themselves at risk.

School Expectations

At St Mary's the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention will always be considered within the wider context of other measures. These include establishing and maintaining good relationships with children and using diversion, diffusion and negotiation to respond to difficult situations. Use of physical force that is unwarranted, excessive or punitive is not acceptable. Failure to comply with this principle, when considering or using physical force, will be dealt with under school disciplinary procedures.

Positive Behaviour Management

At St Mary's all staff will adopt a positive approach to improving behaviour in order to reward effort and application, and to build self-esteem. We will work in partnership with those who know the child to help those concerned:

- find out why this child behaves as he or she does
- understand the factors that influence this child's behaviour
- identify when possible early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours are developing.

This approach will help to ensure that early and preventative intervention is the norm. It will reduce the incidence of extreme behaviours and make sure that the use of physical force is rare.

School staff will refer to the school's Behaviour Policy when developing and implementing Behaviour Management Plans. All Behaviour Management Plans will be formally agreed and ratified before implementing them in school. Plans should be formally recorded in accordance with school procedures and set out the action taken to:

- meet the pupil's needs;
- encourage the pupil to make positive choices and develop self-control;
- support the pupil in difficult situations;
- safely manage crises if and when they occur.

Circumstances when Restrictive Physical Intervention can be used

Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives all schools the power to use such force as reasonable to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing an offence
- Causing injury, or damage, to a person or the property of any person (including the person themselves).
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline in the school or among pupils receiving education in the school, whether during lessons or elsewhere.

The most usual circumstances where reasonable force might be used by most teachers at St Mary's is when a child's behaviour is likely to cause personal injury or serious damage to property. Members of staff should be very cautious about the use of force in other circumstances and should remember that force should only be used as a last resort and in line with the principles above.

What is Reasonable Force?

The DfE guidance provides the following clarification:

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 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 need 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.

St Mary's staff will 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.

Who can use Restrictive Physical Intervention?

All staff at St Mary's can use Restrictive Physical Intervention to maintain safety in an emergency consistent with principles of common law.

The 2006 Education and Inspections Act gave all teachers and other school staff, who have control or charge of pupils, the statutory power to use reasonable force.

Mrs Booth can authorise other people to use force e.g. other adults who might be helping with a school trip.

Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions in Unforeseen and Emergency Situations

We acknowledge that, on occasion, staff may find themselves in unforeseen or emergency situations when they have no option but to use reasonable force to manage a crisis. At St Mary's we will:

- before using force - staff will attempt to use diversion or diffusion to manage the situation.
- when using force - staff will use techniques and methods with which they are familiar, confident and are permitted by the school.
- in exceptional circumstances (where permitted techniques are ineffective or staff are unfamiliar with the action they should take) - staff manage the situation as best they can to comply with Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006.

It is important to distinguish between the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention in planned circumstances compared to unplanned, emergency situations.

Risk Assessment and Planning for the Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

At St Mary's we acknowledge that some children behave in ways that make it necessary to consider the use of restrictive physical intervention as part of a behaviour management plan. All identified behaviours necessitating use of physical intervention will be formally risk assessed.

When it is likely that a child's behaviour may necessitate the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention as one of the reactive strategies, a risk assessment will be written.

Planned Restrictive Physical Intervention

When pupils present particularly challenging behaviour it is helpful to use the multi-element model, outlined below, to generate an Individual Education Plan which outlines:

- Communicative function of the behaviour
- The environmental changes made
- New skills to be taught
- How these will be reinforced
- Reactive strategies
- If the pupil's behaviour presents a significant risk, Restrictive Physical Intervention may be identified as one of the reactive strategies.

Positive Handling Plan

When the Individual Education Plan and risk assessment indicated the likely need for school staff to hold or restrain a child to prevent an injury, 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 authorised to use this intervention
- Parental consent for the plan
- Head teacher authorisation for the plan

Recording the Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

When restrictive physical intervention has been used, whether in a planned or unplanned way, we will record this within 24 hours using the format in Appendix 1. This report includes a summary of the post incident support. A copy of this report will be sent to the Senior Education Social Worker and link Education and Inclusion Officer.

Informing Parents / Guardians

Parents / guardians will always be informed of any incident involving physical intervention. Parents / guardians will be included in any review of the pupils Individual Education Plan which takes place as a result of an incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention.

Post Incident Support

We acknowledge that any incident involving Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely to be highly emotional and distressing for all pupils and staff involved, whether they are involved directly or as observers. Support will always be made available to the staff and pupils involved. This will be offered in a timely manner when individuals are sufficiently calm to be able to talk about the incident.

We feel it is important to help pupils understand why Restrictive Physical Intervention was used and when possible and appropriate, allow them to explain how they felt about it, the triggers for their behaviour and explore how they could make different choices about how they behave in the future to reduce the need for this type of intervention. This information will then contribute to the new Individual Educational Plan around the child's behaviour.

Staff will be given an opportunity to talk about the incident, how they feel about it, how it might impact on their future relationship with the pupil and how this can be addressed. This will also include a discussion about how the incident could have been managed differently.

The support given to staff and pupils will be recorded in the follow up action of the Restrictive Physical Intervention incident record form.

Unplanned Restrictive Physical Intervention

In an unexpected, emergency situation, the member of staff will make an immediate mental assessment of risk and act accordingly to maintain the safety of all involved. The procedures outlined above for recording the incident, informing parents, support for those involved and future risk assessment should all be followed. School staff will not be expected to act in a way which puts themselves at risk or injury.

Monitoring the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

The use of Restrictive Physical Intervention at St Mary's will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team in collaboration with members of the school governing body. Parents and pupils will be involved in such review. It will also involve the Senior Education Social Worker Mr John Grant.

Concerns and complaints

If a parent / guardian makes a complaint about the use of force by a member of the school staff, it will be taken seriously and addressed by Mrs Booth, either under the school disciplinary procedures or school procedures for allegations made against staff.

Training on Restrictive Physical Intervention

Training on Restrictive Physical Intervention will always be carried out in the context of an overarching approach to promoting positive behaviour at St Mary's and in line with St Mary's Behaviour Policy.

School will train staff when available (every three years). This will familiarise all school staff of:

- Their responsibilities with regards to Restrictive Physical Intervention
- De-escalation techniques
- Risk assessments for planned and emergency RPI