

Physical Restraint and Restrictive Intervention Policy

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This updated policy for **The Pioneer Academy** has been revised to align with the core principles of the current guidance on restrictive interventions and the use of reasonable force. It emphasises a move toward a "reduction-based" approach, focusing on de-escalation, human rights, and the minimized use of force.

1. Introduction and Legislative Framework

The Pioneer Academy is committed to maintaining a calm, safe, and supportive environment. This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- **The Children Act 1989**
- **Equality Act 2010** (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- **Education Act 1996/1989**
- **DfE Guidance: *Use of Reasonable Force in Schools and Working Together to Safeguard Children***

This policy must be read alongside our **Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy, and SEND Policy**.

2. Core Principles: The "Last Resort" Strategy

We believe that staff should work positively to find the least intrusive way to support children. Our foundation of practice relies on:

- **Relationship Building:** Establishing trust and understanding with all pupils.
- **Preventative Understanding:** Identifying triggers and individual needs to prevent escalation.
- **De-escalation:** Using verbal and non-verbal strategies as the primary response to conflict.
- **Proportionality:** Any force used must be the minimum required for the shortest time possible.

3. Definitions

- **Reasonable Force:** Covering a range of interventions that involve physical contact. Whether force is "reasonable" depends on the specific circumstances and the severity of the risk.

- **Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI):** The positive application of force with the intention of protecting a child from harming themselves or others, or preventing serious damage to property.

4. Legal Rights to Use Force

Staff authorised by the Headteacher have the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from:

1. Committing an offence.
2. Causing personal injury to themselves or others.
3. Causing serious damage to property.
4. Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline (used only in extreme circumstances as a last resort).

5. Practical Guidelines for Staff

Prohibited Actions

Staff must **never**:

- Act in temper or use force as a punishment.
- Use "pain-compliant" techniques, such as twisting limbs or grabbing hair.
- Restrict the child's airway or blood supply.
- Involve other pupils in the intervention.

Required Actions (The "Do" List)

When an intervention becomes necessary, staff should:

- **Communicate:** Tell the pupil what you are doing and why.
- **De-escalate:** Continually advise the pupil how to remove the restraint (e.g., "When you are calm, I will let go").
- **Safety First:** Involve another staff member as a witness/support whenever possible.
- **Physical Care:** Hold limbs above major joints; avoid personal jewellery that could cause injury.

6. Post-Incident Support and Reporting

Every incident of restrictive intervention must be managed with care:

- **Recording:** All details must be recorded immediately on the **CPOMS system**.
- **Debriefing:** Separate debrief sessions must be held for the pupil and the staff involved to ensure emotional well-being.
- **Parental Notification:** Parents/carers must be informed as soon as possible on the same day.
- **Review:** If a pattern of behaviour emerges, a formal **Risk Assessment** or a **Positive Handling Plan** must be created.

7. Complaints and Accountability

The Pioneer Academy shares this policy with parents to ensure transparency. Any complaint regarding the use of force will be investigated under the school's **Complaints Procedure** and, if necessary, referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Child Protection review. This policy has been developed with due regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE 'Use of reasonable force in schools' 2013
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015
- **DfE Guidance:** *Use of Reasonable Force in Schools* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

The policy should be read in conjunction with other academy policies relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding, Behaviour, Health and Safety, Equality and Complaints policies.

Policy Statement

The Pioneer Academy respects the rights of children and believe that staff should work positively and confidently to find the least intrusive way to support and keep children safe. The foundation of good practice in working with children should be:

- Building relationships of trust and understanding
- Understanding triggers and finding solutions
- Diffusing incidents should they occur

We recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the last in a range of strategies available to secure pupil safety and well-being and also to maintain good order and discipline. Physical restraint should only be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible, and at the same time allowing the pupil to regain self-control. Our policy on restraint should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy and Child Protection Policies.

Specific aims of the restraint policy

- To protect every person in the school community from harm
- To protect all pupils against any form of physical intervention that is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- To provide adequate information for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour when dealing with violent or potentially violent situations

Definition of Restraint at The Pioneer Academy

Physical restraint is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming himself or others or seriously damaging property.

The Legal Framework

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the case. Physical restraint should be limited to emergency situations and should only be used as a LAST RESORT. Article 4 of the Education Act 1989 clarifies powers that already exist in common law. It enables teachers and other members of staff in schools, authorised by the Headteacher, to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances, to prevent a pupil:

- Committing an offence
- Causing personal injury to a person
- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among its pupils; whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

However, any use of restraint has to be the last resort.

Examples of possible situations are

- A pupil attacks another child or adult Pupils fighting
- A pupil trying to run away from school
- A pupil is in danger of causing injury through the misuse of substances, materials or objects
- A pupil shows persistent and extreme acts of defiance disrupting the safety of those around them
- A pupil persistently refuses an instruction to leave an area putting themselves or others in danger

Why use Restraint?

Physical restraint should be used to avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's actions.

It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical restraint would be necessary and staff will need to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise. They should always act within the school's Behaviour Policy particularly when dealing with disruptive behaviour

Use of Physical Restraint

The Interventions used are Proportionate

Physical restraint should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention of re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible, and at the same time allowing the pupil to regain self- control.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint. If a member of staff decides that force is necessary, he or she must then ensure the degree of force used is reasonable.

The Intervention employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is trying to prevent. Any interventions used should be the minimum required to achieve the desired result.

ONLY THE FORCE NECESSARY TO STOP OR PREVENT THE BEHAVIOUR SHOULD BE USED. IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES OTHER METHODS SHOULD BE USED WITH PHYSICAL RESTRAINT BEING THE LAST RESORT

The member of staff must bear in mind what it is that force is being used to prevent, and use no more force than is necessary to ensure that result.

When Physical Restraint Becomes Necessary

Do

- Tell the pupil what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Advise the pupil what they need to do to remove the restraint
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible
- Relax your restraint in response to compliance
- Maintain a calm supportive manner
- Do be aware of personal jewellery or sharp nails which might scratch children

Don't

- Involve yourself in a verbal altercation with the pupil
- Involve other pupils
- Twist any limbs
- Grab children by their hair
- Hold the pupil in any way that would restrict blood supply
- Act in temper

Management by Staff of Disruptive Behaviour

Physical intervention should never be used as a substitute for good behavioural management. All staff need to develop strategies and techniques for dealing with disruptive and challenging behaviour, which they should employ to diffuse and calm situations.

Staff should:

- Avoid confrontational behaviours
- Avoid invading a child's personal space
- Avoid too much language or sensory overload
- Use distraction tactics

- Avoid giving the impression of communicating through frustration or anger

Actions after the Incident

There is a clear need for debriefing once an incident of physical restraint has taken place, both for the pupil and the adult. A member of the Leadership team should be informed as soon as possible and all relevant information should be recorded on the school CPOMS system. (Child Protection Online Monitoring System). All sections of the report should be completed so that in case of a future complaint the incident has been fully recorded.

The senior leadership team will take responsibility for debriefing and offering support as required. The parents/carers will need to be informed as soon as possible after the incident, with details of the actions that were taken the reasons why and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary for decisions to be made regarding possible exclusions, support programmes and engagement with outside agencies including the possibility of a social care referral.

Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Management of the pupil (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict)
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate

Complaints Procedures

A clear restraint policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents/carers, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police and Social Services under Child Protection procedures.

All staff will be made aware of about these procedures and the context within which they apply.