

Ringway Primary Restraining Policy

Date reviewed Spring 2017

Reviewed: Spring 2020

Rationale

Ringway Primary recognises that the occasions when it will become necessary to physically restrain pupils will be very rare and only when there is no alternative in their and other's interests and safety.

Ringway Primary recognises the importance of placing its policy on physical restraint within the context of its whole-school approach to behaviour and discipline. This school's behaviour policy sets out the steps taken within school to positively promote and encourage good behaviour amongst pupils; is specific about what behaviour is expected of pupils and what is unacceptable; and sets out the range of progressive sanctions and steps which staff might feel it becomes necessary to apply.

We also recognise the very real difficulties which staff can sometimes be faced with in their day to day dealings with pupils on matters involving behaviour and discipline. Ringway's approach to the issue of physical restraint is that:

- pupils are entitled to a safe and secure environment in which the highest value is placed on learning how to behave towards others
- staff are also entitled to a safe and secure environment, and have a right to personal support and guidance about what is expected of them in difficult situations.

POLICY

The school has a duty of care to all its pupils. Staff will therefore be required to act in a manner which safeguards and promotes the welfare of their pupils, and to do everything reasonable that is within their power to protect the child from harm, from harming others or from causing serious damage to property. In exceptional circumstances the carrying out of this responsibility may conceivably involve the use of reasonable force in accordance with the school's

policy to physically control or restrain a pupil whose behaviour lies well beyond the usual boundaries of self control.

Physical restraint should at no time be used as a threat, as punishment to the pupil or to force compliance with staff instructions when there is no risk of injury or of serious harm to property.

Physical restraint will only be used in the following circumstances:

- the child is attempting to harm himself/herself, or his/her actions may result in harm;
- there is a substantial risk of physical injury to another child;
- there is a substantial risk of physical injury to a member of staff or a member of the public
- serious damage to property is being caused
- it is the judgement of the member of staff that there is a serious risk of any of the above happening unless immediate action is taken.

Wherever possible, staff should exhaust a range of appropriate behaviour management strategies aimed at preventing the situation from reaching the point at which physical intervention becomes considered - for example, discussion, persuasion, diversion, a brief period of withdrawal from the main group. Restraint will therefore only be used as a last resort after all other agreed avenues to defuse and de-escalate the situation have been pursued or where staff feel that immediate action is required.

Once a member of staff has decided to intervene physically in order to prevent injury occurring to any person, or *serious* damage to property, then he/she should:

- give clear instructions warning the pupil that unless he/she conforms then physical restraint will be applied
- calmly explain to the pupil that staff are unable to allow him/her to damage or hurt others, and once they have calmed down and is no longer posing a threat then the restraint will cease
- summon help from another member of staff, if at all possible, to act as witness and ensure the safety of both parties where possible. If no other staff are available then restraint should only take place where staff feel sure of success.

- use only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied, and for the minimum amount of time.
- gradually relax the restraint as soon as it is judged safe to do so, to allow the child to regain self control.
- reassure the pupil that no harm will follow.

Both pupil and the adult should be given time to recover, if possible, acknowledging that emotional distress takes longer to subside than physical symptoms.

Authorised staff

While the Education Act 1996 allows all teachers at a school to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils, it also allows other personnel to do so provided they have been authorised by the head teacher to have control or charge of pupils. At First Friends this authorisation is currently extended to the administrative staff, Learning Support Assistants and Lunchtime supervisory staff, but only in circumstances outlined above. This does not include voluntary helpers accompanying pupils on visits out of school.

Recording incidents

At Ringway we recognise the importance of keeping detailed, up to date written records of any occasion where it has been necessary to use force. This may help to prevent any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the incident, and will prove helpful in making parental contact.

Immediately following any such incident, the member of staff concerned should report to the Headteacher and should provide a written report before leaving the premises on the day involved. A school pro-forma is available and must be used to record the incident.

Staff may find it helpful to consult a senior colleague or representative of their professional association, when compiling a report.

At Ringway parents of pupils will be informed of all incidents involving the use of force against his/her child and an opportunity given for discussion - this will take the form of a meeting or where a parent/carer chooses not to attend by a written report.

The Headteacher will need to consider whether this should be done immediately or at the end of the school day and whether parents should be informed orally or in writing.

Parental Complaints

Having an agreed policy on physical contact with pupils that staff adheres to should help to prevent parental complaints. However, complaints may still arise and any dispute about the use of force by a member of staff may lead to an investigation, by the headteacher, Governing Body under disciplinary procedures, or by social services under the child protection act or by the police. The possibility of this happening cannot be ruled out, but in that event account would be taken of the school's policy on restraint, whether that had been followed, and the need to prevent injury, damage or severe disruption, in considering all the circumstances of the case.

This has been written in line with: DfEE Circular number 10/98 - Section 550A of the Education Act 1996

The DfEE circular offers guidance on the use of such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence,
- Injuring themselves or others,
- Damaging property, including own,
- Behaving in a way, which is prejudicial to the good discipline and order of the school, whether in the classroom or elsewhere where the teacher has a lawful control of a pupil.