

# **DOROTHY GOODMAN SCHOOL**

## **Policy for Physical Interventions**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the ways in which staff at Dorothy Goodman School intervene physically with pupils. This is important because such interventions are necessary on a day-to-day basis, and therefore our practice needs to be set in a framework which is agreed and approved by all concerned – the pupils themselves, the staff, the governors, the local education authority, and (most importantly) parents.

In general, physical interventions are necessary for four broad reasons:

1. For Health & Safety reasons, e.g. to prevent injury to staff or pupils; to prevent damage to property
2. To maintain good order and discipline
3. To support and promote participation in an educational programme
4. For medical, care or therapy reasons

For some pupils none of the above situations will apply, and for these pupils physical intervention will not normally be necessary. Other pupils will require intervention more often. What this policy does is to set the parameters within which we operate as a school, but at the same time we recognise that each individual will require a different approach, and what is important is to make sure that we are working with every pupil in appropriate ways.

This policy document incorporates advice issued by the DfEE (Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions, ref. LEA/0242/2002), and, as a local authority school, it is to be taken in conjunction with any advice or specimen policy document issued by Leicestershire Local Authority.

The principles underpinning this document are as follows:

1. The use of force should, wherever possible, be avoided.
2. There are occasions when the use of force is appropriate.
3. When force is necessary, it must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned, and it must be used in a controlled manner.
4. When force is necessary, the minimum required should always be used.

## DEFINITION

Physical interventions can be defined in two broad categories:

Non-restrictive (associated with a lower level of risk)

Restrictive (where a higher level of risk is present).

Examples from these two categories are provided in the DCSF advice, as follows:

	<b>Bodily Contact</b>	<b>Mechanical</b>	<b>Environmental Change</b>
<b><i>Non-Restrictive</i></b>	Manual guidance to assist a person walking	Use of a protective helmet to prevent self-injury	Removal of the cause of distress, e.g. adjusting temperature, light or background noise
<b><i>Restrictive</i></b>	Holding a person's hands to prevent them hitting someone	Use of arm cuffs or splints to prevent self-injury	Forcible seclusion or the use of locked doors

### ***Key Consideration 1: Legal Obligations***

Any physical intervention should be consistent with the legal obligations and responsibilities of school staff, and with the rights and protection given to children under the law, including the Human Rights Act (1998).

As a staff our first duty is to ensure that the children and young people in our care are safe. Our aim, in all our work, is to provide an environment in which pupils feel happy and secure, and in which they are able to develop and learn – physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually. The justification for any kind of intervention, therefore, is that it is beneficial to the pupil(s) concerned.

### ***Key Consideration 2: In the Interests of the Child***

In justifying the use of physical intervention, staff should be able to demonstrate that it is in the best interests of the child.

At every stage of any intervention with a pupil, we must always be acting in the pupil's best interests. On occasion we will be taking action which is designed mainly to prevent a pupil hurting someone, or to stop property being damaged, but allowing these things to happen is in no-one's interests. In the long run, if pupils continue to cause damage, then less opportunities and less activities will be open to them, because their poor behaviour will prohibit their involvement. We do everyone a service if our

aim is to promote and encourage reasonable, socially acceptable behaviour, and reasonable ways of behaving with each other.

### ***Key Consideration 3: Physical Interventions are not a First Resort***

Physical intervention strategies are only one component in a broad management framework, and they should only be used after other strategies have been tried and have failed, or where other strategies are not possible. Ways of trying to prevent situations escalating should always be sought and employed and, where appropriate, should form part of the Positive Handling Plan.

For certain individuals it may be clearly documented that particular sequences of behaviour rapidly escalate into serious violence, and in these instances the use of restrictive physical interventions at an early stage may be justified.

On occasion we face very difficult circumstances, and it may be that prompt action has to be taken because of the particular situation that has arisen. In the normal course of events we would ensure that we had tried non-physical methods before moving to physical interventions. However, where there is a clear risk of harm to someone, or of serious damage to property, then staff will need to intervene physically straight away. If any such risk is present, then we have a clear duty to protect staff and pupils, and to minimise any possible damage. ***An example would be of a child about to run on to a road – a situation in which physical intervention would be required immediately.***

### ***Key Consideration 4: Discussion with Parents***

In Appendix 1 we have listed a range of strategies for managing behaviour that we would expect to see used at Dorothy Goodman in the normal course of events. Not all of these will be used with every pupil, and some pupils will require very few, but they will all be used as a regular part of our work in each class.

Where pupils require restrictive strategies to manage their behaviour, or where they present challenges over and above those that can be dealt with through the approaches detailed, then it is important that we manage their behaviour in ways that are agreed by and acceptable to all concerned. In these circumstances we agree the nature of our interventions at the Annual Review. This means that all those people involved with the child or young person – and most importantly the parents – can come together and discuss and agree appropriate strategies. These strategies are then written up as a specific Positive Handling Plan, which is signed by parents and by the Head Teacher, and then circulated to all involved. This ensures consistency of approach, which is vital if success is to be achieved.

What cannot always be taken account of is the unexpected – e.g. the child who has always walked to the shops without any problem at all, and then all of a sudden one day decides to hit out at a member of the public. Should we be faced with circumstances like these, then we will take whatever action is needed to ensure everyone's safety, consistent with the principles outlined in this policy document. In

these instances the over-riding consideration is Health and Safety, and that should be the yardstick by which we measure appropriate intervention.

### ***Key Consideration 5: Risk Assessment***

Risk assessment needs to take account of the potential consequences for all parties if physical intervention is used, and this should be weighed against the likely consequences if no action is taken. This requires careful judgement about the pupil's level of understanding and likely response, and in addition it is essential to take account of a number of factors which will affect the decisions that are taken:

- A. Age of pupil – whatever action is taken must consider issues of age-appropriateness.
- B. Gender of pupil – it is important to be sensitive to situations which are best dealt with specifically by either male or female staff.
- C. Gender of staff – which should be taken into account in the risk assessment process.
- D. The safety both of the pupil and the member of staff concerned.
- E. The potential for causing distress – to either the pupil or the member of staff
- F. Ensuring that physical intervention is not used unnecessarily
- G. Maintaining working relationships between staff and pupils
- H. Ensuring that physical intervention is not used *habitually*
- I. Ensuring that whatever action is proposed or taken maintains the duty of care

Staff should not hesitate to call for assistance when required, and the culture of the school should promote the joint solving of problems, rather than an expectation that staff get on and cope. Leaving individuals to manage difficult situations in isolation is not acceptable.

Where risks can be foreseen, then the assessment of these and of appropriate staff responses will form part of the Positive Handling Plan for individual students. When emergency situations arise risk assessments must be made at the time, and so it is essential that, wherever pupils are during the school day, sufficient experienced and trained staff are available to carry out those assessments quickly and effectively should the need arise.

If a pupil presents risks that cannot be managed well as part of the Positive Handling Plan process then staff should draw up a separate Risk Assessment. This may be

needed, for example, when there are difficulties in relation to visits outside school. The document to be used is the DCSF specimen Risk Assessment ProForma (available within school and attached to this Policy document).

### ***Key Consideration 6: Care and Control***

When staff are involved in physical interventions they are always acts of care and control.

### **Corporal punishment is not permissible under any circumstances.**

Where physical interventions are necessary, then we would always use the minimum amount of force required in order to bring children and young people back under the influences of less obtrusive approaches. The scale and nature of any physical intervention must always be *proportionate* to both the behaviour of the individual concerned, and the nature of the harm that might be caused. In order to ensure this we hold ourselves accountable in the following ways:

- where restrictive physical interventions can be foreseen, they are discussed and a Positive Handling Plan is devised
- regular discussions, both in general terms and concerning individual pupils, are held at staff meetings
- informal training is given through class meetings
- advice is sought from external professionals, e.g. the Autism Outreach Service, the Educational Psychologist
- serious incidents are evaluated by Senior Leadership Team, and by Governors, and proposed alterations to our practice are discussed and, if necessary, implemented

### ***Key Consideration 7: Communication***

What we do needs to be known and understood by a wide range of people. Parents / carers are the most important, but it is also important for others such as social workers, residential workers, community nurses, health professionals etc. to know how we work with pupils here at Dorothy Goodman School, and to have an involvement in decision-making. The most effective process for this to happen is the Annual Review process, which brings together all those involved with a particular individual.

Basic details of our approaches are included within the annual prospectus, and our policies on: Physical Intervention, and Care & Management of Pupils, are all open to inspection and are available on our Web Site. In general terms a number of points should be noted:

1. In situations which involve Health & Safety it may be necessary to take prompt action of some kind. This would be a decision taken on the spot, and would always be reported verbally to the Head Teacher, and then in written form (in the Incident Book).

2. As a matter of course we aim to use the least intrusive method possible. Thus, if children can be managed through verbal instructions, this is what we do; if some kind of physical prompt is needed, then it is provided; if physical contact is necessary, then staff should use the minimum required.
3. We do not believe in physical confrontation. This would only become necessary in situations that involve serious Health & Safety issues. On occasion, when the amount of force required would be excessive, it may be necessary to change tack and use other methods. There are many effective ways of encouraging good behaviour!
4. Where staff have been in circumstances that have proved difficult, they should always report it and discuss it with their class teacher, with the Assistant or Deputy Head, or with the Head Teacher. After any incident has occurred it is healthy to talk it through with someone else in the class team and it may well be a good idea to take a few minutes away from the pupils, have a cup of tea etc.. This is in no way a sign of weakness, and nor should it be taken as a sign of weakness if staff need to have further counselling.
5. Staying calm and in control is normally the most effective way to deal with any situation.

### **DE-BRIEF for STAFF**

It is recognised that involvement in incidents can be distressing for staff, and can be exhausting both mentally and physically. After significant incidents have occurred:

- Staff should always be given the option to stop work and recover themselves
- Staff should always have the opportunity to discuss the incident with a senior member of staff (i.e. a teaching member of staff)
- Staff should be reassured that they have acted appropriately, and in accordance with the child's best interests
- Teachers need to consider future implications in terms of staffing so that the responsibility for youngsters who can be difficult is shared appropriately amongst the class team, taking account of experience, individual preferences, training etc.
- The de-brief should include:
  - Review of the incident
  - Question as to whether we could have acted better / differently
  - Question as to whether we can do something differently next time
  - Recording of what is decided in the appropriate place (Incident Book, individual diary, Positive Handling Plan etc.)

At times an individual pupil's behaviour becomes difficult within a class setting and there are implications for staffing levels. Where it is demonstrable that increased staffing can have a positive impact then the governing body and the Head Teacher will be sympathetic to this, whatever the pupil's banding level, and subject to an assessment of the overall financial situation.

## **ELEVATED LEVELS of RISK**

Practices which should not be used in Dorothy Goodman School are as follows:

- Seclusion (defined as isolating a pupil in a room without supervision)
- Physical punishment
- Threatening physical punishment
- Extending or flexing joints (e.g. pulling arms)  
Acceptable alternatives are taking a pupil underneath the arms
- Putting pressure on joints  
Acceptable alternatives are to hold a pupil away from the joints (N.B. Caring "C's")
- Pressure on the neck, chest, abdomen or groin areas
- Any procedure which restricts breathing or impedes the airways
- Threatening force where that is not required in the situation concerned
- Deprivation of food or drink

Practices which require the Head Teacher's sanction:

- Supervised Seclusion (i.e. isolating a pupil – but under supervision)
- The use of clothing or belts to restrict movement
- The use of any kind of artefact to restrict movement, e.g. chair, splints
- Holding someone on the floor or forcing them on to the floor (which should not be done without the staff involved having advanced training)
- Forcibly moving a pupil from one place to another
- The locking of any door (which is only permissible under certain clearly defined circumstances, where Health & Safety considerations are an over-riding factor)

## **TRAINING**

Staff at Dorothy Goodman should all receive Team Teach training for a medium-level setting (i.e. the two-day course). Staff receive this training on a rolling programme, up-dated every two years, and the governing body undertakes to make funding for Team Teach courses a priority within the Staff Development Budget. Ideally all staff should be trained at all times, but in practice the following constraints exist:

- It is not always possible to get new staff trained immediately – and so the school undertakes to train them as soon as a course is available

- Sometimes training runs out before there are spaces on an up-date course – in these circumstances the school undertakes to re-train staff as soon as possible
- There may be existing staff who have not yet been able to attend a course, because of timings, illness etc. – the school will keep a record of this and send staff for training as soon as is practically possible

Team Teach techniques should be used as a matter of course across the school in all instances where physical interventions are required. Staff who have not yet had the training or whose training has run out are covered to assist in physical interventions – provided they work with someone whose training is in date and who “leads” the intervention.

Similarly there will be staff who are not able to attend the two-day course for medical reasons. Such staff should identify themselves to the Head Teacher, so that their exemption from the two-day training can be recorded, and they should attend the one-day training course as soon as a space becomes available. These staff too are covered to assist in physical interventions – provided they work with someone whose training is in date and who “leads” the intervention.

At all times the over-riding consideration is Health and Safety. There will be times when something other than Team Teach techniques are required, and there will be times when staff who are untrained have to intervene. The school has a planned programme of training, using an accredited course sanctioned by the LA, but the unexpected can always occur. Provided that the actions of staff are justifiable in terms of Health and Safety then they are doing the right thing. Better a child should be alive than a member of staff not take action because the action required is not yet an approved one!

## **REPORTING & RECORDING**

All pupils who have a Positive Handling Plan are provided with a diary containing numbered, dated pages. As intervention with these pupils may well be on a daily basis and may well occur frequently throughout the day, a summary report will be made each day of the kind of interventions that have been required. This will be acceptable, provided that what is happening is broadly in line with the Positive Handling Plan.

In the following circumstances a different procedure should be followed:

- where interventions are used that are outside the scope of the Plan
- where a situation has arisen that is deemed to be an emergency situation
- where a pupil does not have a Positive Handling Plan, and staff have used restrictive physical interventions, or interventions outside the scope of those measures recorded in the appendices attached to this policy document
- where staff have felt distress during the incident
- where a pupil has been distressed during the incident
- where there is clear injury to staff or pupils (e.g. a significant bruise or broken skin from a bite)
- where there has been difficulty in implementing a particular procedure

- where staff have felt exposed
- where the procedure implemented has not succeeded as anticipated
- where the incident has occurred in a public setting

In these circumstances the following measures must occur:

- the incident must be reported to the Head Teacher
- the incident must be recorded on an Incident Report form and affixed in the Incident Report Book
- post-incident support will be offered to the member of staff concerned
- the Senior Leadership Team and Governors will review the incident and take the appropriate action

The Incident Book, and the individual Positive Handling Plan records, will be reviewed termly by the Head Teacher along with pupils' medium-term IEP plans. Implications of this review will be discussed with the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors as appropriate.

In all instances where Team Teach holds have been used, then – wherever the incident is recorded – a Team Teach form should be completed and attached.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy document will be reviewed bi-annually, and amended when required.

*Dorothy Goodman School July 2000  
Amended July 2002  
Amended May 2005  
Up-Dated November 2007*

## **Appendix 1: Behaviour Management**

It is not possible to list in detail every method used by staff for managing difficult behaviour. However, strategies similar to the following represent the broad range of ways in which we work with our pupils:

### ***Strategies Used to Manage Behaviour – Not Involving Physical Intervention***

Looking at pupils – requesting co-operation through one’s expression

Gestural prompts

Adult requests good behaviour – verbally, Makaton, symbols, photographs etc.

Turning things into a game – “Come on, up you get, Ready, Steady, Go!!!”

Teaching individual pupils key phrases for co-operation, e.g. “1,2,3, GO!”

Withdrawing attention from pupils if they are misbehaving

Prevention – e.g. having things that interest pupils available, so that they are not disruptive

Rewards – star charts, smiley faces, praise etc.. Reward pupils when they behave well!

Reward others in the class, if one pupil has been disruptive

Distracting or diverting children – into something more acceptable

Reminding pupils that there are rewards for good behaviour (incentives!)

Providing small incentives for pupils to behave well

“If you do this (i.e. something good), you can.....” is generally better than “If you do this (i.e. something inappropriate), you can’t .....” – although both may be used on occasion!

Withdrawal of privileges – withdrawing as little as possible

### ***Strategies Used to Manage Behaviour – Involving Non-Restrictive Physical Intervention***

Physical prompts – e.g. taking a pupil’s hand or arm to request co-operation

Taking pupils by the hand or arm:

To request co-operation

To enable learning to take place

To encourage them to move to a required place around classroom or school

Physically assisting pupils to sit down and to learn

The use of double handled internal doors

### ***Strategies Used to Manage Behaviour – Involving Restrictive Physical Intervention***

Removing pupils who are being disruptive from the situation

Time Out (i.e. restricting the pupil's access to positive reinforcements)

Taking pupils under the arm (which may require 2 members of staff) to move them to a place where they need to be or to remove them from a situation or to prevent injury to staff or pupils

Moving pupils from behind

Blocking pupils who are attempting to harm staff or other pupils

Preserving the safety of pupils, staff, other people or property. Where situations occur that require intervention, the minimum amount of force will always be used, and we will wherever possible combine it with other approaches, e.g. turning things into games

**N.B. PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT is NOT PERMITTED under any circumstances.**

In any physical contact between staff and pupils, the following factors should always be taken into account:

1. The minimum amount of contact necessary should be used
2. Consideration must be given to the age of the pupil
3. Consideration must be given to the gender both of the pupil and of the member of staff

Some forms of contact are less acceptable than others. For example, if a teenage girl is to be led out of the room, then it is more acceptable for a female member of staff to do this than a male member of staff. Equally, it may be more acceptable to link arms with an older pupil when visiting the shops than to hold his/her hand. Consideration must always be given to issues of this nature.

*Dorothy Goodman School July 2007*



Some situations would not be acceptable under any circumstances. For example, only female staff are ever allowed to supervise female pupils during toileting and menstruation. Staff need to be, and are, sensitive to such issues.

Where there is any doubt, then individual members of staff should always consult either:

Their class teacher

Their Teaching and Learning Leader

The Assistant Head or Deputy Head

The Head Teacher

### **Appendix 3: Curriculum**

Physical interventions that are used to guarantee access to the curriculum and to learning include the following:

Working hand over hand with pupils, e.g. working at early writing skills

Physiotherapy

Helping children on and off physiotherapy bikes

Swimming lessons – working with children in the pool

Assisting children on and off the minibus, up and down steps etc.

Fastening seat-belts on the minibus

PE:    tuition (e.g. holding pupil's hands to show how to use items of equipment)  
        dance work – with partners  
        support – in gymnastics  
        Sherborne movement work

Tac Pac work

Softplay sessions – designed to encourage confidence

Interactive work (including Dance Therapy)

Play, e.g. playground games

Proactive interaction work, e.g. shadowing and adjusting a child's physical responses when in close contact with other pupils or with members of the public

This can only be a representative sample of methods that we use, but it does serve to give an overall impression of this aspect of our work.

Again, staff are always sensitive to issues of gender and age-appropriateness, always consider the specific needs of individual pupils, and always respect pupils' feelings.



