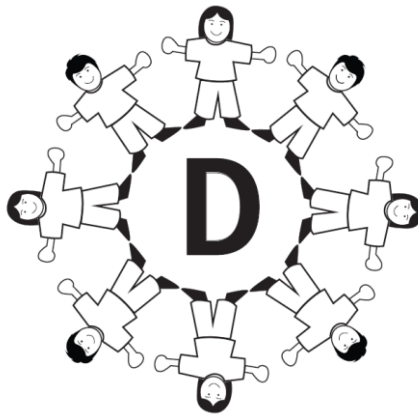


# Dalestorth Primary and Nursery School



## Physical Intervention Policy January 2026

## **Objectives**

At Dalestorth Primary School, we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our pupils to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential.

We take the safety of our pupils and staff very seriously. We believe that all pupils and staff have the right to be and feel safe whilst at school or on a school-run activity

This policy should be read in conjunction with our behaviour, child protection and safeguarding policies.

## **Policy Development**

This policy was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from members of staff, governors, parents/carers, children and young people, and other partners.

This policy is also written in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's policy on the same subject, entitled 'Keeping Classrooms Safe for Learning and Teaching'. It also takes note of 'Use of Reasonable Force' DfE 2013, 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools' DfE January 2016 and 'Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force, in schools' DfE April 2026.

## **Minimising the Need to Use Reasonable Force**

As a school we are firmly committed to creating a calm and safe environment which minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require the use of reasonable force. We use our Busy Bee values, zones of regulation and our PSHE curriculum to explore and strengthen emotional responses to situations.

We will only use force as a last resort and strongly believe in de-escalating any incidents as they arise to prevent them from reaching a crisis point. Staff will be skilled in promoting and rewarding positive behaviour and will utilise various appropriate techniques in the management of a class environment.

Staff will only use reasonable force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved by not using force.

## **Unacceptable Use of Force**

It is illegal to use force on a pupil for the purpose of punishment. Pupils should not be restrained in a way that affects their airway, breathing or circulation, for example, by covering the mouth and/or nose, or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. The use of force can be dangerous, particularly where it occurs on the ground. If a pupil is unintentionally held on the ground, staff should release their holds or re-position into a safer alternative or standing position as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, the pupil should receive a medical assessment and treatment for any injuries as soon as possible. For any form of restraint, including seated and standing, there is a risk of physical and psychological harm, and it should be avoided where possible.

## **Staff Authorised to Use Reasonable Force**

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act (2006) the head teacher of our school is empowered to authorise those members of his/her staff who are enabled to use reasonable force.

Here at Dalestorth Primary School the head teacher has empowered the following members of staff to use reasonable force:

- Teachers and any member of staff who has control or charge of pupils in a given lesson or circumstance have permanent authorisation.

- Other members of staff such as site management and administrative teams also have the power to use reasonable force if a circumstance should arise in which immediate action should be taken.
- If time and circumstances permit, it should be those staff who have received CRB training who may use reasonable force, however, in some situations, this might not always be possible.

### **Deciding Whether to Use Reasonable Force**

Under English law, all members of staff are empowered to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from or stop them continuing:

- committing any criminal offence;
- causing personal injury to themselves or others, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or,
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

All members of staff will make decisions about when, how and why to use reasonable force. To help staff in making decisions about using reasonable force the following considerations may be useful:

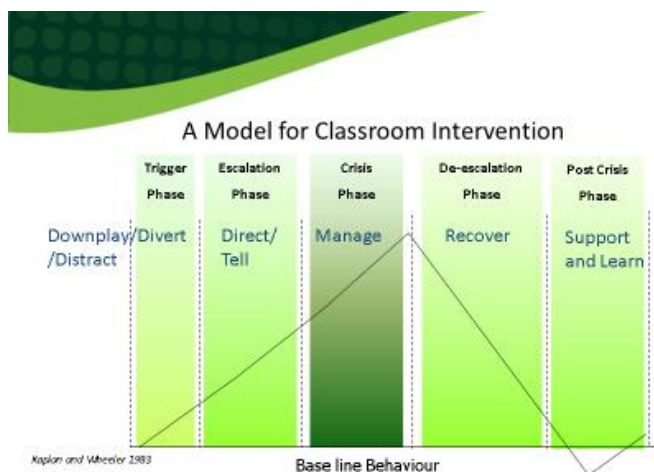
- whether the consequences of not intervening would have seriously endangered the wellbeing of a person;
- whether the consequences of not intervening would have caused serious and significant damage to property;
- whether the chance of achieving the desired outcome in a non-physical way was low;
- the age, size, gender, developmental maturity of the persons involved.

Staff are also expected to remember that physical intervention is only one option and for behaviours involving extreme levels of risk, it may be more appropriate to gain support from other agencies, including the police.

Staff will be kept informed and have a duty to inform others about the plans around specific pupils who can present risks to themselves and others. This may include information about SEN, personal circumstance and temporary upset.

### **Using Reasonable Force**

When using force members of staff should only use the minimum amount of force required in achieving the required outcome. Staff should also use force within the context of existing good practice in nonphysical skills and techniques, such as in model for classroom practice outlined below



Staff should, where possible, avoid any type of intervention that is likely to injure a pupil, unless in the most extreme of circumstance where there was no viable alternative. Also, staff should avoid using force unless or until another member of staff is present to support, observe or call for assistance.

### Staff training

Staff at Dalestorth Primary School, who have been identified as needing training in this area, will access Physical intervention and Positive Handling training through an accredited provider, for example, REACT UK.

These courses provide participants with an insight into recent legislation and guidance that could impact on policy and practice, as well as a range of physical and non-physical strategies to help manage the risks posed by children and young people's behaviour.

These training programmes will be delivered to staff via whole school inset or by accessing specialist training events.

Staff who receive this training will be accredited to use the physical elements of positive handling for a defined period as stated on their certificate. Staff will be expected to attend a refresher course to update their skills and renew their certification every 2 years.

### Consideration for pupils with SEND

Some children and young people with SEND may react to distressing or confusing situations by displaying behaviours which may be harmful to themselves and others. Triggers may include pain, sensory overload, unfamiliar situations or environments or feelings of fear and anxiety. Pupils who are non-verbal or find verbal communication challenging may express their needs, discomfort or confusion through actions. This can lead to pupils with SEND being disproportionately subject to the use of restrictive interventions.

Our staff will seek to understand the underlying triggers of challenging behaviour so that they can provide proactive support, create an inclusive environment and consider the impact of school policies on pupils with SEND. For example, our staff should consider how the school culture and environment may be experienced differently by pupils with SEND and seek to support pupils to cope with situations

that they may find distressing. We will utilise staff who know individual pupils well to help identify and manage risk such as trigger points when challenging behaviour is more likely to occur and develop proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of restrictive interventions being used. We will also work with the pupil, parents and other professionals to develop prevention and de-escalation strategies. Depending on the circumstances, examples of strategies may include: removing stimuli that may be causing distress, changing body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice, supporting the pupil to express their emotions before getting overwhelmed, engaging the pupil in an activity which can help them manage their feelings of anxiety, distracting the pupil in something that interests them or by introducing familiar objects and activities to redirect their attention. Where appropriate, our staff will work with pupils with SEND and their parents in the co-production of any necessary behaviour support plans.

Behaviour support plans made by school should outline any adjustments, such as to address aspects of the school environment which the pupil finds challenging and ways for pupils to communicate their needs effectively. Behaviour support plans will detail circumstances where it may be appropriate for staff to have increased physical contact with a pupil. This should be discussed in conjunction with the relevant people, such as teachers, parents, the pupil, pastoral staff or health professionals, and parameters around its use stated clearly in the plan. Where there is an identified risk, such as increased likelihood in the need to use reasonable force and/or other restrictive interventions, a risk assessment will be put in place and where possible, mitigate risks such as through training and prevention strategies. Whether the use of restrictive interventions is appropriate will depend on the circumstances, irrespective of whether it has been considered as part of a behaviour support plan. Behaviour support plans will be reviewed with the pupil and their parent periodically and following any significant incident, so that changes can be made based on evidence of what has worked and what has not worked in practice for the individual pupil. Where a pupil has a disability, the school has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage so that the pupil can fully participate in the education provided by the school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils.

### **Recording and Reporting Incidents**

The governing body will ensure that a procedure is in place, and is followed by staff, for recording and reporting, significant incidents where a member of staff has used reasonable force on a pupil, in line with the most recent Safeguarding requirements issued to Governors and the latest advice given to OFSTED inspectors.

Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. A member of the leadership team should be informed verbally of any incident as soon as possible and all interventions should be recorded on the school CPOMS system (Child Protection Online Monitoring System).

The record must be made as soon as practicable after the incident using the form in Appendix 1.

While ultimately only a court of law could decide what is 'significant' in a particular case, in deciding whether or not an incident must be reported, staff should consider:

- an incident where unreasonable use of force is used on a pupil would always be a significant incident;
- any incident where substantial force has been used (e.g. physically pushing a pupil out of a room) would be significant;
- the use of a restraint technique is significant;

- an incident where a child was very distressed (though clearly not over reacting) would be significant.
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In determining whether incidents are significant, schools should consider:

- the pupil's behaviour and the level of risk presented at the time;
- the degree of force used and whether it was proportionate in relation to the behaviour;
- the effect on the pupil or member of staff.

Staff should also bear in mind the age of the child; any special education need or disability or other social factors which might be relevant.

Sometimes an incident might not be considered significant in itself, but forms part of a pattern of repeated behaviour. In this case, although there is no legal requirement to record such incidents, schools are advised to let parents know about them.

Records are important in providing evidence of defensible decision-making in case of a subsequent complaint or investigation. Staff may find it helpful to seek the advice of a senior colleague or a representative of their trade union when compiling a report.

Staff should always remember their duty of care for children as detailed in the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

We will use our accident spreadsheet to record any injuries where hospital treatment is required. This is stored on the school's Admin drive and is recorded by the headteacher.

### **Post-incident support**

Following the use of physical intervention staff and pupils will be supported, the immediate physical needs of all parties will be met and staff will ensure that positive relationships are maintained.

The senior leadership team will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of a behaviour plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies agreed by the SENCO. Any behaviour plan should always be discussed and agreed with the parent.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded (CPOMS) immediately. All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available. A member of the leadership team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

### **Complaints and allegations**

We will also make clear to pupils that they have a right, and are able, to question/complain about the use of reasonable force.

We will ensure that mechanisms are in place for pupils, parents, carers and staff to voice the opinions, comments or concerns. These are detailed in the school's complaints policy.

### **Further information**

Can be found in the Nottinghamshire County Council's policy on the same subject, entitled 'Keeping Classrooms Safe for Learning and Teaching'

### **POLICY REVIEW**

**This policy is to be reviewed every 2 years.**

**Policy written by C Robertson and H Claxton: October 2021**

**Policy reviewed: January 2025**

**Policy updated in line with new guidance: January 2026**

**Policy due to reviewed: January 2027**

## Appendix 1

### Physical Intervention Recording Form

Details of Pupil (name, class SEN etc)	
Date, time location of incident	
Name of staff involved (directly or witness)	
Details of other pupils involved	
Description of incident, including any de-escalation	
Reason for using force and description of force used	
Any injury to staff or pupils and details of first aid or medical attention	
Follow-up, including post incident support and disciplinary procedures	

Any information shared with staff not involved or other agencies	
How and when were those with parental responsibility informed	
Has any complaint been logged as a result of this incident	
Names, signatures and dates	