

# Newbold School

## Appropriate Physical Contact Policy

*Reviewed December 2021 by Mrs J Crissey (Headteacher)*

*Ratified by Newbold School Board of Governors, January 2022*

**AIMS:** The aim of this document is to assist in:

- Developing safe working practices ensuring the safety and well-being of children, staff and visitors;
- Enabling each and every child to fulfil their own potential within a safe, secure and supportive environment;
- Protecting a child from causing personal injury to themselves, others or damage to the property of any person.

**INTRODUCTION** Newbold School recognises that there are occasions where members of staff may be required to physically restrain or make physical contact with pupils in their care (e.g. to administer first aid). It is also acknowledged that members of staff can be put into situations where physical restraint of a pupil may be necessary to prevent deliberate self-harm or harm to others and/or the environment. The 'Guidelines to Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People' (2007) state that all children and young people have the right to be treated with respect and dignity, including in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour. This policy is intended to set out guidelines for appropriate physical contact and to support members of staff working with children in making sensible judgements about the physical contact needed with children. It outlines ways to prevent misinterpretation of any physical contact with children as well as making clear those situations which should be avoided if possible.

**GUIDELINES** Nurturing touch is very important to developing a sound relationship with children (particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1). However, in order to ascertain a sound decision about touching, restraint or 'holding still' the following is required:

- An ethos of caring and respect for the child's rights where it is acknowledged that restraint or holding without the child's consent is a last resort and not a first line of intervention;
- Parental consultation, wherever possible, about appropriate touch needed for an individual child where there are specific needs;
- Sufficient members of staff who are trained and confident in safe and appropriate techniques required for positively handling or restraining a child.

Members of staff need to remember that some children with whom they come into contact may have experienced physical or sexual abuse and, therefore, staff must endeavour to ensure that the child does not misinterpret any physical contact. As a general rule no physical contact should be offered to a child unless it has been sought or the child is in danger of harming themselves, others or the environment.

**EXPECTATIONS** It is accepted that younger children, in particular, are very tactile and often seek physical contact with adults. Where this is the case then the following expectations should be met:

- Physical contact as a form of punishment is always unacceptable. This includes contact such as rough handling, shoving, shaking, hair pulling, slapping, spanking, hitting etc.
- Children should never be tickled as it can be over stimulating and is considered to be a deceptive device that may lead to more inappropriate touching, e.g.
- Children should never be allowed to stand or sit in between an adult's legs. Instead, they should be gently guided to the adult's side where they can be spoken to at eye-to-eye level.
- Children sitting on laps should be avoided. However, when this is necessary it should be for a short period of time and in the presence of another adult where at all possible.
- Kissing and other similar forms of affection are unacceptable.
- Children should not be taken to an isolated area where they cannot be viewed by others (unless there is an agreed Care Plan' where a member of staff has responsibility for applying or administering medication/addressing personal hygiene).

If a member of staff feels that an act of physical contact between themselves and a child has occurred that may be misinterpreted, then they should speak to the Headteacher or Deputy Head Teacher immediately.

**PHYSICAL RESTRAINT** In extreme cases, such as when a child loses control of their behaviour, the physical presence of a member of staff is usually enough to signal an unspoken message of authority to the child. The use of a member of staff's physical presence, such as standing temporarily in the way of a child who is ignoring instructions, is an acceptable way of reinforcing an adult's presence. If the physical presence of an adult is not having an impact on the child's behaviour then there may be a need to hold or restrain a child.

No member of staff should ever be expected to restrain a child unless they have received 'Positive Handling Training' and feel comfortable in doing so. Where this is not the case another member of staff should be sent for. Holding or physical restraint of a child is only permissible in circumstances where staff are attempting to:

- Avert an immediate danger or significant injury to the child or another individual.
- Avoid immediate serious damage to property, when any other course of action would be likely to fail.

Physical contact in this form should avert danger by preventing and deflecting a child's action or by removing a physical object. Averting harm by causing or threatening hurt, pain or distress is always unacceptable. The child should be given a verbal warning alerting them to the fact that a lack of cooperation may result in the need to use appropriate levels of

restraint. Physical restraint should be skilfully applied and may be disengaged by degrees as the child calms down in response to physical contact. If behaviour, which requires physical contact as a regular form of intervention, for a pupil persists, then the SENCO should be consulted to draw on the expertise of outside agencies and to consult with parents to create a physical handling/management plan.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CLASS TEACHERS/TEACHING ASSISTANTS:** The class teacher and teaching assistants will:

- Make sensible judgements about the use of physical contact with pupils;
- Report any incidents where physical contact with a pupil may be misinterpreted to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher;
- Follow all procedures outlined when making physical contact with pupils.
- Address any concerns regarding physical contact to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

**SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM:** The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Implement and monitor the effectiveness of this policy throughout the school and, where appropriate, report to governors
  - Support the staff in the implementation of procedures outlined in this policy and guidance where necessary
  - Keep records of any incidents where physical contact with a pupil may have been misinterpreted and report to the LA as necessary
  - Liaise with external agencies as necessary in order to support individuals with specific needs
  - Ensure that any updated policy or legislation regarding physical contact with pupils is shared with staff.
- GOVERNORS** The Governors will:
- Annually review the contents of this policy;
  - Notify the Headteacher and offer further guidance where it feels that particular measures introduced or issues addressed regarding appropriate touch.

**PARENTS/GUARDIANS** The parents/guardians will meet with relevant staff, if appropriate, to discuss the individual needs of their child where physical contact may be required on a regular basis.

**MONITORING & REVIEW** The Appropriate Physical Contact Policy is reviewed on an annual basis. The Headteacher monitors the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis and reports to the Governing Body as appropriate, including by making any recommendations for improvement. Records of agreed physical contact (physical handling/management plans and care plans) are outlined in children's individual records and shared with staff, as necessary. All instances where physical restraint has been used are logged for future reference/record keeping. Any reports of inappropriate touch are recorded and logged with the relevant authorities where appropriate.