

# STOKE DAMEREL PRIMARY ACADEMY

## Physical Intervention Policy

Physical Intervention (Restraint) is one element of our Behaviour Policy at Stoke Damerel. When a child behaves in an unacceptable way, we have a variety of strategies and sanctions for dealing with it. However safety is our main priority and we may, on occasion, have to physically intervene in a situation to remove a child if they are presenting a danger to themselves or others. Also sometimes a child may refuse to follow an instruction to move, and would require an adult to escort them.

We aim to prevent such situations from arising in the first place. We have developed strategies to prevent situations arising as outlined in our behaviour policy. The Behaviour Policy states:

### **RESTRAINT**

*At Stoke Damerel most instances of misbehaviour can be dealt with by discussing matters with the child and the child's parents. There are times, however, when staff have to restrain pupils. This is quite rare and only occurs if a child is presenting a danger to him/herself or to others, or defies an adult's request to move. Teachers and learning support assistants have been specially trained to restrain pupils in a safe way. If a child has to be restrained the incident is recorded and the parent and the Headteacher are always informed and the circumstances explained.*

Physical Intervention is only used minimally and as a last resort. For individuals who present challenging behaviour and who may, at times, need physical support, a planned PHP (positive handling plan) in addition to the child's IEP (individual education plan) or BSP (Behaviour Support Plan). The positive handling plan will also consider the needs of disabled children and children with special educational needs and ensure that reasonable adjustments are made and will detail agreed consistent strategies for supporting the pupil. When physical support is included in a behaviour management plan or positive handling plan, all involved eg. parents, relevant school staff etc. are made aware of the details.

Staff at Stoke Damerel School receive up-to-date behaviour management training, and all staff are advised to attend an authorised training course dealing with de-escalation techniques and positive handling, e.g. CPI/MAPA/Pivotal training. We believe that positive handling should be the last resort. In the majority of cases de-escalation and diffusion are the appropriate methods of dealing with situations that might result in a threat to the health and safety of any individuals.

On extremely rare occasions it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically with or between pupils. These include:

- Injury, or risk of injury, to another pupil
- Injury, or risk of injury, to a member of staff
- Serious damage to property
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere

Any intervention should be a last resort and be **proportionate, reasonable** and **appropriate**, and be done with the aim to **reduce** not **provoke**.

*All staff owe a **duty of care** to pupils. To take no action, where the outcome is that a child injures him/herself, or another, including staff, could be seen as negligence.*

### **Advice for Staff**

Members of staff facing confrontational situations with pupils are reminded that the following behaviours can either reduce or inflame incidents, and that a brief moment of risk assessment may allow the time to decide on the appropriate action necessary.

Staff are advised not to physically stop pupils from leaving their room. They should give a clear choice and spell out consequences, but unless there is a risk of injury or harm should not block a pupil's exit.

**Remaining calm** – the ability to try and remain calm and appear relaxed is less likely to provoke. A relaxed posture and a non-threatening (CALM) stance, i.e. not toe-to-toe, are recommended.

**Awareness of Space** – try to be aware of the space around you and avoid stepping into another individual's personal/intimate space. Try to take a step back outside the circle of danger.

**Pacing and Chasing** – angry people often pace around in tense situations and staff should try to avoid the temptation to follow as they attempt to help them calm down. This can be counterproductive as it may trigger an animal chase response and drive the other person away. Where possible it is preferable for the staff member to stand still, speaking calmly, clearly and confidently – or even sit down!

**Intonation** - when people are anxious or angry they tend to talk faster, higher and more loudly. In a potential crisis situation staff need to deliberately speak slower, lower and more quietly.

### **Help Script**

- Connect by using pupil's name
- Recognise the feelings
- Tell the pupil you're there to help
- You talk and I will listen
- Give direction

### **Diffusing body language responses**

- Social distance
- Sideways stance, step back
- Intermittent eye contact
- Relaxed body posture
- Palms open

### **Calm Stance**

Think of the values of stepping back from a situation, both physically and emotionally:

- Allows a more considered response

- Time to make a 'dynamic' risk assessment and seek assistance
- Allows other person 'take up' time to make their own choices

### **Application of Force (DfE advice to schools 2011)**

Staff should NOT act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. This includes:

- Slapping, punching, kicking or tripping a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against joints
- Indecently touching, holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- Other than in circumstances that are exceptional, using reasonable force to hold a pupil face down on the ground

**In the event of a serious incident** e.g. a fight, staff should:

- Make their presence felt – “stop fighting, stop fighting”
- Send for assistance
- Spell out sanctions
- Remove the 'fuel' by clearing the 'audience' away
- Be a witness
- Intervene physically if confident and having assessed the degree of risk

**But** should not ignore or walk away. If you require support when using a restraint please use the agreed script *Help needed, help given*.

### **Physical Intervention**

At Stoke Damerel School all children follow a developmental schedule. There are some behaviours which are characteristic of a developmental stage and these inform the appropriateness of any strategies that are used.

Physical contact with a child can raise concerns for staff, parents and children. Staff should be sensitive to the child's needs. Contact must be appropriate for age group, setting and context.

There are certain circumstances when a child may need close physical contact:

- When they are distressed and require comfort
- When they require calming to ensure continued self control
- When they have been injured and require first aid
- When they need physical prompting (touch support) to be guided to an activity or guided from a potentially difficult situation (for example)

On occasion it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically with young children. These times may include:

- when a child is at risk of injury
- when a child is causing injury or likely to cause injury to another child

Any physical restraint should be used only in an emergency when there is a real possibility of significant harm to the child or to other children/adults if a physical intervention is withheld. Physical intervention should only be used as a last resort when all other strategies are exhausted. Any physical intervention should be 'proportionate', 'reasonable' and 'appropriate'. It should never be used for adult convenience or as a matter of course e.g. a child fidgeting on the carpet and lifted to an alternative place.

## **Planned Risk Assessment**

At Stoke Damerel we use planned risk assessment as part of planning to meet the needs of an identified child. The use of planned risk assessment is an integral part of our behaviour policy.

- **General Risk Assessment**

A general risk assessment of the environment assists us in gauging the potential triggers or factors that might provoke difficult to manage behaviour.

## **Positive Handling Plans**

At Stoke Damerel we use positive handling plans as part of planning to meet the needs of an identified child.

Positive handling plans aim to assist in gauging the potential triggers or factors that might provoke difficult to manage behaviour and identify prevention and de escalation strategies including appropriate positive handling strategies. The positive handling plan will also consider the needs of disabled children and children with special educational needs and ensure that reasonable adjustments are made.

### *Advice for Staff*

In the event of a crisis (a crisis situation is defined as one where a difficult-to-manage behaviour occurs and an agreed plan for managing is not available) it is important that staff should:

- enlist the support of others, (*Help needed, help given.*)
- remove other children from the vicinity
- remain calm – approach child in a manner that does not raise the anxiety of the child Use:
- distraction
- redirection
- emotional holding
- active listening
- language appropriate to development, including Makaton

**Stoke Damerel Primary Academy Leadership, 2025**