



PHYSICAL TOUCH AND INTIMATE CARE POLICY 2024-25

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Links to UNCRC

This policy links to the following UNCRC articles:

- Article 24 – Health, Water, Food and the Environment
- Article 28 – Access to Education

Introduction

There are a number of situations in which a member of staff might need to make physical contact with a pupil. At all times members of staff should adhere to the code of conduct as laid out by the professional body of which they are members.

Physical contact with a pupil might be appropriate, or necessary, to support, control or restrain them. Physical touching falls into five broad categories:

1. When comforting an upset pupil;
2. When administering first aid or supporting an injured pupil;
3. When teaching a pupil in a practical subject;
4. Use of reasonable force;
5. Intimate care

The age and stage of the pupil will dictate the amount of physical contact required to support pupils in their daily lives. Naturally those in the Prep School will require more physical contact than those in the Senior School.

Comforting a Pupil

There are times when a pupil will be upset. In these situations, it is the duty of the member of staff to check their wellbeing and comfort them. On some occasions it is appropriate for the member of staff to put an arm round the pupil or give them a hug. This should only be done once other non-contact methods of comforting have been tried and have failed.

Where possible, physical contact with a pupil should be made in a public space where there are other people around. It would not be appropriate to comfort a pupil by making physical contact with them in a private space, e.g. an empty classroom. Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent.

It may be appropriate for the member of staff to ask the pupil if they want a hug.

There is no expectation that staff have to make physical contact with a pupil when comforting them.

First Aid

Staff are also required to administer first aid to pupils who are in need. Where possible, staff should ensure there is another person, ideally a member of staff, present when first aid is being given. Again, where possible, the pupil should also be asked for their consent and the member of staff should explain to the pupil what they are going to do before they do it.

For further details on administering first aid, staff should view the First Aid Policy, which is held within the Healthcare Policy.

Physical Touch Whilst Teaching or Coaching

There are, of course, times during teaching or coaching when it is appropriate for a member of staff to physically touch a pupil in order to guide them through a movement with the intended outcome of improving their learning. Certain subjects and activities lend themselves more to this type of teaching technique, particularly practical subjects and activities, such as dance, sport and drama.

Physical contact should be kept to a minimum and only used when the pupil has consented to it. It should always be in the presence of other people.

Use of Reasonable Force

All members of school staff are allowed to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the pupil were not under the age of criminal responsibility);
- Compromising the safety of others (this can include acts of self-defence);
- Causing damage to property (including their own property);
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the Academy or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in the classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere.

This provision applies when a member of staff is on the Academy premises and when they are in charge of the pupil concerned elsewhere e.g. an off-site visit. Any such instances must be recorded.

A member of staff is not required to use reasonable force and should only do so if they wish to.

Types of incident

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain (using force or restricting liberty of movement) a pupil. They will fall into two broad categories:

1. Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is imminent risk of injury;
2. Where there is a developing risk of injury, significant damage to property, or major disruption to the learning of others;

Examples of situations that fall into the two categories are:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil;
- Pupils are fighting;
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- A pupil is causing, or is at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by 'misuse of dangerous materials or objects'
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which they might have or cause an accident likely to injure themselves or others;
- A pupil persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom;
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Practical considerations

Before intervening physically, a member of staff should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is behaving to stop, and what will happen if they do not. The member of staff should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and teachers should never give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish the pupil.

Sometimes a teacher should not intervene in an incident without help (unless it is an emergency). For example, when dealing with an older pupil, or a physically large pupil, or more than one pupil, or if the teacher believes he or she may be at risk of injury. In those circumstances the teacher should remove other pupils who might be at risk, and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues, or where necessary phone the Police. The teacher should inform the pupil that they have sent for help. Until assistance arrives, the teacher should continue to attempt to diffuse the situation orally, and to prevent the incident from escalating.

Reasonable force

The degree of force will always depend on all the circumstances of the case and there are two relevant considerations:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore, physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that could be resolved without force.
- The degree of force employed must be a proportionate response to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Whether it is reasonable to use force, and the degree of force that could reasonably be employed, might also depend on the age, understanding, special educational needs or disability and gender of the pupil.

Application of force

Physical intervention can take several forms:

- Physically interposing between pupils;
- Blocking a pupil's path;
- Holding;
- Pushing;
- Pulling;
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force': for example to prevent a young pupil running off a pavement onto a busy road, or to prevent a pupil hitting someone, or throwing something.

Staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe;
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil;
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- Tripping a pupil;
- Holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear;
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground.

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a pupil in a way that might be considered indecent. The use of corporal punishment is banned.

Boarding pupils will never be locked in their rooms for any reason (including pupil or staff safety).

Recording incidents

It is important that a detailed, contemporaneous, written report of any occasion (except minor or trivial incidents) where force is used is made. This should be submitted to the Deputy Rector. If a concern is lodged against a staff member the matter will be passed to the Rector.

The Care Inspectorate considers the use of reasonable force (against a boarder) a notifiable event and as such the Deputy Rector will report this within 48 hours.

Intimate Care – Prep School Arrangements

Children present in many ways with regards to their toileting independence as they begin life in the Prep School:

- Fully toilet trained across all settings.
- Fully toilet trained but regress for a little while in response to the stress and excitement of starting school.
- Be fully toilet trained at home but prone to accidents in unfamiliar settings.
- Be fully toilet trained but require reminders and encouragement.
- Be fully toilet trained but have disabilities or learning difficulties which impacts on toileting.

Admitting children who have continence problems into school can present a challenge to schools. The purpose of this section of the policy and guidelines is to identify best practice to achieve the full inclusion of such children.

It is recommended that the adult who is going to change the child informs another member of classroom staff such as a Teaching Assistant, that they are going to do this.

Location of changing

Whenever possible it is recommended that:

- Children are changed standing up;
- If this is not possible the next best alternative is to change a child on a mat on a suitable surface.

Resources

In the Infant area of the Prep school there is:

- Hot running water
- Paper towels
- Aprons and Gloves
- Cleaning equipment
- Bin
- Spare clothes
- Wipes
- Plastic bags for soiled clothing

Working with Parents/carers

In the Prep school we will work with parents when attending to changing routines. If a child has any disability or medical needs that may affect their personal care routine, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP)/Health Care Plan will be drawn up in agreement with parents/carers.

Protection for Staff

Changing procedures and toileting routines will be carried out by the child's teacher/classroom teaching assistant. Protection being afforded to the single member of staff in the following ways:

- If a situation occurs that causes staff embarrassment or concern, a second member of staff should be called if necessary and the incident reported to the Assistant Head of Prep and recorded.
- Where staff are concerned about a child's actions or comments whilst carrying out the personal care procedure, this should be recorded and discussed with the Assistant Head of Prep immediately.

Procedure for changing Wet Pants (as followed by staff)

- Consider where to change the child
- Wash your hands
- Gather all the necessary items needed before changing; wipes, plastic bag and wet accident note for parents.
- Put on gloves and disposable apron. A new set of gloves and disposable apron is used for wet or soiled accident.

- Place the child in a safe space to change them.
- Remove the child's clothing to access wet pants. Remove them and place them inside the plastic bag.
- If the child's clothes are soiled, you should bag them separately and send them home. You should not rinse them by hand.
- Using the wipes, clean the child from front to back and place the used wipes in the pedal operated bin. Tie the plastic bag and put it in a pedal operated bin.
- Put on a clean pair of pants.
- Take off the gloves and apron and place them in a pedal operated bin.
- Dress the child.
- Help the child to wash their hands if necessary, using liquid soap, warm water and paper towels.
- Wash your hands using liquid soap, warm water and paper towels.
- Take the child back to the room.
- Return to the area where the child was changed and using anti-bacterial spray and paper towels clean the surrounding area and underneath the mat before leaving to dry and then wash and dry your hands.
- Label the plastic bag with soiled clothes inside to include name, date of soiling.