



**Reflect
Education**



Gwenllian Education Centre

Independent Autism Specialist School

Physical Intervention Policy

Date written: January 2016

Review date: February 2017

Next review date: February 2018

Introduction

At Reflect Education we believe that children and young people need to be safe, to know how to behave, and to know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. Only for a very small minority of students/clients will the use of physical intervention be needed. On such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used.

Reflect Education staff currently access 'Descal8: Developing Positive Relationships with Individuals in Distress' training that includes theory and physical safeguarding strategies. Training is updated annually.

The majority of students/clients behave well and conform to the expectations of our service. We have a responsibility to operate an effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling inappropriate behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class, and individual students/clients.

All staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours may be communicating. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents/carers need to know that our service users are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if a service user is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

Definition of "restrictive physical intervention"

"Restrictive Physical Intervention" is the term used to describe interventions where bodily contact using force is used to control or manage a student's behaviour. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Head Teacher/Manager has to use "reasonable force" to control or restrain students in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria.

- To prevent a student/client from committing a criminal offence (*this applies even if the student is below the age of criminal responsibility*)
- To prevent a student/client from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a student/client from causing serious damage to property (*including the student's/client's own property*)
- To stop the student/client from engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to maintain the good order and discipline at the school.

There is no legal definition of "reasonable force". However, there are two relevant considerations:

- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it;
- the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

The definition of physical force also includes the use of mechanical devices (e.g. splints on the student prescribed by medical colleagues to prevent self-injury), forcible seclusion or use of locked doors. It is important for staff to note that, although no physical contact may be made in the latter situations, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

When the use of physical interventions may be appropriate?

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. However there are other situations when physical handling may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain students/young adults may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well-being of all staff, students and young people are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

Who may use physical interventions?

The following staff (as well as the teachers employed at the school) are authorised by the Head Teacher/Manager to have control of students/young adults, and **must** be aware of this policy and its implications. However, non-inclusion on this list does not mean that an adult is necessarily barred from using physical intervention. If the Head/Manager has lawfully placed an adult in charge of students/young people, then that adult will be entitled to use restrictive physical intervention if needed.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and that removing other students and themselves from risky situations may be the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the students and young people.

Names of Authorised staff

All staff have received training in DESCAL8. Please see attached appendices of staff that are trained.

Planning for the use of physical intervention

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows:-

- Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions.

- Physical Intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the legal criteria for its use are met.
- Staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the student's/clients and/or other student's/clients best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion. The student/young person will be warned, at their level of understanding, that Physical Intervention will be used unless they cease the unacceptable behaviour.
- Only the minimum force necessary will be used.
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response incident.
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses.
- As soon as it is safe, the Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the student/young person to regain self-control.
- A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy.
- Escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable.
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual student/young adult will always be taken into account.
- In developing Individual Education/Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each student/young adults circumstance.
- Procedures are in place for supporting and debriefing students and staff after every incident of Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

Acceptable forms of intervention

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with students/clients for a variety of reasons, for example:

- to comfort a student in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age);
- to gently direct a student;
- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc);
- in an emergency to avert danger to the student or students;
- in rare circumstances, when Physical Intervention is warranted.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and students/clients takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the student's/young adults age and level of understanding;
- the student's/young adults individual characteristics and history;
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present).

Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participants neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular student/young adult. [Should a student/young adult appear to **enjoy** physical contact this must not be sought via Physical Intervention].

Developing a positive handling plan

If a student/young adult is identified for whom it is felt that Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This plan will help the student/young adult and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing. The plan will include:-

- involving parents/carers and students/young adults to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- a risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risks, and learn from what happens
- a **record** to be kept in school of risk reduction options that have been examined and discounted, as well as those used
- techniques for managing the student/young adults behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point a Physical Intervention may be used
- identifying key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the student/young person
- ensuring a system to summon additional support
- identifying training needs

Guidance and Training for Staff

Guidance and training is essential in this area. We need to adopt the best possible practice. At Reflect Education this is arranged for all staff at a number of levels including:-

- awareness of issues for managing directors, staff and parents,
- behaviour management techniques for all staff
- managing conflict in challenging situations - all staff

Training in practical techniques of physical intervention may be required for staff where there is a significant likelihood of them needing to intervene physically due to the nature of the student/ young adult (or students/young adults) that they are working with. All staff are to receive a Three Day Descal8 Course provided by BILD accredited trainers and thereafter receive an annual update.

Recording

In the occurrence of Physical Intervention being used staff should record the incident or accidents using the incident form highlighting any forms of intervention used. All incident and accidents are to be reported to the manager. All forms are to be handed into the office as soon as possible.

Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents informed we can avoid the need for complaints. All disputes which arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to Child Protection and Safeguarding policies.


DESCAL8: Developing Positive Relationships with Individuals in Distress

Full list of staff names who have received training by Descal8.

NAME	DATE OF COMPLETION	UPDATE (1 day update)
Leigh Hipkiss	September 2016	2017
Rebecca Hipkiss	September 2016	2017
Leanne Thomas	September 2016	2017
Rhian Hughes	September 2016	2017
Hope Harries	September 2016	2017
Rhodri Mason	September 2016	2017
Stephanie Rogers	September 2016	2017
Della Howells	September 2016	2017
Tom Reynolds	September 2016	2017
Christine Harmer	September 2016	2017
Charlotte Morrison	September 2016	2017
Elliot Jones	September 2016	2017
Rhys Clarke	November 2016	2017
Christopher Davies	November 2016	2017
Jordan Lewis	November 2016	2017
Yvette Davies	November 2016	2017
Jade Tarsnane	November 2016	2017
Samantha Lloyd	November 2016	2017