



MONK'S WALK
SCHOOL

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Restrictive Physical Intervention

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1. INTRODUCTION

At Monk's Walk School we believe that students 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 will the use of physical intervention be needed. On such occasions, acceptable forms of intervention are used.

The majority of students behave well and conform to the expectations of our school. We have 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.

All school staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours might 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 need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

2. 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 child's behaviour. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has to use "reasonable force" to control or restrain students in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria.

- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence likely to cause harm to self or others
- To prevent a child from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a child from causing serious damage to property which might lead to the harm of self or others (e.g. starting a fire)
- To stop the child from engaging in any serious behaviour which is prejudicial to maintaining the good order and discipline at the school.

There is no legal definition of "reasonable force". However an important consideration is:

- 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 forcible seclusion or use of locked doors. It is important for staff to note that this is still regarded as physical restraint.

3. WHEN THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION MAY BE APPROPRIATE AT MONK'S WALK SCHOOL

Restrictive Physical Intervention 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. Certain students may become distressed, agitated, and out of control posing a risk of harm to self or others, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-

resisted after a few seconds. If there is no risk of harm then other strategies should be used to support an agitated student (such as the use of On-Call or a Time-Out Card).

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

WHO MAY USE RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION AT MONK'S WALK SCHOOL

All adults employed by the School are authorised by the Headteacher to have control of students, and **must** be aware of this Policy and its implications. If the Head has lawfully placed an adult in charge of children then that adult will be entitled to use Restrictive Physical Intervention where there is a risk of harm. All staff must be aware of this policy and its implications.

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.

4. PLANNING FOR THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION IN MONK'S WALK SCHOOL

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

The principles relating to the intervention are as follows:-

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions.
- Physical restraint will only be used in circumstances when there is a risk of harm.
- 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 and/or other student's safety for staff to intervene physically.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion. The student will be warned, at their level of understanding, that Restrictive Physical Intervention will be used unless they cease the dangerous behaviour.
- Only the minimum force necessary will be used.
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident.
- Every effort should 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 Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the student to regain self-control.
- 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 will always be taken into account.
- In developing Behaviour Plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each student's circumstance.
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing students and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.

5. ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION AT MONK'S WALK SCHOOL

- There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with students for a variety of reasons, for example:
 - ❑ to comfort a student in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age and to the situation)
 - ❑ 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 Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted.
- In all situations where physical contact between staff and students takes place, staff must consider as far as possible the following:
 - ❑ the student's age and level of understanding
 - ❑ the student's 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 intentionally be made with the participant's 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.

6. DEVELOPING A POSITIVE HANDLING PLAN AT MONK'S WALK SCHOOL

If a student is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely, then a Positive Handling Plan will be completed. This Plan will help the student 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 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's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict, and stating at which point Restrictive 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
- ❑ ensuring a system to summon additional support
- ❑ identifying training needs.

7. GUIDANCE AND TRAINING FOR STAFF

Guidance and training is essential in this area. We need to adopt the best possible practice. At Monk's Walk School this is arranged for all staff at a number of levels including:

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

There is no legal requirement for staff to be trained in the use of practical techniques, so staff may exercise their legal right to physically intervene even if they have not had such training. However, they would still need to demonstrate that their intervention was reasonable and proportionate).

8. COMPLAINTS

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and trustees 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.