



Bromstone Primary School

Physical Contact Policy

Senior Team Responsibility: Heads of School

Approved on: 18th January 2023

Reviewed : 25th February 2026

Next Review Date: January 2027

Bromstone Policy on Physical Contact

Rationale

This policy relates to physical contact at school and also sets out guidelines for the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions. (RPI's).

Aim

Our key aim is to facilitate a safe and happy learning environment to which both children and staff enjoy coming. Positive relationships are fundamental to our positive ethos and our policy fully supports this.

1. What the Law says:

There is no legal definition of 'Reasonable Force'. The degree and "reasonability" of force will depend on circumstances. The law refers to the term "proportionate" with regard to the amount of force which may be used, and the length of time for which it can be applied. A good rule of thumb is to always use the minimum amount of force for the minimum amount of time. However, this is not about fitting a particular situation into an existing template. In an unpredicted emergency, staff will use their experience and training to make things as safe as possible. In all predictable problem scenarios, individual risk assessments should provide the focus for staff guidance.

2. Purpose of policy

2.1 Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils is vital to ensure good order in our school. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our school respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in school. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable force may be required.

2.2 Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in this school: (i) clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where reasonable force is necessary and (ii) are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations. However individual members of staff will not be required to use physical restraint but must ensure that appropriate assistance is immediately available.

2.3 The application of any form of physical control places staff in a vulnerable situation. It can only be justified according to the circumstances described in this policy. Staff, therefore, have a responsibility to follow the policy and to seek alternative strategies wherever possible in order to prevent the need for physical intervention.

2.4 Reasonable force will only be used as a last resort when all other behaviour management strategies have failed or when pupils, staff or property are at risk – see 3 below.

3. Definitions

3.1 Physical Contact

Situations in which proper physical contact occurs between staff and pupils, eg, in the care of pupils with physical and/or learning disabilities; in games/PE; to comfort pupils (where children need to be picked up and carried in a parental style manner this will have been discussed and agreed in advance with parents).

3.2 Physical Intervention

This may be used to divert a pupil from a destructive or disruptive action, for example guiding or leading a pupil by the hand, arm or shoulder with little or no force.

3.3 Physical Control/Restraint

This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to pupils, staff or property. All such incidents must be recorded. It is not possible to set out comprehensively when it is reasonable to use force, or the degree of force that may be used.

Physical Intervention

Application of Force: A situation in which force is applied against resistance is legally defined as a “Restrictive Physical Intervention” (RPI) This can involve:

- a. Physically coming in between children
- b. Blocking a child’s path
- c. Holding a child
- d. Leading a child by the hand, or arm (long bones only)
- e. Shepherding a child away
- f. In extreme, dangerous circumstances, using Safe Holding techniques as taught in SCIP training.

Prior to using any Restrictive Physical Intervention, staff must consider:

- a. Can the situation be safely resolved using other strategies?
- b. Is there a Risk Assessment in place for the child/ren concerned?
- c. Will the intervention being considered exacerbate the situation (What is the “least worst” option)?
- d. Is the action being used as a substitute for good behaviour management?

Before intervening physically, the member(s) of staff involved must:

- a. Tell the child who is misbehaving to stop.
- b. Tell the child what will happen if s/he does not stop
- c. Make clear that physical contact will cease when it is no longer required
- d. Retain a calm and measured approach
- e. Not give the impression of loss of temper, or that action is being taken out of anger, frustration or a wish to punish a child

It may be ***inappropriate*** for a member of staff to intervene without help. In such cases s/he should:

- a. Remove other children who are at risk
- b. Summon help from colleagues
- c. Inform children that help has been sent for
- d. Continue to attempt to defuse the situation

After a physical intervention

- a. The child and adult will be given space to calm down.
- b. The child's parents will be informed at the earliest convenience.
- c. A report would be completed on CPOMS.

Other physical contact with pupils

- It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.
- Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:
 - Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school;
 - When comforting a distressed pupil;
 - When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
 - To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument;
 - To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching; and
 - To give first aid.

4. Authorised staff

4.1 At our school, Teachers and TAs are authorised to use physical contact as defined within this policy. Only specifically trained staff (through the program) have control or charge of pupils may use reasonable force to manage or control pupils.

4.2 Where the use of restraint is necessary on more than one occasion, a positive handling plan will be put in place in agreement with the parents and carers.

4.3 The Heads of School are responsible for making clear to whom such authorisation has been given, in what circumstances and settings they may use force and for what duration of time this authorisation will last. The Heads will ensure that those authorised are aware of, and understand, what the authorisation entails. Those whom the Heads have not authorised will be told what steps to take in the case of an incident where control or restraint is needed, for example to contact an authorised member of staff.

4.4 The office staff will keep a list of all staff who are PROACT trained. This list will be updated as required when staff are trained.

5.5 SLT, Team Leaders and the Safeguarding Team will undergo training as appropriate.

6. Training

6.1 Training for appropriate staff, as defined in section five, will be made available and will be the responsibility of the Heads. No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training. Prior to the provision of training, guidance will be given on action to be taken. Arrangements will be made clear as part of the induction of staff and training will be provided as part of ongoing staff development