

Physical Intervention Policy

What is Physical Intervention?

When a child's movements are restricted against his or her will.

Difference between positive handling and Physical Intervention

The positive use of touch is a normal part of interaction and is appropriate in a range of different situations. For young children, examples of these could include

- Providing the child with emotional support
- Helping the child with personal care needs
- To give guidance in tasks

Physical intervention is not the same as positive handling. Physical intervention occurs when a practitioner uses physical force to restrict a child's movements against their will. Any physical intervention used should be a supportive act of care and control not a punitive action by the adult.

When would we need to restrict a child's movements.

Part of our roles as nursery practitioners is to keep children in our care safe. If a child is behaving in a way that could cause them to hurt themselves, or someone else, we have to try and prevent this from happening.

The statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets out the specific legal requirements in relation to EYFS and provides the following guidance:

'Physical Intervention should only be used to manage a child's behaviour if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the child, other children or an adult, to prevent serious damage to property or in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances.'

Examples of what this behaviour might look like.

- A child attacks a member of staff or another child
- Children are fighting, causing risk or injury to themselves or others
- A child is committing, or on the verge of committing, deliberate damage to property
- A child is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects.
- A child absconds from or tries to leave the setting, other than at an authorised time, and you believe that this may result in injury, damage or disorder
- A child is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a session.

Physical intervention is always used as a last resort, and reduced at the earliest possible time. If appropriate other strategies must be used first. When all other strategies have been exhausted, it may become necessary to physically intervene for several reasons. These include the child placing themselves in danger, hurting themselves or someone else, causing serious damage to property, or trying to run away.

Positive strategies to prevent unwanted behaviour that may require physical interventions.

The most effective way to prevent the need for physical interventions is to create a supportive environment, where relationships are positive, and expectations of behaviour are clear. Examples are below;

- Creating a calm and supportive environment that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require using force.
- Developing positive relationships between children, staff and parents
- Ensuring that staff have appropriate expectations of behaviour, and that these are conveyed to children and parents
- Taking a structured approach to professional development that helps staff to acquire the skills of positive behaviour management
- De-escalating incidents as they arise
- Recognising that situations which trigger challenging behaviours are often foreseeable
- Completing risk assessments and positive handling plan for individual children, where appropriate.

Physical intervention should be used when there is no other way to keep children safe. It should be a supportive act of care.

Where possible staff will receive training to support them with making good judgements for physical interventions. There is a statutory power that applies to all members of staff, or to any other person whom the manager has authorised to have control or charge of children. It does not matter if staff have not received any formal training in physical intervention. If necessary they are permitted to use reasonable force to manage a difficult situation.

When using physical intervention practitioners should:

- Aim for side by side contact between themselves and the child
- Leave no gap between the adult and the child's body
- Keep their backs as straight as possible
- Avoid holding the child at joints to avoid pain and damage
- Avoid lifting the child
- Not restrict the child's ability to breathe

What is reasonable force?

When physically intervening, the amount of force used should be appropriate to the situation. For example, if a child is about to run in front of a car, and the only thing you can do is pull their arm to prevent them from being knocked over, this force is reasonable. However the same amount of force would not be reasonable if a member of staff was trying to persuade a child to pick up a pen.

Recording of Physical Intervention and informing Parents

A written record of any incident involving the use of physical restraint should be made as soon as possible after the incident, and parents will be informed of the incident on the same day. Witnesses or any staff involved in providing additional support should also add signed and dated notes giving details of the incident. These records will be kept in a confidential incidents file in the office.

Parents and carers must always be informed of incidents involving physical restraints.

Individual Behavioural Plan

It may become necessary to write a behaviour plan for a child whom you find you are having to physically restrain a child on a regular basis. The plan will include details on:

- What the behaviour looks like
- When and why it occurs
- What can be done to prevent it
- What physical interventions may be used when it occurs (Parents should always be involved with the writing of a behavioural programme)

Parents and carers play a vital role in promoting positive behaviour of their child. When planning behavioural strategies and interventions, parents opinions will always be sought. In addition, parents will be fully informed of any incidents that have resulted in the use of force to their child. Parents will be directed to the settings policies during the registration phase.

Complaints regarding Physical Restraints

Parents and children have a right to complain about actions taken by the staff when physical interventions have been used, including any use of force. If an allegation is made against an adult, staff will follow the appropriate procedures to ensure the incident is investigated and dealt with swiftly and in a fair manner. All complaints will be recorded and stored in a confidential incident file in the office.