

Physical Intervention Policy

Introduction and purpose

This policy set out the way that the Pre-school will minimise the need for physical interventions with children, and how physical interventions will be applied, if necessary. (EYFS 3.74-3.76)

What is Physical Intervention?

In the context of the Pre-school Physical Intervention is when a child's movements are restricted against his or her will.

The 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.

Scope:

Part of our roles as Early Years 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.

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

The statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets out the specific legal requirements in relation to EYFS (3.75 footnote 61) and provides the following guidance:

Physical intervention is where practitioners use reasonable force to prevent children from injuring themselves or others or damaging property.

Examples of what this behaviour might look like are:

- 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

Minimising the Need for Physical Interventions

Physical intervention is always used as a last resort. Whenever possible and appropriate other strategies must be used first.

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.

Application of Physical Interventions

Physical intervention is always used as a last resort. 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.

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

Training

Where possible staff will receive training to support them with making good judgements for physical interventions.

Good practice for physical intervention

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
- Use reasonable force
- Reduce the physical restriction at the earliest possible time

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 locked filing cabinet in staff cupboard.

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

Individual Behavioural Plans

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

(See the Managing Allegations of Abuse by Staff Policy)

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 locked filing cabinet in staff cupboard.

Review / Version Control				
Review period - 3 years				
Version	Created	Reviewed	Initials	Changes
Physical Intervention Policy (v1.0)	09/2021		DH / AP	New policy
Physical Intervention Policy - Oct24 – v2.0	10/2024		DH AP	Changed template and added version control. Restructured and minor changes to wording
Physical Intervention Policy – v2.1	09/2026		DH SH AP	References to 2026 version of EYFS Statutory Framework, removal of section on Statutory Power, other minor wording changes