Jessie Younghusband School

Physical Intervention Policy

Approved Spring 2026
Review Spring 2028

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Jessie Younghusband School Physical Intervention Policy

Purpose of Policy

This policy aims to:

- Clarify for staff, Governors, and parents the circumstances under which physical intervention (restraint) may be appropriate.
- Outline the actions staff may take when physical restraint is necessary.
- Define post-incident procedures to ensure transparency, accountability, and support.
- Ensure alignment with the updated DfE Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force (April 2026), relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010, and best practice in behaviour management.

Introduction

This policy is grounded in the DfE Guidance 'Use of Reasonable Force' (April 2026). The school acknowledges that physical intervention must not be used as punishment or to cause pain, injury, or humiliation. It is only ever justified when necessary, reasonable, and proportionate to prevent harm or maintain order.

Jessie Younghusband School is committed to an inclusive, supportive approach to behaviour management. We recognise our positive duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to avoid discrimination against children with disabilities or other protected characteristics. Individual risk assessments and tailored support plans are developed for children with SEND or complex needs.

Our approach is informed by evidence-based training: several staff members have completed accredited Team Teach training and therapeutic approaches to behaviour training through West Sussex. These trained staff cascade knowledge and skills to other team members, ensuring a consistent and skilled approach to de-escalation and physical intervention across the school.

This policy complements our Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies, and staff handbook.

Part 1: Circumstances in Which Physical Intervention May Be Appropriate

All staff are authorised to use physical restraint in line with this policy and the DfE guidance. Physical intervention may be used only to:

- Prevent a child from committing a criminal offence.
- Prevent injury to themselves or others.
- Prevent damage to property, including their own.
- Prevent behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at school or during school activities.

Physical intervention must always be a last resort, after all reasonable de-escalation and behavioural strategies have been attempted or considered impractical. It must be the minimum necessary force and proportionate to the situation.

For children with identified needs, including those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) or on the SEND register, specific risk assessments and behaviour support plans guide any intervention. Staff trained in Team Teach and therapeutic approaches ensure interventions respect the child's dignity and promote calm and safety.

Part 2: Actions Staff May Take When Incidents Occur

Before any physical intervention (except in emergencies), staff should:

- Attempt to manage the situation through de-escalation techniques and other behavioural strategies.
- Assess risks to themselves and others; if at risk, remove other children and seek assistance immediately.

When physical intervention is necessary, staff should:

1. Call for help promptly to provide support and witness the incident.
2. Quickly assess whether they can safely manage the situation alone.
3. Remove other children who may be at risk or exacerbating the situation.
4. Use calm, clear verbal communication to de-escalate.
5. Position themselves to prevent harm without physical contact if possible.
6. Apply physical restraint only as a last resort, explaining calmly why it is necessary.
7. Maintain calm communication throughout, helping the child regain composure.

Staff must use the least intrusive method possible, consistent with Team Teach principles and therapeutic approaches training. Regular refresher training is provided to all staff to maintain competence.

Part 3: Procedures Immediately After an Incident

Following any incident involving physical intervention:

1. Inform the Headteacher or senior staff immediately.
2. Complete a detailed written report in the restraint log and any other relevant forms (e.g., safeguarding 'Yellow Form', ABCC log). Reports must include:
    - Description of the child's behaviour and incident progression.
    - Verbal exchanges during the incident.
    - De-escalation attempts and steps taken.
    - Type, degree, and duration of restraint.
    - Child's response and outcomes.
    - Injuries or damage incurred.
    - Any reasonable adjustments made or considered.
3. The Headteacher will determine:
    - Need for medical attention.
    - Reporting requirements for Child Protection.
    - Whether to involve police or Local Authority.
    - Communication plans with parents/carers.
4. An investigation will be conducted, with findings shared as appropriate.
5. Support will be offered to the child, staff, and others involved.
6. Parents/carers will be informed promptly, with clear explanations and plans for ongoing support.
7. Incident records will be securely maintained in compliance with data protection.
8. The child's risk assessment and behaviour plan will be reviewed and updated to prevent recurrence.

Physical Contact in Other Circumstances

All physical contact must be appropriate, respectful, and in line with safeguarding policies and the Equality Act 2010. Staff should be aware of and follow school procedures for physical contact outside of restraint situations.

Training and Development

Jessie Younghusband School prioritises ongoing professional development in behaviour management. Several staff hold Team Teach certification and have completed therapeutic behaviour training via West Sussex. These staff provide peer training and support, ensuring a whole-school culture of skilled, compassionate, and consistent behaviour support.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes. Monitoring of physical intervention incidents informs continuous improvement and staff training needs.

Complaints and Feedback

Concerns about physical intervention incidents can be raised through the school's complaints procedure. The school is committed to transparency, learning, and partnership with families to promote safe and positive behaviour.

This policy reflects Jessie Younghusband School's commitment to high expectations, inclusion, and a safe, respectful learning environment for all children.