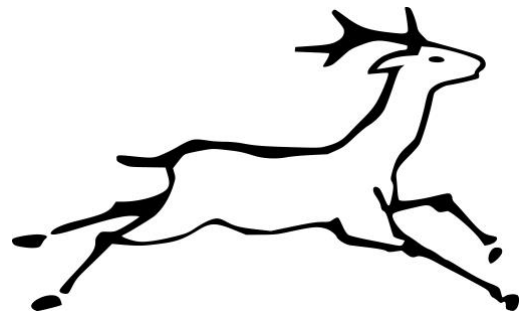




De-escalation, Physical Intervention and Restraint Policy

Reviewed: 15.10.2025 | Next date for review: 15.10.2026

Purpose of the policy

The DFE recognises that as a school we have a duty to care for all children and young people and that staff should take appropriate actions to ensure that the children in our care are protected from harm and do not harm others. This policy deals with all situations where physical intervention or restraint may need to be used. This includes situations where children have risks assessed and protocols in place but also for any child who demonstrates behaviour which is unforeseen and unpredictable.

This policy will make staff aware of the type of situations where they may or may not be required to intervene physically, and those situations where it is acceptable or not acceptable to physically restrain a child. We accept that there are situations where as an act of care, physical intervention and physical restraint may be necessary. All staff are expected to adhere to this policy.

Terminology

Physical intervention refers to the actions by one or more people to restrict the actions of a student. Physical restraint is the positive application of force with the intention to physically control a student- which is a restriction of liberty.

Rationale

Every child has a right to the best education which can be provided, in partnership with the school, their family, the local authority and the community. Running Deer School aims to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our students to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential. Good student behaviour and skilled behaviour management are essential for an effective learning environment. This policy should be read in conjunction with the behaviour and safeguarding policies. It also has to be look in along side the UNICEF states the following as rights relevant to all children and therefore a must in our school:

The following **rights are of equal importance** to every child. **Every child has the right to:**

- **Relax and play** (Article 31)

- Freedom of **expression** (Article 13)
- **Be safe** from violence (Article 19)
- An **education** (Article 28)
- Protection of **identity** (Article 8)
- **Sufficient** standard of **living** (Article 27)
- **Know** their **rights** (Article 42)
- Health and **health services** (Article 24)

We take a holistic approach to the support of children and their provision should be individualised in accordance with the needs of children.

Staff will be trained in positive behaviour management, de-escalation, and physical intervention. They will understand that planning a well-matched, engaging, curriculum and employing the direct teaching of social and emotional skill development is imperative to minimising challenging behaviour. We use the PACE approach (see our Relationship Policy and Behaviour Policy) alongside our Emotional Curriculum and individually targeted PSHE lessons.

There can sometimes be occasions when children's' behaviour challenges the ability of staff to maintain good order. Behaviour may disturb others, risk damaging property or place that student or others at risk of harm.

All staff need to know the appropriate steps and strategies to de-escalate situations, including the use of distraction, diffusion, re-direction, humour and positive engagement. Priority is to minimise the severity of behaviour and avoid physical intervention or restraint becoming necessary.

Confident trained staff working within an effective team climate will feel they can handle day to day situation effectively knowing they can call on the support of colleagues.

Staff will only physically intervene when the risks of not doing so outweigh the risks involved by not using reasonable force in this way. This may also include the use of force to manage foreseen risks which are noted in the student's risk assessment or interaction plan.

Team Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and these are not to be seen necessarily as a failure of professional technique, but a regrettable and infrequent "side-effect" of ensuring that the service user remains safe"

We aim to:

- Minimize the number of physical interventions in school
- Ensure that physical interventions are used as a last resort
- Develop an understanding about why we use physical interventions
- Involving parents and carers and Directors in school policy and individual programmes

We will:

- Act within the legal framework and DFE guidance on the use of reasonable force
- Record and analyse physical interventions at least half termly

- Monitor serious incidents as soon as they occur
- Keep a separate record of physical interventions
- Review and update behaviour risk assessments and plans regularly in response to observations of children to ensure that they remain appropriate
- Make accredited de-escalation and physical intervention training available for staff within school

DfE guidelines identify that a physical intervention can be used as a last resort in circumstances where:

- Good classroom order is at risk
- The student or other students are at immediate risk
- There is a risk to school property.

See the DfE Guidance – Use of Reasonable Force in Schools July 2013

Also see DfE Guidance – Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Physical Intervention June 2019

Positive Touch

At Running Deer, we recognise the value of positive physical touch and the positive impact this may have on a young person. This obviously depends on their age, stage of development and needs as laid out in EHCPs or Interaction Plans that have been agreed upon with parents.

The guidelines around this are the same as restrictive physical interventions. It must be, reasonable, proportionate, and justifiable and in the best interest of the student. It must be for the minimum amount of time required.

A member of staff must be able to account for these criteria when challenged and if an appropriate rationale is not provided Running Deer may seek to start disciplinary action or refer to the LADO for investigation (if the threshold is met).

Where a member of staff has instigated positive physical interaction, it must be recorded on CPOMs as a physical intervention and reported to parents accordingly.

Examples of this may include a game to provide sensory feedback, a safe touch to provide emotional comfort to a distressed student, or part of a game/activity that requires touch.

There are examples of touch that at Running Deer we cannot support or see a valid justification for these are:

- Tickling
- Cuddling
- Stroking
- Massaging (unless part of a structured, Risk assessed activity with parental and child consent- for example hand massage as part of an ASDAN project.)

- Lifting students off the ground Placing students in a situation they may feel powerless.

This list is not definitive.

Rough play

Whilst rough play is integral to child development Running Deer must recognise that for students it may represent a pathway to emotional dysregulation and may be very difficult to resolve without causing harm. Therefore, when a student initiates rough play the member of staff must:

- Seek to end the situation as calmly as possible without causing distress or damage to the student's professional relationship with them.
- Match and reduce the level of intensity of the play, never up it.
- Always be a passive partner, and never seek to "win" the encounter.
- Never intentionally elevate or heighten the situation.
- Never take the lead or instigate for the sake of the play. If it's instigated as part of a planned technique to de-escalate a situation, then it needs to be recorded as a physical intervention on CPOMs and parents informed accordingly.

This list is not definitive.

Staff must always be aware of how this might look to students, parents, and members of the public. Staff must be able to provide a clear rationale for all their actions as they may be asked to account for them. This may include historic allegations in order to protect themselves and the school staff must be aware of the importance of accurate record-keeping.

Recording and reporting

Where young people are known to display behaviours which may become volatile or difficult to manage, they will have a behaviour risk assessment. All staff should be aware of this assessment and familiarise themselves with it. These profiles should be read alongside any individual learning plans which identify children's individual barriers and potential triggers.

In situations where behaviour has been concerning or where physical intervention has been necessary an incident should be recorded using CPOMs. These forms will be used as a basis for a debrief conversation as soon as possible after the incident.

Post incident support should take place as soon as reasonably possible after an incident, this should include restorative conversations with the child, reparative work for any hurt feelings, damage to property or injury to others. Staff members will be given a debrief which will take the form of a conversation with senior staff this will identify the need for any further support.

Parents should always be informed following a physical intervention and their response should be included on CPOMS.

If a member of staff or child has sustained an injury an accident or injury form should be completed.

SLT will evaluate all incidents and support staff to modify individual risk assessments and plans where necessary. If incidents begin to show frequently for an individual or in a regular pattern for an individual or group, a member of SLT will support the team to look at and adapt the provision for that student. This may trigger referrals to other professionals for further assessment and support. A behaviour report will be shared with Directors on a termly basis.

Health and safety

These guidelines are written to ensure health and safety both for the student and staff members. We will:

- Ensure safe working practices
- Carry out risk assessments and take appropriate action to eliminate or reduce risks

All employees are expected to:

- consider their own physical health, emotional state and attire

Staff will have monthly group supervision after school with an Educational or Clinical Psychologist, and will have half-termly access to individual sessions with a counsellor.

Equal Opportunities

These guidelines are central in ensuring that all students, regardless of their emotional development, disability or cultural background will have access to the same range of diverse opportunities. It is also important to ensure that all incidents are managed as carefully as possible to minimise stress for students and maintain dignity.

Complaints and allegations

Students have the right where possible and can question or complain about physical intervention. We will ensure that students and parents understand they can voice their opinions, ask questions and voice any concerns. If an allegation is made that a member of staff has used unnecessary force or that a member of staff has acted inappropriately this will be taken seriously. Allegations against staff will be managed under the Complaints policy.

The use of force as a punishment is always unlawful and inappropriate.

Contact Running Deer School

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