PHYSICAL CONTACT AND INTERVENTION POLICY

Approved by: SLT

Approved date: April 2026

Review date: April 2028

Accessibility: Available on request

Scope: Ashbridge Independent School

Introduction

Positive, respectful relationships between staff and children are fundamental to providing nurturing care and a high-quality education.

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with pupils. This will depend on the circumstance, but examples of occasions when physical contact is generally appropriate include:

- to give first aid
- to guide or escort pupils, such as holding the hand of a pupil on a school trip
- to comfort a distressed pupil
- to congratulate or praise a pupil, for example a pat on the back or a handshake
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching

Physical Intervention

Physical intervention refers to any situation where a member of staff uses physical contact to guide, restrict or control a child's movement. This may include:

- guiding or leading a child away
- blocking a child's path
- holding a child to prevent harm

Restraint is a more restrictive form of physical intervention where a child's movement is significantly limited.

When Physical Intervention May Be Used

Whilst the majority of children respond well to our behaviour management approaches, there may be very rare occasions where physical intervention is required to ensure the safety of a child or others.

In line with the *Restrictive Interventions, including Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (2026)* guidance, EYFS and ISI requirements, physical intervention may only be used when it is reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent a child from:

- injuring themselves or others
- damaging property
- committing a criminal offence
- causing serious disruption or disorder

Physical intervention must always be a last resort, after de-escalation strategies have been attempted wherever possible.

Corporal punishment is illegal and the use of physical force as a punishment will never be used at Ashbridge.

All staff are trained in preventative approaches, including de-escalation and behaviour management, and understand the boundaries of appropriate intervention. Physical intervention is only used where necessary, and staff who may be required to use it receive appropriate training to ensure it is carried out safely and proportionately.

De-escalation and Prevention

Staff must always aim to prevent situations escalating by using calm communication and reassurance, redirection and removing triggers where possible.

For children with SEND or additional behavioural needs individual risk assessments and behaviour/support plans will be in place if required, and agreed strategies shared with staff and parents.

How Physical Intervention Should Be Used

When physical intervention is necessary:

- it must be used for the **shortest time possible**
- the **least restrictive option** must always be used
- force must be appropriate to the child's **age, size and level of risk**
- wherever possible, another adult should be present

The child's dignity, safety and emotional wellbeing must always be maintained.

Prohibited Practices

Staff must never restrict a child's breathing by covering the mouth and/or nose or applying pressure to the neck region or abdomen. Prone (face-down) restraint should never be used.

Recording and Reporting

All incidents involving physical intervention must be recorded promptly and factually. A **Physical Intervention Record** will be completed by the staff member as soon as possible and no later than the same day. The staff member is also responsible for contacting the DSL or deputy DSL to inform them.

A **Physical Intervention Record** will include:

- antecedents (what happened before including triggers)
- reason for intervention
- type of intervention used including degree of force
- duration
- outcome including any injuries
- follow up actions

The incident will also be added to the **physical intervention log.**

Parental Communication

After the use of physical intervention, parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible and no later than the same day. This will be followed up in writing, and parents/carers will be offered the opportunity to discuss the incident.

Monitoring and Review

Senior leaders will:

- review all incidents
- identify patterns or repeated behaviours
- ensure appropriate support plans are in place
- reflect on practice and training needs

Complaints or allegation

Any concerns or complaints regarding the use of physical intervention will be managed in line with the school's Complaints Policy.

Any concerns or allegations regarding the use of physical intervention will be treated as a safeguarding matter and escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Safeguarding procedures will be followed in full, including referral to external agencies such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).