

ELY ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL - SAFE TOUCH PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

Section 1. Introduction

Ely St John's has adopted the STEPs approach which is Cambridgeshire's preferred approach to supporting positive behaviour. This policy is consistent with the principles and ethos of STEPs. This policy must be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy.

In Ely St John's school we believe that pupils need to be and feel safe, to know how to behave and to know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently. The majority of pupils behave well and follow our EJ Way Code of Conduct. Some children will require strategies that de-escalate and prevent behaviour that is anti-social or dangerous by addressing the underlying needs and feelings. Only for a very small minority of pupils will the use of restrictive physical intervention be needed. On such occasions, only acceptable forms of intervention are used. Staff will know through this policy what is safe touch and what is unsafe.

We have a responsibility to operate an effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for managing dangerous and difficult behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class and individual pupils.

All school staff need to feel that they are able to manage behaviour and to have an understanding of what dangerous and difficult behaviours might be communicating. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour and they need to be free from undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention. Parents need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a restrictive physical intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

Those who have had the 6 hour training will have had the Step On training this policy focuses on. In Ely St John's the majority of staff have been Step On trained and we have four Step on Tutors who can train and refresh staff in the school each year. Where adults have not had the full 6 hour training, they will have training appropriate to their role in school, to feel confident in following the Behaviour Policy and with regards de-escalation. All staff are made aware of this policy.

Step On – De-escalation training: It is considered best practice that all teachers, TAs and middays complete this de-escalation training. Steps is a therapeutic approach to behaviour management, with an emphasis on consistency, on teaching internal discipline rather than imposing external discipline and on care and control not punishment. It uses techniques to de-escalate a situation before a crisis occurs and, where a crisis does occur, it adopts techniques to reduce the risk of harm. The name Steps comes from the process of taking necessary steps to ensure that every child is given an equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy community life.

Step Up – Restrictive Intervention training: This provides training on elements of restrictive physical intervention (restraint) and personal safety. This training can only be provided where staff have already completed Step On training and are still within certification. Step Up training is only delivered where there is an audited need with an individual young person who displays dangerous behaviour.

This policy should be read alongside the Behaviour Policy. The Behaviour Policy aims to improve the educational experience and outcomes for all pupils by promoting and supporting their engagement with education. It also connects to policies on Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Equal Opportunities and Intimate Care.

Section2: Safe touch - acceptable forms of physical intervention (PI) in Ely St John's School.

Physical Intervention is the term used to describe contact between staff and pupils where no force is involved. There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have contact or physical intervention with children, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the pupil's physical needs. This is safe touch. There are occasions when staff may have cause to safely touch pupils. Safe touch at Ely St John's is:

- to reward or comfort a pupil in distress (age appropriate and in this school that means a comforting arm; a hug if initiated by a child and in public (must be side on); but not sitting a child on the knee.
- to gently guide, steer or escort a pupil using caring Cs or an open/closed mitten/hand (see below)
- for curricular/activity reasons e.g. in PE or drama (e.g. to aid a forward roll)
- for first aid and medical treatment
- in an emergency to avert danger to the pupil(s) or other persons (e.g. if child steps into a road)
- In rare circumstances, when restrictive physical intervention is warranted (*see section 3*)

Those staff who have a Cambridgeshire Steps Training Record certificate have been advised to do the following things:

- Open mitten, used to move a pupil away (Fingers together, thumb away from fingers, palms parallel to floor, the hand should remain in a mitten to avoid the possibility of gripping. Gripping hands can result in bruising consistent with poor practice. Open mitten can be to guide, protect or turn (open mitten placed above the elbow); or to escort (two open mittens and a nudge with nearest arm)



- Closed mitten, used to draw a pupil close (Flat hand, fingers and thumb together, the hand should remain in a mitten to avoid the possibility of gripping. Gripping hands can result in bruising consistent with poor practice.



- Offering an arm, (Hip in, head away, sideways stance, arm is offered, pupil accepts the invite, draw elbow in for extra security)



- Supportive hug, (Hip in, head away, sideways stance, closed mittens contain each shoulder, communicate intention, use 'de-escalation script' if needed. Seated or standing. Remember that touch and silence denotes intimacy thus always talk)



- Supportive arm, (Hip in, head away, sideways stance, positioned behind the elbow, closed mittens used above the elbows to maintain safe shape (penguin shape), communicate intention verbally. All five fingers up to the ceiling or down to the floor. The supportive arm is to support, guide and escort.



- Open mitten escort (or caring C) (or paired escort), Hip in, head away, open mitten hands above the elbows, safe shape (penguin shape), arm resting across the shoulders, communicate intention, move assertively (prevent kicking / dropping), the hand should remain in a mitten to avoid the possibility of gripping. Gripping hands can result in bruising consistent with poor practice. The supportive arm is to support, guide and escort.

NB: Please remember that any of the above could become restrictive / restraint if at any time the child cannot move away. A hand hold if a grip when a child tries to move away, is restraint by the fingers – restraint is an overpowering force and must be recorded in the blue book. The aim is for de-escalation; high level comfort i.e. an increase in physical intervention to avoid the need for restraint.

Section 3: Definition of “Restrictive Physical Intervention” (RPI)

Restrictive Physical Intervention is the term used to describe interventions where the use of force to control a person’s behaviour is employed using bodily contact. It refers to any instance in which a teacher or other adult authorised by the Headteacher has a duty to use “reasonable force” to control or restrain a pupil in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria:

- To prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence (this applies even if they are below the age of criminal responsibility)
- To prevent a pupil from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a pupil from causing serious damage to property (including their own property)

There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. However, there are two relevant considerations:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it
- The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent

The definition of Restrictive Physical Intervention also includes the use of mechanical devices (e.g. splints on the pupil prescribed by medical colleagues to prevent self injury), forcible seclusion, use of locked doors or changes to a pupil’s environment. It is important to note that although physical contact may be made in the latter situations, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

Reasonable defence for the use of force is based on evidence that the action taken was:

- Reasonable, proportionate and necessary

- In the best interest of the young person

The focus is on the use of force to manage harm not to manage behaviour.

This policy takes into account DfE guidance on Use of Reasonable Force, July 2013 (revised July 2015).

Physical contact should never be used as a punishment or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact shall not be made with the pupil's neck, chest, abdomen, genital area or any other sensitive body areas, or to put pressure on joints. It must not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular pupil. Physical intervention should be in the pupil's best interest and should only be used with an awareness of the need to differentiate the attachment to staff from the attachment to key adults such as parents and siblings.

Section 4: When the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) may be appropriate in Ely St John's School.

Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used when all other strategies have failed and therefore only as a last resort. All staff should focus on de-escalation and preventative strategies rather than focusing solely on reactive strategies. However there are other situations when restrictive physical intervention may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain pupils may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief restrictive physical intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

- The safety and well being of all staff and pupils are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor. Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for restrictive physical intervention through dialogue and diversion
- Only the minimum force necessary will be used for the shortest time possible
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident

Section 5: Who may use Restrictive Physical Intervention in Ely St John's School?

All staff must be aware of this policy and its implications. No adult is barred from using physical intervention if in charge of a pupil/pupils however it must be in line with this policy. If a pupil is likely to require more than physical intervention i.e. restrictive intervention then the relevant staff will be trained appropriately i.e. Step Up. However there is the necessity at times to use Restrictive Physical Restraint for emergency intervention and then section 6 must be followed carefully.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and removing other pupils and themselves from risky situations may be the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations in which they exercise their duty of care for the pupils.

The Steps training is as follows:

- 1. Daily intervention (Step On)**
 - Space and stance
 - De-escalation script
 - Supporting, guiding and escorting (as above)
- 2. Planned intervention (Step Up) – additional input received from Step on county advisers.**
- 3. Emergency intervention (common law)**

Section 6: Planning for the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention at Ely St John's – unsafe touch

Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety.

When considering the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention, there are only 3 components that can be judged as wrong.

1. If there is a negative impact on the process of breathing.
2. The pupil feels pain as a direct result of the technique

3. The pupil feels a sense of violation.

The following can result in a sense of violation, pain or restricted breathing:

- The use of clothing or belts to restrict movement
- Holding a person lying on their back or chest
- Pushing on the neck, chest or abdomen
- Hyperflexion or basket type holds
- Extending or flexing of joints (carrying or dragging)

The following can result in significant injury:

- Forcing a pupil up or down stairs
- Dragging a pupil from a confined space
- Lifting and carrying
- Seclusion where a person is forced to spend time alone against their will (requires a court order except in an emergency)

Staff at Ely St John's must not:

- carry, lift (unless the child cannot walk) or drag a pupil.
- Physically separate a child from their parent with restraint or force (may stand in front of a door or steer/escort/use a supportive action as in section 2.)

At Ely St John's the differing definitions of seclusion and withdrawal are important and withdrawal is the right emphasis to place and the process to aim for, where a child needs to be withdrawn as a strategy for keeping the pupil or those around the pupil safe. (Definition for seclusion: A student is forced to spend time alone against their will (requires a court order except in an emergency) (definition for withdrawal: Removing the person from the situation which is causing anxiety or distress to a location where they can be continually observed and supported until they are ready to resume their normal activities.). Where the likelihood of Restrictive Intervention is becoming more likely in order to ensure withdrawal, it is also advisable to remove other children from the environment rather than resorting to RPI.

The following pictures are an example of a basket like hold – **these are no longer allowed.**



The following principles relating to Restrictive Physical Intervention are as follows:

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions.
- Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the legal criteria for its uses are met
- Staff will only use force when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the pupil's and/or other pupils' best interests for staff to intervene physically

- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion. The pupil will be warned, at their level of understanding, that Restrictive Physical Intervention will be used unless they cease the dangerous behaviour.
- Staff will use the minimum force necessary to ensure safe outcomes
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and / or witnesses
- As soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control
- A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance and the using of it repeatedly as a regular feature of school policy – Step On training must be sought
- Escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual pupil will always be taken into account.
- In developing a risk management plan, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing pupils and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well being of all involved at these times.
- The incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention will be recorded in the blue book and shared with parents.

Section7: Developing a Risk Management Plan at Ely St John's Primary

If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that Restrictive Physical Intervention may be a likely result then a Risk Management Plan will be completed. This plan will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations through understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying any early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may develop. The plan will include:

- Involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the school may take, when and why
- Reasonable action from staff having considered the risks and learning from what happens
- Scripts and procedures that work to de-escalate
- Suitable protective consequences for certain predicted situations (limits to freedom to control risk of harm)
- Educational consequences (how we are going to teach to adapt behaviours)
- A record of options that have been examined based on consideration such as Roots and Fruits; Anxiety Maps – to keep a record of those used and those not successful (assess, plan, review, do)
- Techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict and stating at which point a Restrictive Physical Intervention may be used (if Step Up has been necessary and advice has been given)
- Key staff who know exactly what is expected. It is best that these staff are well known to the pupil.
- Ensuring a system to summon additional support e.g. radios
- Identification of training needs
- It may also include advice about how to hold a pupil with specific medical needs if appropriate

Section 8: Guidance and Training for Staff

Guidance and training are essential in this area. We need to adopt the best practice in Ely St John's school and recognise that it is essential that it is arranged for all staff at a number of levels including:

- Awareness of issues for governors, staff and parents
- Behaviour techniques for all staff through Step On training
- Managing conflict in challenging situations
- Advice from Step Up tutors where Restrictive Physical Intervention is likely to be regularly used.

Section 9: Complaints

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping parents and governors informed we can avoid or minimise the likelihood of any complaints being made. All disputes which arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

Safer working practice

To reduce the risk of allegations, all staff should be aware of safer working practice and should be familiar with the guidance in this policy; the Code of Conduct for All Adults; and the document, *Guidance for Safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (September 2019)*.

This Policy was adopted by the Governors at a Resources Committee Meeting held on 16th January 2020.

To be reviewed annually.