



Physical Intervention Policy

2025 - 2026

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Introduction

This policy provides guidance on the safe and appropriate use of physical intervention in rare and exceptional circumstances. REACH staff recognise that physical intervention is not a substitute for skilled behaviour management techniques. It will only ever be used as a last resort, when other de-escalation strategies have failed and there is a risk to the safety of pupils, staff, or visitors.

REACH Learning Provision staff will only use reasonable, proportionate, and necessary force when it is unavoidable.

Principles

- The safety of staff, pupils, and visitors is paramount.
- Physical intervention must be:
 - Reasonable in relation to the circumstances
 - Appropriate for the purpose
 - Minimal in application and duration
- All staff must seek to de-escalate situations and use non-physical approaches wherever possible.

Recommended Approaches

Talk and Warn

- Where possible, staff should attempt to calm and defuse situations verbally.
- Holding may be used only to reduce immediate risk of injury to self or others, never as a form of aggression.
- Staff must ensure actions cannot be interpreted as confrontational or escalating.

Audience Control

- Removing the audience (or moving the pupil away from peers) can reduce escalation.
- Pupils must not be taken into a closed room alone with one staff member. A colleague should be present or the door left open.

Immediate Risk Situations

- Physical intervention may be necessary if a pupil's behaviour presents an immediate risk of injury to themselves or others.
- In some situations, more than one member of staff may be required to safely intervene.
- Under no circumstances should staff strike, slap, or hit a pupil.

Staff Guidance

- Staff should exercise professional judgement and always prioritise safety.
- Intervention should be passive in intent, aiming only to restrict movement enough to prevent harm.
- Force should be gradually reduced as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Assistance should be sought early; staff must support colleagues where safe to do so.
- Pregnant staff or those with relevant medical conditions (e.g., back issues, mobility problems) must not engage in physical intervention.
- All incidents requiring physical intervention must be recorded promptly and reported to the Provision Manager.
- Witness statements from pupils and staff should also be collected where appropriate.
- Parents/carers will be informed following incidents involving physical intervention.
- Staff retain the right to defend themselves if assaulted, but only using reasonable force under the law.

Training

- All staff will receive basic training on the use of reasonable force as part of induction.
- Refresher training will be provided as needed to ensure staff remain confident, safe, and compliant with current guidance.
- Ongoing professional development will support staff to manage behaviour through positive strategies, reducing the likelihood of physical intervention.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Parent and Student Handbook

Reference:

DfE (2015) *Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies*