

Swansea Council – Education Directorate

Interim guidance on Restrictive Practice and Physical Intervention in mainstream settings

Swansea Education Directorate remains committed to the ethos of no physical restraint of pupils in mainstream settings. However, it is important that we acknowledge Statutory National Guidance on Safe and Effective Intervention: Guidance for Schools on the use of force and searching for Weapons 2013 and more recent statutory guidance – Reducing Restrictive Practices 2020.

This interim guidance is provided in recognition of the national guidelines and should be implemented sensitively while the local authority reviews its policies to ensure consistency across the directorate, including the Behaviour Policy, Use of PSP, EOTAS, Exclusions, Peer on Peer Harassment, Equality, ALN etc

In Swansea, we recognise that there may be times in mainstream settings where the use of restrictive practice or even safe physical intervention will be required. It is not appropriate for schools to apply a “no contact” policy for staff with children as this could impact on their responsibilities to effectively safeguard children and others.

The Exercise of Professional Judgement

Professional judgement is key to deciding upon the most appropriate course of action to ensure the safest outcomes for individuals and others in situations that pose a risk of **serious** harm. Where the potential exists for the use of restrictive physical intervention, a number of important factors have to be balanced. These factors include:

- knowledge of the individual and their history
- knowledge of the impact and effects of restrictive physical intervention techniques and methods
- ensuring the welfare and safety of all those involved
- ensuring professional transparency and accountability
- ensuring that all actions are appropriate and acceptable within recognised professional practice, civil law and criminal law.

Circumstances When Restrictive Practice or Safe Physical Intervention Might Be Appropriate?

Some examples of situations where physical intervention might be used are:

- To prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff, or another pupil,

- To prevent a pupil causing serious, deliberate damage to property eg. Smashing windows, setting fires;
- To ensure that a pupil leaves a classroom where the pupil persistently refuses to follow an instruction to do so;
- To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson; or
- To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or school visit.
- To prevent a pupil causing serious injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous material, objects or apparatus;

The focus should be on preventing, as far as possible the need for the use of physical intervention with pupils, by creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that lessens the risk and threat of violence of any kind. The use of physical intervention should only be a last resort, schools should minimise the possibility of physical intervention being needed. However, this may not always be possible and in such circumstances staff need to be aware of sensitivities associated with any form of physical contact with pupils.

Strategies other than physical intervention to be considered:

Examples

- The use of a range of de-escalation strategies, especially those which have been identified as effective through an pupil's Individual Plan (where one exists)
- Providing the identified pupil with a choice of locations to exit to
- Giving clear directions
- Change of face – calling a staff member who is known to have a positive relationship with the pupil
- Allowing 'take-up' time thus allowing a 'face-saving' opportunity
- Removing the audience, i.e. requesting that other pupils leave the room

Procedures and practical considerations during specific incidents

Wherever practicable staff are expected to:

- Use a calm and measured approach
- Tell the pupil to stop, remind them of consequences, tell them what will happen if she/he does not stop
- Seek assistance from other colleagues at as early a stage as possible
- Staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a pupil have a responsibility to provide a presence, and to offer support and assistance should this be required
- Try to defuse the situation verbally and prevent escalation
- Try to remove the pupil from the peer audience

- Attempt to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident
- In as calm a manner as possible, explain that the reason for intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe
- Make it clear that intervention will stop as soon as the pupil calms and the risk assessment indicates it is no longer necessary
- If it is not possible to de-escalate and managed the behaviour without risk of injury to yourself or others, removal of the other pupils who may be at risk should be considered alongside a call for assistance.

It is good practice to:

- Demonstrate that you are in control
- Demonstrate that you have not lost your temper and are not acting out of anger or frustration
- Give clear advice that you are not trying to punish the pupil
- Call for assistance

Duty of Care

When dealing with situations requiring protective action, duty of care does not imply that the needs of one individual automatically override the safety needs of others (including staff members) placed at risk. Threatening or reckless behaviour needs to be managed to minimise harm to all concerned. Any action that involves the restriction of choice and movement must be commensurate with a professional duty of care and proportionate to the level of risk presented.

The professional's duty of care extends to ensuring that an individual is monitored and cared for throughout any incident. Autonomy, commensurate with their age and understanding, is returned to them as soon as it is safe to do so. The expectations placed upon staff using restrictive practices or physical intervention should not contravene health and safety requirements by placing themselves or others in unnecessary risk.

Reporting

Any incident where a physical intervention has been required must be recorded on the child's My Concern (or alternative) safeguarding record and reviewed by a senior leader. Regular monitoring of incidents is required and reported on to senior leaders and governing bodies.