



PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY

1. General statement of policy

All Stars staff who may have to intervene physically with children must clearly understand the options and strategies open to them. This policy clarifies what is acceptable and what is not. *'Staff' includes employees, visiting activity providers and volunteers.*

Corporal punishment is in no way authorised through the following policy. All Stars policy and the law forbid a member of staff to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a child, or which is intended to cause pain or injury or humiliation – see Education Act 1997 section 550A:

- where necessary *reasonable force* can be used to control or restrain children
- physical contact with children may also be appropriate or necessary in other circumstances
- staff should always avoid touching or holding a child in a way that might be considered indecent.

2. Procedures

2.1 Reasonable force

Staff who have control or charge of children during All Stars sessions are allowed to use 'reasonable force' to prevent a child from:

- committing a criminal offence (or what would be a criminal offence if they were old enough)
- injuring themselves or others
- damaging property
- acting in a way that is counter to maintaining good order and discipline at All Stars.

Although there is no legal definition of reasonable force, the degree of force must:

- be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident
- always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result
- take into account the individual.

The degree and reasonability of force will depend upon circumstances. Physical force is not justified for:

- trivial misdemeanours
- a situation that can be resolved without force.

The Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy should always be used in the first instance to support both staff and children.

2.2 Application of force

Physical intervention can involve:

- coming between children
- blocking a child's path
- holding, pushing or pulling
- leading a child by the hand or arm
- shepherding a child away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- in extreme circumstances, using more restrictive holds.

On no account may a member of staff act in a way that might cause injury:

- holding a child around the neck, by the collar or way that might restrict breathing
- slapping, punching or kicking a child
- tripping up a child
- holding or pulling by the hair or ear
- holding a child face down on the ground.

2.3 Self defence

All staff have the right to defend themselves against an attack provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so.

2.4 Recording incidents

A detailed written report must be completed using the Incident Report Form of any occasion where force is used is required. This will help prevent misunderstanding and would be helpful should there be a complaint. This procedure would not be applicable in a minor or trivial incident.

It is recommended that a First Aider should make a report immediately after there has been a need for restraint to be used.

Immediately following an incident the member of staff concerned must tell the Play Leader and provide a written report using Incident Report Form. This should include:

name of the child or children involved
where the incident took place
names of witnesses, staff or children
how the incident began and progressed. Include details of child's behaviour, what was said, steps taken to defuse or calm the situation, degree of force used and how applied
child's response and outcome
details of any injuries or damage to property

The Children and Families Worker must be informed of any incident involving physical restraint, who may liaise with the Headteacher as necessary.

Staff may consider informing their professional association.

Parents will be informed of any such incident by the Children and Families Worker as soon as possible. This may require a phone call followed up by a letter.

Complaints from a parent could lead to an investigation either under All Stars' disciplinary procedures, or by the Police or Social Services under child protection procedures. It is therefore vital that the policy is carefully followed and all incidents accurately recorded.

2.5 Advice

Prior to using physical intervention consider whether:

- the situation could be dealt with using other strategies
- strategies are in place for the individual child concerned which can be used to defuse or calm situations
- such action will exacerbate the situation
- the actions are suitable for the age and level of understanding of the child.

2.6 Practical considerations

Before intervening physically a member of staff must:

- tell the child who is misbehaving to stop.

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- continue to talk with the child throughout the incident
- retain a calm and measured approach.

It may be inappropriate for a member of staff to intervene in an incident without help unless in an emergency. In such cases the member of staff should:

- remove other children who are at risk.
- summon help from colleagues.
- inform children that help has been sent for.
- continue to attempt to defuse the situation verbally.

3. Related All Stars documents

Incident/Accident Report Form
Safeguarding Policy
Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy

Date: ***January 2015***

Signed:

Reviewed: ***August 2015***

Signed: