



# Physical Intervention Policy

Signed by headteacher: *A Hughes*

Signed by Chair of Governors: *David Bradley*

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# Physical Intervention Policy

## 1. Statement of Intent

At Bitterne Manor Primary School, we are committed to providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment in which all children can learn and flourish. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and that children may display distressed or unsafe behaviour when they are unable to regulate their emotions or communicate their needs effectively.

Our approach prioritises prevention, understanding and de-escalation. Staff are expected to build strong, trusting relationships with children and to use proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring. However, we acknowledge that in rare and exceptional circumstances, physical intervention, including the use of reasonable force, may be necessary to prevent harm.

This policy sets out how such interventions will be used lawfully, safely and proportionately, ensuring that the dignity, rights and welfare of children are maintained at all times, while also protecting staff and others from harm.

## 2. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 93), which gives school staff the power to use reasonable force
- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE guidance on the use of reasonable force
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- HM Government guidance on reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention
- DfE "Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools" (2026), including statutory expectations regarding the recording of significant incidents involving the use of force (from April 2026)

The policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, SEND Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

## 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- **Physical intervention** refers to any situation in which a member of staff makes physical contact with a child in order to manage a situation safely. This may range from guiding a child away from a situation through to more restrictive forms of intervention.
- **Reasonable force** is a legal term that describes the use of the minimum level of force necessary, applied for the shortest possible time, in order to prevent harm or serious disruption. It must always be proportionate to the circumstances.
- **Restrictive intervention** is a broader term that includes any action, whether physical or non-physical, that limits a child's movement or behaviour.
- **Restraint** is a form of restrictive intervention that involves the use of force to restrict a child's movement against their will.
- **Seclusion** refers to a situation where a child is prevented from leaving a space. This is only ever used as a safety measure and must never be used as a form of punishment.

## 4. Core Principles

The use of physical intervention at Bitterne Manor is governed by clear principles. It is always a last resort, used only when other strategies have been attempted or where there is no time to do so due to the immediacy of risk.

Any intervention must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary in the circumstances. Staff must always consider whether the risks associated with intervening are outweighed by the risks of not intervening. The welfare of the child remains central to all decision-making, and every effort must be made to preserve dignity and reduce distress.

Physical intervention must never be used as a punishment, a threat, or as a response to frustration. It must always be a professional response to a clearly identified risk.

## **5. Staff Training and Responsibilities**

All teaching staff at Bitterne Manor Primary School are trained in Securicare techniques. This training provides staff with the skills to recognise early signs of distress, apply effective de-escalation strategies, and, where absolutely necessary, use safe physical intervention techniques.

Staff are expected to act within the scope of their training and to maintain a calm, controlled and professional approach at all times. They must continuously assess risk throughout an incident and be prepared to reduce or cease intervention as soon as it is safe to do so.

Staff should not place themselves at risk of serious harm. Where a situation cannot be safely managed, support must be sought immediately.

Staff are accountable for their actions and must be able to clearly justify any use of physical intervention. Decisions must be based on a dynamic assessment of risk and demonstrate that the intervention was reasonable, proportionate, necessary and in the best interests of the child.

## **6. Preventing the Need for Physical Intervention**

Preventative practice is at the heart of this policy. Staff are expected to use a range of strategies to reduce the likelihood of incidents escalating to the point where physical intervention is required.

This includes building positive relationships, understanding individual child needs and triggers, adapting the environment, and using calm and consistent communication. Staff should use distraction, redirection and de-escalation techniques wherever possible.

Before intervening physically, staff must consider whether the situation can be resolved through less restrictive means. They should reflect on whether intervention is necessary, whether it is proportionate, and what impact it may have on the child's wellbeing.

In many cases, effective early intervention will prevent situations from escalating further.

## **7. Circumstances Where Physical Intervention May Be Used**

Staff may use reasonable force to prevent a child from:

- Injuring themselves or others
- Committing a criminal offence
- Causing significant damage to property
- Seriously disrupting good order

Staff must exercise professional judgement in determining whether these thresholds have been met. The decision to intervene must be based on the specific circumstances at the time and should always be defensible.

## 8. Prohibited Practices

In order to safeguard children and staff, certain practices are strictly prohibited under all circumstances. The following are never permitted:

- Prone restraint (face-down holds)
- Pressure on neck, throat, chest or airway
- Pain-inducing techniques
- Any action intended to punish, intimidate or humiliate

Any deviation from safe and approved techniques would be considered a serious breach of this policy.

## 9. Safe Use of Physical Intervention

When physical intervention is used, it must be applied in a way that minimises risk. Any intervention must:

- Use minimum force
- Last only as long as necessary
- Allow for breathing and communication
- Be applied calmly and professionally
- Take account of physical safety at all times, ensuring there is no obstruction to airway, no restriction to breathing, and no pressure applied to joints or pressure points
- Stop immediately if:
  - Breathing difficulty occurs
  - Signs of distress increase
  - The situation is resolved

The intervention must stop immediately once the risk has reduced.

## 10. Seclusion and Time-Out

Seclusion may be used in exceptional circumstances as a means of reducing immediate risk. It must always be a safety measure and never a disciplinary response.

Where seclusion is used, the child must be continuously supervised by a member of staff. Seclusion requires:

- Continuous supervision
- Safe and appropriate environment
- Ends as soon as risk reduces
- Recorded as an incident

Children will never be left alone without supervision.

Seclusion is distinct from removal, where a child is required to spend time away from others for educational or behavioural reasons but is not prevented from leaving and continues to be supervised appropriately.

## 11. Children with SEND

The school recognises that children with SEND or medical conditions may experience heightened anxiety or difficulty regulating their behaviour, and may therefore be more vulnerable in situations involving physical intervention.

Staff must take account of individual needs, including known triggers and communication difficulties. Reasonable adjustments must be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, and wherever possible, strategies should be tailored to the individual.

Where there is an identified risk:

- Individual risk assessments are in place

- Positive Handling Plans are developed where needed
- Reasonable adjustments are made
- Staff use known strategies and triggers

## 12. Recording and Reporting

any relevant needs or circumstances of the pupil, including whether the pupil involved has an identified special educational need or disability and their SEN status code

**All incidents MUST be recorded on CPOMS on the same day.**

### 12.1 What must be recorded

Every record must include:

- Names of child(s) and staff involved
- Any relevant SEND status, medical needs or known vulnerabilities of the child
- Date, time and location
- Duration of incident
- Antecedents (what happened before)
- Description of behaviour
- De-escalation strategies attempted
- Type of physical intervention used
- Justification for use of force
- Any injuries (staff or child)
- Follow-up actions
- Parent communication
- Whether the incident meets the threshold of a “significant incident” in line with DfE guidance (2026)

	Objective	Specific	Justified	Balanced	Professional Tone
Records must →	Describe what was seen and heard Avoid opinion or judgement	Use precise descriptions of actions	Clearly explain why force was necessary	What the child did What staff did What strategies were tried first	No emotional or blame language No assumptions about intent
Correct examples	“Child threw a chair across the room, narrowly missing another child”	“Staff used a two-person guiding hold to move child away from doorway”	“Intervention was used to prevent the child from leaving the classroom and entering the car park unsupervised.”  “Staff intervened to prevent the child striking another child with a chair.”	“Staff offered the child time out and used calm verbal reassurance; when this was unsuccessful and the child began throwing objects, staff used a guiding hold.”  “Child refused to leave the room; staff used distraction and offered choices before intervention was applied.”	“Child appeared distressed and was crying during the incident.”  “Child used raised voice and moved quickly towards another child.”
Avoid examples	“Child was aggressive and out of control.”  “Child had a meltdown.”	“Staff restrained the child.”  “Child was disruptive.”	“Staff intervened because behaviour escalated.”  “Intervention was needed to manage behaviour.”	“Child became unsafe and had to be restrained.” “Staff followed policy.”	“Child was being naughty and attention-seeking.”  “Child deliberately tried to hurt others.”

### **12.3 Required phrasing (recommended structure)**

Use this structure:

1. Antecedent
  - a. "Following..."
2. Behaviour
  - a. "Child then..."
3. Response
  - a. "Staff attempted..."
4. Intervention
  - a. "When this was unsuccessful, staff used..."
5. Outcome
  - a. "The intervention ceased when..."

### **12.4 Parental communication**

- Parents must be informed on the same day
- Record:
  - Time of contact
  - Method (phone, in person, etc.)
  - Summary of discussion

### **12.5 Monitoring**

- SLT reviews incidents half-termly
- Governors receive termly summaries
- Patterns are analysed to:
  - Reduce future incidents
  - Improve practice

### **12.6 Statutory Recording Requirements**

In line with DfE guidance (2026), the school recognises its duty to record and report all significant incidents involving the use of reasonable force. A significant incident is defined as any use of force that goes beyond routine physical contact and requires formal recording.

All such incidents will be recorded, reviewed and, where appropriate, reported to parents and relevant authorities in line with statutory expectations.

## **13. Post-Incident Support**

Following any incident involving physical intervention, appropriate support must be provided to both children and staff.

Children should be given time and space to recover, followed by an opportunity to reflect on the incident in a supportive and non-judgemental manner. The aim of this process is to support learning, rebuild relationships and reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

Staff involved in the incident should also be offered a debrief, allowing them to reflect on what occurred and identify any support needs. Where necessary, further actions may be taken to review strategies or update individual plans.

## **14. Complaints and Safeguarding**

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

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff, this will be handled in line with statutory safeguarding guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education.

## **15. Monitoring and Review**

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will monitor the use of physical intervention through regular review of incident records. This will include identifying patterns, evaluating the effectiveness of strategies and ensuring that practice remains consistent with this policy.

The Governing Body will receive regular updates and will review the policy annually to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation and best practice.

**Physical intervention at Bitterne Manor Primary School is rare, carefully considered, and always focused on keeping children safe while preserving dignity and promoting positive behaviour.**

### **Appendix 1:**

Recording Crib Sheet:

- Name of staff involved:
- SEND status/medical needs:
- Date, time and location:
- Duration of incident:
- Antecedents (what happened before):
- Description of behaviour:
- De-escalation strategies attempted:
- Type of physical intervention used:
- Justification for use of force:
- Outcome / Any injuries (staff or child):
- Follow-up actions:
- Parent communication: when/who/summary:
- Does the incident meets the threshold of a "significant incident"?