



**ST BERNADETTE'S**  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Approved by BoD: 03/04/2025  
Policy Review Date : 30/09/2026

## **Mission Statement**

**At St Bernadette's, we follow Jesus by sharing His light through our words and actions, spreading His word in how we live and learn, trusting His plan even when the path is uncertain, loving one another with compassion and respect, and serving others with humility, just as Christ did. Through these daily acts of faith and kindness, we grow together as a community of disciples.**

### **Purpose of this Policy**

This Policy aims to give all members of the School community clear guidance so that any physical intervention that they undertake is carried out in a way that supports the values and principles described above. In particular, it aims to describe the circumstances in which restrictive physical intervention is an appropriate response and how staff at school will fulfil their responsibilities in those circumstances.

The Head Teacher will be responsible for ensuring staff and parents/carers are aware of this Policy. She will ensure that any necessary training/awareness-raising takes place so staff know their responsibilities.

### **Introduction**

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is committed to the safety, well-being, and dignity of all students and staff. This policy provides guidelines for the use of physical intervention and restraint in a way that reflects the values of our Catholic ethos, ensuring that students are treated with respect and care at all times.

Physical intervention or restraint will only be used as a last resort and in accordance with legal requirements and our school's values. The primary objective of this policy is to ensure that all students, staff, and visitors feel safe in school.

This involves:

- Helping children to avoid possible situations known to provoke challenging behaviour.
- Having education/care plans which are responsive to individual needs.
- Creating opportunities for children to engage in meaningful activities which includes opportunities for choice and a sense of achievement.
- Developing staff expertise in working with individuals that present challenges.
- Understanding that behaviour is often a method of communication.

### **Definitions**

**Physical Intervention:** The use of physical force to prevent or stop a student from engaging in behaviour that is harmful to themselves or others.

**Restraint:** The use of force to restrict a student's movement where they are at immediate risk of harm or are engaging in violent behaviour.

**Reasonable Force:** Force that is proportionate to the situation and used only to the degree necessary to prevent harm or injury.

### **Purpose of Physical Intervention and Restraint**

Physical intervention or restraint may be necessary in the following circumstances:

To prevent a student from causing harm to themselves, others, or property.

To stop an incident of physical violence or aggression.

To prevent serious disruption to the learning environment.

To maintain safety and prevent escalation of challenging behaviour.

### **Principles of Use**

Physical intervention will always be a last resort when other de-escalation techniques have not been effective.

Restraint should be used for the minimum time necessary and with the least amount of force required.

Restraint will only be used by trained staff or in situations where it is absolutely necessary to protect the safety of others.

All staff involved in physical intervention or restraint should be aware of the correct procedures and act in a calm, respectful manner.

The dignity of the student involved will be maintained at all times.

The safety of the student and all others involved should be the priority.

### **Staff Training**

Staff members who may be involved in physical intervention will receive appropriate training in managing challenging behaviour, de-escalation techniques, and the safe use of restraint. Training will be updated regularly, and staff will be informed of any changes to the policy.

### **Procedures for Physical Intervention and Restraint**

**Assessment and De-escalation:** Before considering physical intervention, staff will attempt de-escalation strategies such as calming the student, offering choices, or removing potential triggers.

**When Restraint is Required:** If physical intervention is necessary, staff should aim to:

Use the minimum force required.

Apply restraint in a way that minimizes the risk of injury.

Ensure that the restraint does not last longer than necessary.

**Recording and Reporting:** Every instance of physical intervention or restraint will be recorded in a designated log, including the reason for its use, the staff involved, and the outcome. Parents or guardians will be notified of the incident as soon as possible.

Post-Incident Support: After an incident, the student will be provided with support to ensure their well-being. The situation will be reviewed to assess whether further interventions or support plans are necessary.

### Unplanned and Emergency Interventions

Emergency use of restraint interventions may be required when a pupil behaves in unforeseen ways. Research evidence clearly shows that injuries to staff and pupils are more likely when the intervention is not planned.

An effective risk assessment procedure, together with well planned preventative strategies, will help to keep emergency use of restraint interventions to an absolute minimum. Staff should be aware that in an emergency situation the use of reasonable and proportional force is permissible if it is the only way to prevent injury or serious damage to property.

Whenever practical, before physically intervening, a staff member should attempt to resolve the situation by other means. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and staff members should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration. The staff member should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that the physical intervention will stop if it ceases to be necessary.

In unplanned/emergency interventions it is good practice for staff to use a dynamic risk assessment approach, which is a quick on the spot assessment prior to acting (where possible)

This will allow staff to:

Step back	Don't rush into an intervention. Is it really necessary? Do you have suitable justification?
Assess threat	Assess the person, the objects, the environment and the situational factors.
Find help	Can you reduce the risks by getting help from other trained colleagues or by using the physical environment, space, natural barriers etc
Evaluate options	Proactive/primary- proactive actions to remove the triggers Active/Secondary- interpersonal skills, non-verbal body language e.g. open palms, directing, defusing, calming, switching staff etc. Reactive/Tertiary- avoid assaults, disengagement.
Respond	Apply the principles of the least adverse method in responding. Continue to re-evaluate the situation and your response. Continually monitor for changes in level of risk.

Even in an emergency, the force used must be reasonable, i.e. it should be proportional to the risk posed by the situation.

Sometimes, for personal safety reasons, a staff member should not intervene in an unplanned situation without help.

Some situations when this might occur are:

- If dealing with a physically large individual or more than one pupil.
- Where an intervention technique cannot be applied safely by one person.
- If the staff member believes he/she may be put at risk of serious injury.

Once an unplanned or emergency restrictive physical intervention has taken place it must be reported and investigated. With this information it is essential that a risk assessment surrounding future use and primary and secondary prevention strategies are completed. This should assist in the reduction and use of further unplanned/emergency restrictive physical interventions.

#### **Communication with Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians will be informed promptly following any incident involving physical intervention or restraint. This communication will include:

A description of the incident and the reasons for the intervention.

Any immediate action taken or plans for follow-up.

Opportunities for parents to discuss concerns or ask questions.

## Appendix 1: Guidance on the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention

### **Types of incidents when Restrictive Physical Interventions may be appropriate.**

Situations in which restrictive physical intervention may be appropriate or necessary will fall into three broad categories:

- Planned interventions
- Unplanned/emergency interventions
- As part of a therapeutic or education strategy

Examples of situations in which a restrictive physical intervention may be appropriate are:

- To prevent a child from running towards a busy road.
- To prevent a child from self-injuring or injuring another person.
- To prevent a child from causing serious damage to property.

School staff may also use reasonable force where a child is affecting the maintenance of good order and discipline.

Examples are:

- Removing a disruptive pupil from the classroom when they have been instructed to leave but have refused.
- Preventing a child behaving in a way that disrupts a School event or an educational visit.
- Preventing a child leaving a classroom or School where allowing this would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.

The decision to use reasonable force is a matter for professional judgement. However, staff should be aware that research clearly shows that injuries to staff and pupils are more likely when the intervention is not planned. Before physically intervening, staff should, wherever practical, attempt to resolve the situation by using other methods.

Restrictive physical intervention for the protection of the property must only be for extreme circumstances, for example, if a person starts to damage a large piece of equipment. At this stage, there needs to be an assessment on whether or not it is worth the risk of injury to protect the property.

In extreme circumstances, such as an immediate and realistic threat of arson or where life is at risk (e.g. the pupil has a weapon.) The police are obliged to attend if the urgency is made clear to them.

Restrictive physical intervention may be used as a preventative measure in order to prevent physical injury, for example if the pupil attempts to obtain a weapon which would later make physical intervention problematic and dangerous to staff.

### **Occasions when Physical Contact is Deemed Appropriate**

There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is appropriate and/or necessary. Examples include:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of a line when going to Assembly or when walking together on an outing.
- When comforting a distressed individual.
- When congratulating or praising the young person e.g. shaking hand in Assembly.
- To demonstrate how to use equipment or a skill e.g. musical instrument
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.
- To give first aid.

It is the Head Teacher's responsibility to ensure that relevant staff are aware of any pupil who finds physical touch unwelcome. Such sensitivity may arise from the pupil's prior experiences, cultural background, age etc.

APPENDIX 2: RECORD OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION OR RESTRAINT

<b>Date of incident:</b>		<b>Time of incident:</b>	
<b>Pupil Name:</b>		<b>D.O.B:</b>	
<b>Member(s) of staff involved:</b>			
<b>Adult witnesses to restraint:</b>			
<b>Pupil witnesses to restraint:</b>			
<b>Outline of event leading to restraint:</b>			
<b>Outline of incident of restraint (including restraint method used):</b>			
<b>Outcome of restraint:</b>			
<b>Description of any injury(ies) sustained by injured pupil and any subsequent treatment:</b>			
<b>Date parent/carer informed of incident:</b>			
<b>Time:</b>		<b>Informed by:</b>	
<b>Outline of parent/carer response:</b>			
<b>Signature of staff completing report:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Signature of Teacher-in-charge:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Signature of Head Teacher:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Brief description of any subsequent inquiry/complaint or action:</b>			