

Use of Force and Restraint (Physical Intervention) Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and procedures for the use of force and physical intervention at Next Steps Ed. It aims to ensure the safety and welfare of learners and staff while maintaining an environment of respect, dignity, and effective behavior management.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and any other adults working with learners at Next Steps Ed. It covers situations where the use of force or restraint may be necessary to prevent harm or manage challenging behavior in accordance with legal and ethical guidelines.

Legal Framework

This policy complies with:

- The Education Act 1996 (Section 93), which permits the use of reasonable force to prevent harm.
- The Children Act 1989, emphasizing the welfare of the child.
- The Human Rights Act 1998, ensuring dignity and respect.
- Guidance from the Department for Education (DfE): *Use of Reasonable Force in Schools* (2013).

Principles

Next Steps Ed is committed to:

- Promoting positive behavior and reducing the need for physical intervention.
- Ensuring that any use of force is reasonable, proportionate, and necessary.
- Protecting the rights, dignity, and safety of all learners and staff.
- Providing appropriate training and support to staff.

Definitions

Use of Force

The application of physical contact by a member of staff to control or manage a learner's behavior.

Reasonable Force

The minimum degree of force required to prevent harm, injury, or damage, or to manage behavior safely.

Restraint (Physical Intervention)

A form of reasonable force involving physical control to prevent harm or manage extreme behavior.

When Force or Restraint May Be Used

Force or restraint should only be used when:

- A learner's behavior poses a risk to their own safety, the safety of others, or property.
- To prevent a learner from committing a criminal offense.
- To prevent significant disruption to the learning environment.

Prohibited Practices

The following are strictly prohibited:

- The use of force as a form of punishment.
- Deliberate actions causing pain or humiliation.
- Any intervention that involves restricting breathing or applying pressure to sensitive areas.

Procedures for Using Force or Restraint

Assessing the Situation

- Staff must consider all de-escalation strategies before using force.
- Force should only be applied as a last resort when other measures are ineffective or impractical.

Applying Force or Restraint

- Use the least intrusive intervention possible.
- Maintain communication with the learner throughout the intervention to reassure and calm them.
- Monitor the learner's physical and emotional well-being during the intervention.

After the Incident

- Ensure the learner is safe and has access to support if needed.
- Inform parents/carers about the incident as soon as possible.
- Record the incident using the school's Physical Intervention report form and body map where applicable.
- The commissioner will be contacted immediately to inform and the report will be securely emailed.
- A meeting with the members of staff and the SLT team will take place to discuss the report.
- Following a situation, the young person's risk assessment will be updated to reflect any new or heightened risks identified, ensuring that future strategies and interventions are informed.

Recording and Reporting

Recording

All incidents involving the use of force or restraint must be recorded and include:

- The date, time, and location of the incident.
- Details of the behavior leading to the intervention.
- The type of intervention used and its duration.
- The outcome of the intervention.
- Any injuries sustained by staff or learners.

Reporting

- The incident must be reported to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- A copy of the report will be kept on the learner's file.
- Serious incidents must be reported to the local authority if required.

Training and Support

- All staff will receive regular training on positive behavior management and the appropriate use of force.
- Specific training will be provided for staff likely to encounter challenging behavior requiring physical intervention.
- Staff involved in incidents will be offered post-incident support and supervision.

Safeguarding Considerations

- Any use of force must prioritise the learner's safety and dignity.
- Staff must be vigilant for any safeguarding concerns arising from incidents and report these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Physical intervention must never be used in a way that could be construed as abusive or neglectful.

For further details on our behavioural expectations, please refer to our Behaviour Policy.

Monitoring and Review

- The SLT will review all incidents involving force or restraint to identify patterns and areas for improvement.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation or guidance.

Policy Acknowledgment

This policy reflects Next Steps Ed's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners while ensuring that staff are supported and guided in managing challenging situations.

Policy Review Date: 10th December 2025

Policy Approved By: Mica Smith - Director