



BENTHAM COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL - PHYSICAL INTERVENTION AND REASONABLE FORCE POLICY

Approved by: Governing Body

Date Approved: June 2026

Review Date: June 2027

Responsible Officer: Headteacher

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the school's approach to the use of physical intervention and reasonable force. It aims to ensure that any use of force is:

- safe
- lawful
- proportionate
- used only when necessary

The overarching priority is to protect the safety, dignity and wellbeing of pupils, staff and others.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- DfE *Use of Reasonable Force in Schools*
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all staff working at Bentham Community Primary School
- pupils aged 4–11
- children attending the nursery provision (ages 2–3)

The policy applies across all areas of school life, including:

- the school site
- off-site educational visits
- school-related activities

Expectations and responses will be adapted appropriately to the age, developmental stage and individual needs of each child.

4. Guiding Principles

Bentham Community Primary School is committed to creating a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where positive behaviour is promoted and physical intervention is rarely required.

Reasonable force refers to the minimum degree of force necessary to prevent harm, injury, serious disruption or damage. Any use of physical intervention must be:

- legally justified and as such,
- necessary
- proportionate to the circumstances
- reasonable in the context of the risk presented
- used for the shortest time possible
- a last resort when other strategies have been unsuccessful or are inappropriate

5. Prevention and De-escalation

Staff will seek to prevent situations from escalating through the use of:

- positive behaviour management strategies
- calm, respectful and clear communication
- de-escalation techniques
- individual behaviour support plans
- risk assessments where appropriate
- early intervention and restorative approaches

All staff are expected to apply de-escalation strategies consistently in line with the school's behaviour policy.

The use of physical intervention should be avoided wherever possible.

6. Circumstances Where Reasonable Force May Be Used

Reasonable force may be used where it is necessary to:

- prevent a pupil from injuring themselves or others
- prevent serious damage to property
- prevent behaviour that places anyone at significant risk
- prevent a pupil from leaving a safe environment where doing so would create a risk
- restore order where serious disruption threatens safety

The decision to use reasonable force will be based on professional judgement, taking into account the individual circumstances, level of risk and available alternatives.

Each incident will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

7. Pupils with SEND and Early Years Children

The school recognises that some pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), may:

- require additional support
- respond differently to situations
- have communication or sensory needs

Staff will:

- consider individual needs carefully
- follow agreed behaviour and support plans
- make reasonable adjustments
- ensure responses remain proportionate and focused on safety

The safety and welfare of all pupils and staff will remain paramount at all times.

8. Training and Authorisation

The Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff receive appropriate training based on identified risks and the needs of pupils
- identify and authorise staff to undertake physical intervention where necessary
- ensure that authorised staff are:
 - appropriately trained in approved techniques
 - aware of relevant legal requirements
 - clear about appropriate and inappropriate methods of intervention

Training will include:

- behaviour management and de-escalation strategies
- safe physical intervention techniques
- safeguarding considerations
- recording and reporting procedures

All staff have a legal power to use reasonable force where it is lawful and necessary, even if they have not received specialist training.

9. Prohibited Practices

Physical intervention must never be used:

- as a form of punishment
- to deliberately inflict pain, discomfort or distress
- in a manner that restricts breathing or circulation
- to humiliate, degrade, intimidate or threaten
- in response to behaviour that presents no significant risk
- in any way that could be considered abusive or excessive

All interventions must preserve the dignity, welfare and safety of the child and must be legally justified: i.e. the intervention is used as the child is a danger to self and others or damaging school property.

Any inappropriate use of force will be investigated in line with school procedures.

10. Recording, Reporting and Follow-Up

Following any incident involving physical intervention:

- a written record will be completed as soon as possible
- senior leaders will be informed
- parents or carers will be informed on the same day wherever practicable
- any injuries or concerns will be recorded and addressed

Pupil Debrief

Where appropriate, pupils will be supported to:

- discuss the incident
- reflect on what happened
- identify strategies to prevent recurrence

Restorative approaches will be used where appropriate.

Parent Partnership

The school will work collaboratively with parents and carers to:

- share relevant information
- review behaviour or support plans
- agree strategies to support the pupil going forward

11. Safeguarding

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Headteacher will be informed of any incidents where:

- safeguarding concerns arise

- the use of physical intervention may indicate an underlying welfare issue

The use of physical intervention may indicate underlying safeguarding or welfare concerns, which will be explored and addressed.

All concerns will be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

12. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will:

- monitor incidents involving physical intervention regularly
- identify patterns, trends and areas for improvement
- ensure staff are appropriately supported and trained

The Governing Body will:

- receive reports on the use of physical intervention
- provide oversight and challenge
- ensure the policy is implemented appropriately and effectively

The school aims to reduce the need for physical intervention through effective behaviour support and early intervention strategies.

13. Final Statement

Bentham Community Primary School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.

Physical intervention will only be used when absolutely necessary, in accordance with the law, and as a last resort to protect the safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and others.

Written and updated by,

Richard Wright, Headteacher (June 2026)