

The Observatory School

Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) Policy

RPI Policy – Updated: January 2017

All substantive members of staff are trained as soon as possible after starting and receive refresher Team Teach training every two years (or as soon as possible thereafter). All substantive staff have a Team Teach certificate to certify they have been trained and a Team Teach workbook as a reference guide. All staff have access to the Team Teach website www.team-teach.co.uk for further reference.

In emergencies, staff may take urgent action without Team Teach training as long as such actions are in line with the protocols and procedures as detailed in this policy.

Definition of Restrictive Physical Intervention

RPI is the positive application of force with the intention of preventing a pupil from harming him/herself or others, or from causing serious damage to property.

1. RPI is a last resort and is only required to prevent the immediate harm or damage either to the pupil him/herself or to others and property.
2. It must always be an **act of care and control not punishment**.
3. Under usual circumstances two trained staff member should always be present with a third trained staff member as a witness, and if needed to act as a critical friend.
4. No staff member will ever use any form of corporal punishment, or make a threat of hitting, kicking, biting or any rough handling which causes harm or the expectation of harm.

Therefore:

1. When dealing with inappropriate or challenging behaviours we are always looking to employ the least restrictive means of achieving the end.
2. The first approach is always to look for alternatives to restraint, to try to deescalate situations and circumstances in which these behaviours may arise, to prevent them, and to teach appropriate alternatives.
3. In some situations however, RPI can also be seen as a form of comfort and reassurance. Pupils on occasion can become very distressed at their own lack of control and can become calmed and reassured by the RPI. The level of RPI to be used is that which is reasonable to convey security and reassurance.
4. RPI should only be used when required by prevailing circumstances and never as part of a general regime.
5. When RPI is required the level employed should be the least restrictive required to prevent injury to the child, danger to others, or serious damage to property.

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6. It must never be used in anger.
7. **It is not a punishment.**
8. **It must not involve deliberately painful or dangerous procedures.**
9. All incidents involving RPI must be logged on Sleuth with the staff member who actioned the hold completing the report.
10. Parents must always be informed when RPI has been employed. The Office Manager ensures that the Sleuth database is checked daily for RPI reports and a letter for parents is sent to the Head teacher to be signed.
11. The Office Manager when completing the written report to parents should also complete the basic details on the 'Pupil De-Brief sheet' and sent it to the Headteacher with the parental letter for completion. The Headteacher will decide which staff member should complete the de-brief, but they should not be a staff member that was involved in the RPI. The records of pupil de-brief should be held in the individual pupil file and any actions emailed to relevant staff.
12. Whenever possible, assistance should be requested before there is a need to resort to RPI. This can be made using a 'STAFF HELP' code over the school radio followed by the location of the incident
13. Staff must apply **only** a reasonable level of intervention, They must:
 - a) Avoid interference with breathing, blood supply or genital areas.
 - b) Avoid holding throat, neck or fingers. When limbs are being held, areas around joints must be avoided. These areas are vulnerable to forceful pressure.
 - c) Avoid arousing sexual expectations or feelings.
14. When it is necessary to lower a pupil to the ground to safely hold them, care must be taken to avoid injury either to the member of staff or the pupil.
15. Staff should not hold if on their own unless a dynamic risk assessment deems it absolutely necessary, or do not feel capable of holding that child safely without further staff support. All staff members must be prepared to offer support.
16. If a member(s) of staff are involved in RPI with a pupil, other members of staff should ask whether support is needed by offering 'HELP AVAILABLE'. It is good practice amongst staff to offer 'HELP AVAILABLE' support even when a RPI is appears to be de-escalating. Staff must never use RPI with a pupil if they feel angry. If supporting staff feel that the staff member needs step away from the incident of RPI then the command of 'MORE HELP AVAILABLE' will be issued. This is a prompt for the staff member to leave immediately as they are escalating rather than de-escalating the incident.

There are also a number of other options available before a full RPI takes place.

1. **Obstructing**

i.e. Use of staff member's physical presence, without touching, to obstruct an entrance or exit.

Used to create an opportunity for discussion.

To prevent the movement of a pupil to an area that could elevate the risk of harm to the pupil and/or staff member.

Is a form of passive control, should be unhurried and non-threatening.

2. **Reassuring contact**

i.e. Safe hug may be seen in the context of caring for pupils, a means of showing affection, providing a sense of security, and offering comfort in distress.

When a pupil has been distressed a calming period of physical contact may be appropriate.

Dependent on the pupil's developmental level it could take the form of an arm round the shoulders, or a gently holding of arm or hand.

Staff should be aware of their own vulnerability to accusations of inappropriate physical contact and should avoid places which have no open access.