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# Restrictive Physical Intervention Guidance Policy

**HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST, AMERICAN LANE,  
HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE PE29 1TQ**

**DOCUMENT CONTROL**

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# **Restrictive Physical Intervention Guidance**

## Contents

- 1.** Introduction to RPI
- 2.** Planning use of RPI
- 3.** Recording RPI
- 4.** Behaviour expectations
- 5.** Acceptable RPI
- 6.** RPI definition
- 7.** Justification for RPI
- 8.** Who is authorised to use RPI?
- 9.** Developing an individual risk management / behaviour plan
- 10.** Recording form.

## **1. Introduction to RPI Guidance**

This guidance has been written to enable Academies with Horizons Education Trust to transition to Cambridgeshire Therapeutic Thinking and support of pro-social behaviour. Until staff have completed training for Therapeutic thinking, this Policy will apply across all Academies. This policy has been created by all Head Teachers for Horizons Education Trust.

**Terminology:** We use the term RPI to mean a restrictive physical intervention incident.

## **2. Planning use of RPI**

Staff will use the DFE document on reasons to use reasonable force, and the use of their professional judgement.

When it is possible, staff will follow a planned response, detailed within a Behaviour Support Plan as part of risk management.

Staff will keep behaviour under review, and a series of behaviour risk logs and analysis of a pupil behaviour (**or one** unplanned serious incident), and use of RPI, should provide information to demonstrate that the severity and frequency of behaviours enabling staff to prepare a planned intervention response for a child.

It is the professional judgement of staff to determine whether physical force is necessary and to be able to explain the DFE guidance of reasons when physical force is reasonable.

Staff will be supported to recognize there is a difference between physical contacts which are non – restrictive, and use of touch (use of staff to guide and escort), and RPI which is restrictive.

Since physical intervention can become traumatic for all involved, and also for the pupils and staff who might witness such an incident, it is a last resort when de-escalation has either been exhausted or direct intervention from staff will prevent injury, damage to property or to maintain good order.

RPI should only be planned where there is clear and appropriate evidence of risk to immediate harm that cannot be mitigated through analysis, planning and practice. It should be strictly limited to supporting an individual's agreed risk management / behaviour plan unless a situation in the professional judgement of staff determines that reactive RPI is required for safety.

The Trust will transition to training that supports the Therapeutic Thinking approaches and training from Cambridgeshire Local Authority. Until this is securely in place the Trust will use this policy.

We expect Academies to develop individual risk management / behaviour plans, consideration will be given to approaches appropriate to each pupil's circumstance

following an audit of their behavioural needs.

Academies will complete an audit of need, the number of staff necessary will receive training in RPI techniques necessary to maintain safety, using the Cambridgeshire Therapeutic programme. Once there are sufficient trainers and staff trained the Trust will stop the transition phase and amend Policy to adhere to any new requirements. If a pupil is identified for whom it is felt that RPI will likely be needed, then an individual risk management plan will be completed. This plan will help the pupil and staff to avoid difficult situations by understanding the factors that influence the behaviour and identifying the early warning signs that indicate foreseeable behaviours that may be developing. Should there be no reduction in the dangerous behaviours with a regularly reviewed plan in place, then the Head Teacher can request RPI training from an accredited trainer in the Trust.

The plan will include:

- Involving parents/carers and pupils to ensure they are clear about what specific action the Academy may take, when and why
- A risk assessment to ensure staff and others act reasonably, consider the risk and learn from what happens

#### **The principles which must be followed:**

1. A distinction will be maintained between the use of a one-off intervention which is appropriate to a particular circumstance, and the repeated use of it as a regular planned intervention with a specific pupil.
2. Physical contact is never used as a punishment or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited.
3. Physical contact will not be made with the participant's neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, and no pressure will be put on joints.
4. Should a pupil appear to enjoy physical contact this will not be sought via RPI. If a child has a profile where they seek sensory pressure, there should be a written plan agreed before provision. Sensory pressure should never be restrictive.
5. Escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it is likely to make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable.
6. The age, understanding and competence of the individual pupil will always be taken into account.
7. RPI will never have a negative impact on the process of the pupil's breathing.
8. The pupil will never feel pain as a direct result of the technique employed.

**REMINDER:** RPI will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the criteria for its use are met:

1. To prevent a child from injuring self
2. To prevent a child injuring other
3. To prevent or stop a child from causing damage to property
4. To maintain good order in the Academy

**The parameters allowing the intervention are as follows:**

- Staff will only use RPI when there is professional judgement there are grounds following a dynamic risk assessment, that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the pupil's and/or other pupils' best interests for staff to begin RPI.
- Staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for RPI through dialogue, scripts, de-escalation and diversion.
- The pupil will be warned, at their level of understanding, that RPI will be used unless they cease the unacceptable behaviour.
- Only the minimum force necessary will be used for the minimum amount of time.
- As soon as it is safe, the RPI will be relaxed to allow the pupil to regain self-control.
- Staff will be able to explain the action taken and the justification using the DFE guidance / reasons for reasonable force.
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of a witness if circumstances allow.

Academies will have a culture to discuss RPI in difficult and challenging circumstances without recrimination to staff, and encourage a self – referral processes for support and offer support to staff after an incident has occurred.

**The following will need to be considered:**

- Techniques for managing the pupil's behaviour i.e. strategies to de-escalate a conflict and using positive language phrasing or planned scripts.
- Ability to identify at which point an RPI may need to be used.
- Ensure staff know the Academy expectations. Whenever possible it is best that these staff are well known to the pupil.
- Ensure the Academy has a system to summon additional support.
- Identifying training needs of all staff and develop evaluation of lessons learned as part of safeguarding culture.

**The Academy may also need to take medical advice about the safest way to intervene physically with a child.**

RPI Training will be delivered as part of transition by fully trained accredited for Cambridgeshire Therapeutic Thinking. Each training session delivered will be recorded on the Cambridgeshire database. Medical needs will be a consideration for the preparation of a RPI plan.

**3. Recording RPI**

The use of RPI, whether planned or unplanned (reactive), must always be recorded as quickly as practicable (within 24 hours of the incident) by the person who was at the start of the incident. A form should be completed and copy provided to the Head Teacher. The written record should include:

- The names of the staff and child or young person involved
- Measures taken to avoid RPI
- Describe what the staff person did and in brackets the DFE justification.
- The date, time and the duration of the RPI
- Whether the child or young person or anyone else experienced injury and, if they did, what action first aid action was taken and separate record
- Arrangements for reviewing risk management plans / behaviour plans

#### **4. Behaviour Expectations**

We believe that pupils need to be safe, know how to behave pro-socially and know that the adults around them are able to manage them safely and confidently.

The use of restrictive physical intervention (RPI) will only be needed for a very small minority of pupils who demonstrate aggressive or violent behaviour. On such occasions, staff will use professional judgement to determine their actions and DFE reasons for justification for use of reasonable force.

All staff have a responsibility and duty of care to operate an effective behaviour policy that encompasses preventative strategies for supporting aggressive and dangerous behaviour in relation to the whole school, each class and individual pupils.

All school staff will receive training to feel that they are able to manage behaviour that challenges and have an understanding of what anti-social behaviours children might be communicating.

Staff need know that their actions in terms of professional judgement will be supported and overtime train to gain wider experience about when to intervene to prevent escalation and potential risk to others to prevent injury.

##### **Difficult behaviour**

Behaviour that is anti-social, but not dangerous. It should be acknowledged in terms of context: "*Child is shouting out which is difficult within a group teaching activity.*"

##### **Dangerous behaviour**

Behaviour that is anti-social and will predictably result in imminent injury or harm. This includes harm to self or others, damage to property or threat to others and disruptive to learning and good order.

Evidence of severity and frequency of outcomes will be analysed by staff to determine

a planned response as guidance to staff, pupil and parents.

## 5. Acceptable RPI

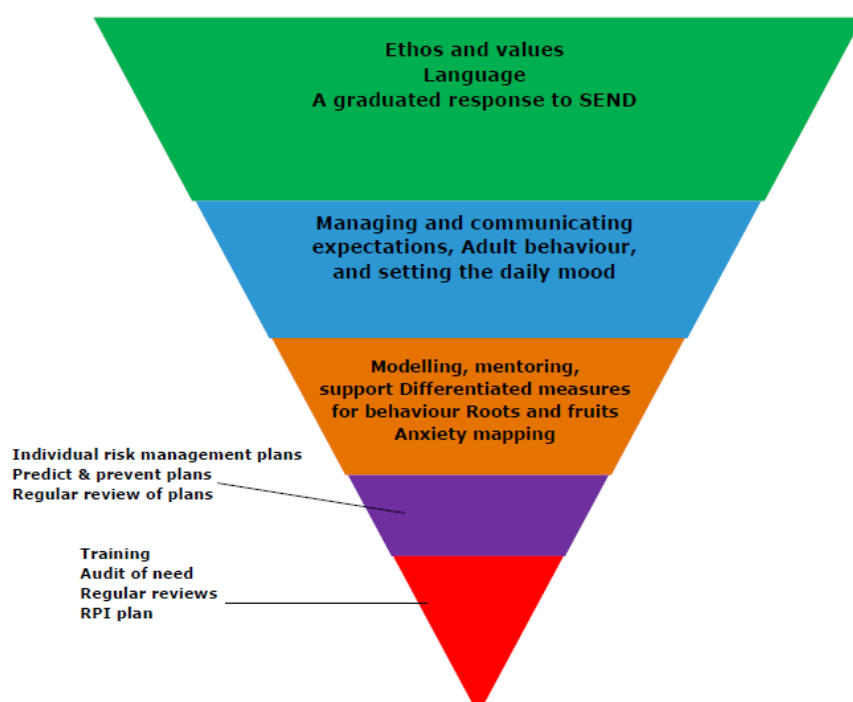
There are occasions when staff may have cause to have physical contact with pupils for a variety of reasons:

- Physically separating a child from others
- Managed move/guide
- Comforting a child (sensory touch)
- Steering, guiding or escorting a child
- Comforting a pupil in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age)
- Averting danger to pupil /s or staff in an emergency.
- In rare circumstances, restraining a child by use of RPI.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and pupils takes place, staff must consider:

- Immediate threat and risk posed
- Risk of not using RPI if this can prevent injury
- The pupil's age and level of understanding and SEN
- The location where the contact takes place

The pyramid below represents a graduated process of intervention for behaviour. The majority of pupils in the Trust will have their needs catered for at the lower end of the pyramid:





## **RPI DEFINITION:**

Restrictive physical intervention (RPI) is the term used to describe any method where the use of force to control a person's behaviour using bodily contact. It refers to instance in which staff authorised by the Head Teacher has to use 'reasonable force' to control or use restraint of pupils in circumstances that meet the following defined criteria:

1. To prevent a child from injuring self
2. To prevent a child injuring others
3. To prevent or stop a child from causing damage to property
4. To maintain good order

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force', though staff should consider:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it.
- The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

Seclusion is an approach to RPI which may only be **deemed acceptable in emergency situation**, for example, if a student is wielding a weapon and the Academy is awaiting Police immediate assistance.

## **When is it appropriate to use reasonable force and RPI?**

RPI may be used when all other strategies have been considered and therefore only as a last resort. However, there are other situations when physical handling may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain pupils may become distressed, agitated and out of control, and need calming with a brief RPI that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well-being of all staff and pupils are important considerations for staff professional judgement. Under certain conditions, such as preventing serious injury this duty must be an over-riding factor as part of the duty of care to a child and other children.

## **6. Who is authorised to use RPI?**

The Head Teacher will maintain a register of staff authorised to use RPI for the Trust. The Head Teacher may, at any time, remove that authorisation.

All staff employed at the Trust, who are authorised by the Head Teacher to have control of pupils, **must** be aware of this policy and its implications.

If the Head Teacher has placed an adult in charge of children for a regulated Academy activity, then that adult will be to use RPI using professional judgement using the DFE

reasons for reasonable force.

We take the view that staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and that removing other pupils and themselves from risky situations may be the right thing to do.

We value staff efforts to manage what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the pupils to maintain a safe environment for pupils.

***The Head Teacher should consider whether members of staff require any additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities and should consider the needs of the pupils in doing so.***

At times there may be a requirement to use RPI without a plan – this would be considered to be an **emergency situation**.

- Preventing a child running into road and oncoming traffic.
- Preventing immediate harm to self or others e.g., to prevent hitting or kicking.

Staff will be aware through support and training of 'reasonable force' and what is a 'proportionate and necessary response'.

After such an emergency incident, the staff member should be approached by a senior manager for a debrief. A plan should be made, or review of the risk assessment and behaviour plan, to mitigate against a recurrence of the situation which led to the RPI.

Trained or untrained staff have a duty to act in an emergency with unforeseeable risk of imminent harm to maintain health and safety.

All staff are authorised to use RPI under the direction of the Head Teacher, who may delegate these duties to Senior Managers in the Academy.

## **7. Individual risk management plan**

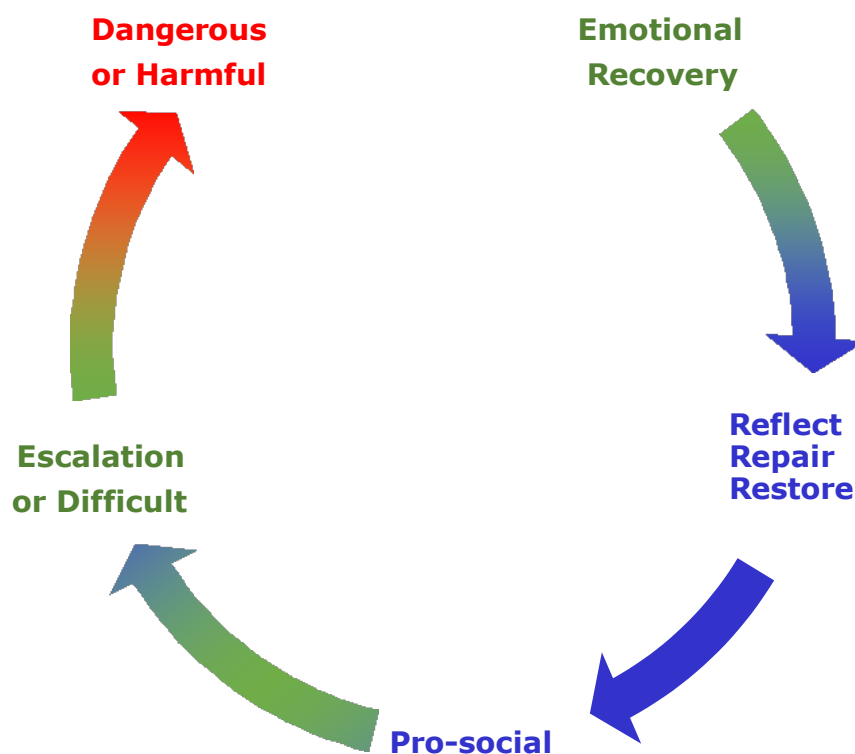
The behaviour policy plans for the majority of children. In addition, some children may require an individual risk management plan (Risk Assessment) to formalise strategies required for an individual pupil and their needs that differentiate from the whole-school policy.

When considering whether to complete a risk management plan (Risk assessment) for a pupil, staff should complete an analysis of each pupil behaviour, using a graduated response encompassing training from Therapeutic Thinking.

As part of the transition to this therapeutic thinking approach to behaviour the Head Teacher will ensure staff are trained to develop skills with early prognosis and identification of what needs are being met through the behaviour (what is the *function*

of the behaviour?), risk calculation to determine the seriousness and probability of behaviour, protective and educational consequences, conscious and subconscious behaviour analysis, anxiety mapping, predict and prevent planning and roots and fruits.

When writing a risk management plan, we expect staff to take into account planned responses for areas below:



We always ensure that the Reflect, Repair and Restore stage:

- Focuses on harm that has been done
- Considers how the harm can be repaired
- Looks at experiences, feelings and needs
- Plans to ensure conflict is less likely to happen in the future.

The plan is reviewed with staff, pupil and parent/carers as part of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) at a review.

The use of RPI, whether planned or unplanned, must always be recorded as soon as practicable (and in any event within 24 hours of the incident) by the person involved at the start of the incident using the Trust RPI form. The written record includes:

- The names of the staff and child or young persons involved;
- Describe actions taken by staff and in brackets the reason for using RPI and decision taken not to use non-restrictive strategies;

- the degree of force used, how that was applied, and for how long;
- the date, time and the duration of the whole intervention;
- whether the child or young person or anyone else experienced injury and, if they did, what action was taken.

**Governance:**

Trustees delegate the responsibility for the implementation of this policy in scheme of delegation to Governors for Academy Advisory Boards (AAG) to ensure they comply with their duties under DFE legislation and the law. They must also have regard to this guidance to ensure that the policies, procedures and training is effective.

The AAG safeguarding governor will have oversight and review the implementation of this policy. The Head Teacher will be responsibility for the Academy arrangements for RPI and this includes: staff training and development of a culture of moving towards a therapeutic climate at the Academy and report incidents of RPI within Head Teacher reports.

The nominated governor is:

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Complaints Procedure**

Parents can use the 'Complaints procedure' and if this is an allegation against a member of staff this must be reported to the Head Teacher, if it is the Head Teacher to the CEO or Chair of Trustees.

All disputes which arise about the use of force by a member of staff will be dealt with according to Safeguarding and child protection Policy.

The following guidance on complaints following a RPI is from page 7 of the DfE 2013

Document 'Use of reasonable force in schools' (ref: DFE-00295-2013):

## What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?

- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. Schools should refer to the “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff” guidance (see the ‘Further sources of information’ section below) where an allegation of using excessive force is made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.
- Schools must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.
- If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school should ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.
- Governing bodies should always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the teacher.
- As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that schools provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

**Staff** need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention.

**Parents** need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of an RPI, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

**Anti-social behaviour:** Behaviour that causes harm to an individual, a group, to the community or to the environment.

**Behaviour:** Everything a person says or does. The spectrum of behaviour goes from extreme pro-social to extreme anti-social behaviour. A behaviour policy should increase pro-social behaviour and reduce anti-social behaviours through planned responses.

**Consequence:** A logical, explainable response to a pro-social or anti-social behaviour. A consequence is a logical or natural outcome of something occurring earlier; a conclusion reached via reasoning. Consequences are designed to help children learn and develop pro-social behaviour transferable to all contexts.

**Consequence (protective):** Removal of a freedom to manage harm. They are necessary measures to manage the risk of harm that results from dangerous behaviours. Protective consequences limit freedoms

**Consequence (educational):** The learning, rehearsing or teaching so the freedom can be returned.

**Dangerous Behaviour:** That which is anti-social and will predictably result in imminent injury or harm (the level of injury and harm that constitutes the label dangerous should be defined within policy). This includes harm to self or others, damage to property or behaviour that would be considered criminal if the person was the age of criminal responsibility, such as racist abuse. Except within an unpredictable first manifestation, the behaviour described as dangerous will be supported by evidence of severity and frequency of outcomes such as 'Three children required first aid for minor bruising as a result of kicking'.

**Difficult Behaviour:** That which is anti-social, but not dangerous. Difficult behaviour should be acknowledged in terms of context: 'Daniel continually shouting out is difficult within a group teaching activity'.

**Dynamic Risk Assessment:** An assessment of risk based on all relevant factors available in the moment undertaken by an individual that needs to employ immediate and appropriate actions to manage the presented risk posed during an incident caused by dysregulation. This individual should train to employ appropriate actions (e.g., via Cambridgeshire Steps)

**Pro-social behaviour:** Relating to behaviour which is positive, helpful, and values social acceptance.

**Restrictive physical intervention (RPI):** Any method which involves some degree of direct force to try and limit or restrict movement (*Restraint Reduction Network 2019*).

## **Links to other Trust Policies:**

**Behaviour Policy**  
**Touch Policy**

**Safeguarding Policy**  
**Staff code of conduct**

Policy agreed on: MARCH 2024

Signed on behalf of the Trustees KIM TAYLOR

Committee: TEACHING, LEARNING AND WELFARE

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Website Y/N