

Catch22 College Policy

Prevention, De-escalation & Physical Intervention

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Catch22 reserves the right to amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

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1.0	16 th January 2025	Will Duke-Oddy - Quality & Curriculum Manager - OSH	New Policy Created
2.0	30 th October 2025	Liz Cole Head of Wellbeing & Safe Practice	Changes to reflect the 2025 draft guidance: Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools

1. What is the policy about?

This policy has been developed to outline best practice in relation to staff’s physical interventions with learners across all Catch22 College provisions, with a clear emphasis on reducing risk through prevention and de-escalation strategies, and recognising physical intervention only as a last resort when absolutely necessary, within the context of child protection procedures & policies and Government guidance. The policy is an essential part of Catch22 College’s commitment to create and maintain safety for all children, adults, the learning environment and property.

This Physical Intervention Policy:

- Promotes the Colleges’ primary focus of prevention and de-escalation to reduce the need for physical intervention
- Outlines Catch22 College’s rationale and expectations of using Physical Intervention with our learners.
- Sets out the legal framework regarding any physical intervention with learners in Catch22 College settings.
- Provides guidance regarding choosing when to physically intervene and which interventions staff are trained to use.
- Specifies the training and reporting procedures required by all staff.

2. Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all staff working within Catch22 Colleges, including teaching and support staff, senior leaders, and any external professionals operating within the college environment. It covers all instances where physical intervention may be considered, with a primary emphasis on prevention and de-escalation strategies. The policy applies to all learners, regardless of age, ability, or background, and aligns with safeguarding, equality, and duty of care responsibilities. It ensures that any physical intervention is lawful, proportionate, and in the best interests of the learner, while also prioritising staff training in de-escalation techniques. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies, including Safeguarding, Behavioural, and Health & Safety.

3. Policy Requirements

At Catch22 Colleges, the primary focus is on prevention and de-escalation to reduce the need for physical intervention. Staff are trained in a range of techniques to proactively manage behaviour and create a supportive learning environment. Prevention involves understanding the context and history of learners' behaviour, identifying potential triggers, and implementing strategies to minimise the likelihood of escalation. This may include structured risk assessments, support plans, consistent routines, and fostering positive relationships.

De-escalation techniques are tailored to the individual needs of learners and may include distraction, offering a change of environment, providing movement breaks, switching the staff member engaging with the learner, or removing immediate triggers where appropriate. However, it is also recognised that learners must develop resilience and coping strategies for real-world situations, and therefore, not all triggers should be eliminated. Staff will prioritise non-restrictive interventions, using verbal and non-verbal strategies to defuse situations and maintain a calm and safe atmosphere. Any instances where intervention is required will be recorded and reviewed to ensure continued improvement in our approach to behaviour support.

Physical Intervention with Learners Over 18

Physical intervention with learners over the age of 18 must be conducted in accordance with legal and safeguarding frameworks, ensuring that all actions are necessary, proportionate, and in line with the learner's rights. Under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, if a learner lacks capacity, any intervention must be in their best interests and follow the least restrictive approach. Staff have a common law duty of care to prevent harm but must respect the autonomy of adult learners, intervening only when there is an immediate risk to the individual or others. In all cases, physical intervention should be a last resort, with de-escalation techniques prioritised. If intervention occurs, it must be recorded, reported, and reviewed to ensure compliance with

safeguarding and legal requirements. Although, unlike with learners under 18, parental involvement is not required unless there is a safeguarding concern; reporting will follow the same process as learners under 18.

- Legal Basis:
 - Mental Capacity Act 2005 – If a learner lacks capacity, interventions must be in their "best interests" and follow the least restrictive option.
 - Common Law Duty of Care – Staff have a duty to prevent harm, but physical intervention must respect autonomy.
 - Equality Act 2010 – Protects learners from discrimination; interventions should not disproportionately affect those with disabilities or other protected characteristics.
- Key Considerations:
 - Adults have the right to refuse physical intervention unless they lack capacity or pose an immediate danger.
 - Incidents should be handled with the principle of "necessity and proportionality."
 - Recording and reporting remain essential.
 - Training should cover legal implications of intervening with adults, particularly regarding consent.

Policy Requirements

Rationale & Expectations

Physical contact is an important part of everyday human life. At Catch22 College we model positive behaviour and support our learners to interact with each other, staff and members of the community safely and purposefully.

Our practice is designed to meet the needs of our learners, many of them with recognised Special Educational Needs (SEN), extensive barriers for learning and/or experiences of failure and rejection in their previous settings.

Staff throughout our colleges are committed to creating and maintaining safe learning environments to both safeguard learners and maximise their sense of safety. However, at times, the difficulties of our learners to articulate and contain strong emotions will leave them dysregulated and could manifest as unsafe and harmful behaviour. At times, signs of safety and verbal interventions by staff will not suffice to reduce the risks and they will decide to use a physical intervention.

All relevant staff in our colleges are trained in Physical Intervention by an ICM (Institute for Conflict Management)/Bild ACT accredited provider. In addition, our ethos is underpinned by the Trauma Informed approach (as articulated by TISUK) and our robust reflective and quality assurance procedures.

It is expected that Physical Intervention is discussed and pre-agreed as part of a learner's Safety/Support Plans to guide any staff response in incidents of crisis and distress.

Any physical intervention must be deemed necessary, reasonable, proportionate and in the young person's best interest.

Corporal punishment is not permitted and is illegal in all circumstances; we prohibit and prevent **unsafe** physical interventions.

The Legal Framework – Use of Reasonable force, what it means and who can use it

- The Children's Act - staff will always follow the principles enshrined in this act, whereby the safety and wellbeing of children is paramount. Staff will act in accordance with the 'best interests' principle - honestly and in good faith to protect what they perceive is the best interests of the child/children (Legislation UK, 1989).
- Behaviour and Discipline in Colleges (DFE-00023-2014, 2016)
- Use of Reasonable Force (DFE 00295-2013, 2015)
- Improving Guidance on Managing Risk and Restraint in Children's Services (Bernard Allen, 2014)

'Harm' and 'welfare' are broad terms that include the physical, mental and emotional. In many cases staff members will be assessing different types of harm occurring simultaneously to ascertain the best way to intervene to safeguard the welfare of everyone in the learning environment. The decision to physically intervene is a professional judgement based on the dynamic risk assessment of staff members responsible for learners when an incident occurs. This decision will be based on this policy's guidelines and the circumstantial factors, in addition to being informed by the risks of using, or not using, physical intervention.

All members of college staff have a legal power to use reasonable force where necessary. However, it will only be used when the criteria outlined in this policy (including appendices) have been satisfied. Ultimately, a member of staff who takes the decision to use physical intervention in the best interests of the young person will be expected to be able to answer:

- Why was it necessary?
- How was it reasonable?
- How was it proportionate?
- Was it in the child's best interest?

'Physical intervention' is a distinct form of using reasonable force and is categorised in two forms of practice:

Planned Physical Intervention –

Individual learners assessed as likely to require planned physical intervention due to their specific needs will have specific strategies and techniques detailed in their Risk Assessments. These will be agreed in consultation with the college, parents/carers, and the learner and will be applied accordingly. Physical intervention to reassure, guide or prompt without resistance from the learner; in which a member of staff uses force intentionally for the purpose of containing and soothing a child's strong emotions, and/or where it is used to support a learner through reassurance and regulation at an early opportunity.

Emergency Physical Intervention

Physical intervention may be used only in exceptional circumstances and refers to the use of *reasonable force* — the minimum necessary and proportionate physical contact by a member of staff to control or restrain a learner's actions or movements to prevent harm. Any such intervention is a form of *restrictive intervention* and should only be employed when there is a real and imminent risk of serious harm to the learner or others, and after all appropriate prevention and de-escalation strategies have been attempted or judged unlikely to succeed.

Restraint means the deliberate application of force to restrict a learner's movement against their will, used only as a last resort when required to safeguard the physical safety of the learner or another person. Reasonable force must be applied for no longer than is necessary, be proportionate to the risk presented, and take into account the individual needs and vulnerabilities of the learner.

Staff should be aware that learners may resist physical intervention; such resistance should be acknowledged and addressed in debrief and behaviour reporting, but in serious risk situations it will not be considered an assault on staff acting appropriately within policy. All interventions must be recorded and reported in accordance with statutory and internal reporting procedures, and reviewed to support future prevention and reduction of restrictive practices.

Deciding to Physically Intervene

Physical Intervention: All staff (unless the Lead Teacher states otherwise) have responsibility for the learners, at all times, in college or elsewhere under the charge of a staff member, including times when on college visits and activities outside college. The choice to use physical intervention will be made with paramount consideration to the safeguarding and welfare of all learners, and visitors. All relevant staff members will be trained with specific physical interventions methods and building safety/de-escalation strategies. Staff will be able to demonstrate how their decision to use a physical intervention was necessary, reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

Any decision to physically intervene must consider the following:

- The learner's age, any special educational needs or disability, and any religious requirements affecting them in balance with any perceived harm they may be causing.

- The use of force must not compromise the learner's safety and must be relevant to the incident.

The college must make clear to learners and parents the reasons that led to a decision to physically intervene, both immediately and before the learner returns home wherever possible. However, a college does not require parental/carer consent to use reasonable force.

Staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring a learner. In those incidents, staff might physically intervene with someone who is actively:

- resisting, to prevent them putting themselves and others at risk of harm;
- resisting, in order to reduce risk of pain or injury;
- resisting, in order to prevent commission of an offence;
- resisting movement into a reduced risk environment;
- seeking to move into an increased risk environment

Physical intervention that is NOT safe

All staff are informed and supported to be fully cognisant of physical intervention that is an abuse of their position of power, invasive, or which could be confusing, traumatising and/or could be experienced as erotic in any way.

It is unacceptable for staff members to:

This list is NOT exhaustive

- Use physical intervention to meet their own needs and/or for their own reassurance;
- Use physical intervention as a form of punishment;
- Use physical intervention that replicates an element of a learner's traumatic past;
- Use physical intervention that the learner experiences as unwanted, uncomfortable, or invasive (except in the use of Emergency physical intervention where safety is paramount);
- Make contact in the following areas: genitals, chest/breast or bottom;
- Hold in order to obtain submission or dominance over the child/young person rather than to keep them and/or others safe.

Whilst more unlikely within a college setting, younger children or learners with complex needs may initiate a hug or a kiss between themselves and a member of staff as a genuine, instinctual demonstration of affection. It is the role of college staff to support young people to understand safety in physical contact and develop proportionate boundaries to keep themselves safe. Staff should withdraw from the situation, gently reminding the young person of their role and the right people to demonstrate their affection to in this way; Staff are expected to report any unsafe physical interventions they may witness immediately following the Catch22 Safeguarding, Managing allegations and Whistleblowing Policies.

When to Avoid Physical intervention

- When the adult has been triggered by the learner's behaviour and is dysregulated. It is impossible to contain and calm a dysregulated young person when the adult is not calm

and steady. Their dysregulation is likely to communicate itself to the young person and further exacerbate their sense of threat and danger.

- With learner's who are identified as sensitive to touch or are touch defensive e.g. young people with sensory integration/processing difficulties, ASC or traumatic associations with touch.

Quality Assurance and Accountability

- Risk assessments will be completed for all learners who present a valid risk.
- In cases of recurring incidents, learner's risk assessments will be reviewed (a change of provision might be considered) and re-shared with all relevant staff.
- All use of physical interventions will be debriefed and recorded, quality assured, monitored and analysed.
- A member of staff that has not been trained will be expected to physically intervene only as an emergency response, rather than as a planned response as might be detailed in the learner's risk assessment.
- Following a physical intervention, a process to repair relationship will be facilitated.
- Records will be counter-signed by a senior member of staff.
- The involved learners' experiences and comments should always be sought and recorded.
- Parents/carers will be informed of this policy and when staff have physically intervened with their child.
- Teachers/support staff will be introduced to the underpinning theory behind physical interventions.
- Staff members that feel unable to use physical intervention should discuss it with their line manager.
- Leadership teams (local & national) will monitor the use of physical intervention, to include consideration of both staff's and learners' frequency and volume of involvement in physical interventions.
- In the event of allegation against a member of staff in relation to physical intervention, senior leaders will support their staff in accordance with the statutory guidance outlined in the guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education and in Catch22's Managing Allegations Policy.

Recording and reporting incidents

All Physical Interventions will be recorded and reported as follows:

- The incident will be reported on CPOMS
- Any correspondence with parent/carers logged on learner contact logs.
- Any physical injury (to anyone involved) recorded on DATIX

The purpose of recording and reporting is to ensure that policy guidelines are followed, to facilitate quality assurance, provide records/data for monitoring/analysis, and to assist any future enquiry regarding a specific incident.

Incident accounts should be taken from the member of staff who undertook the physical intervention, the learner(s) involved, and any third-party witnesses.

Records will be completed after everyone has had time and support to recover, within 24 hours where medically possible and will include:

- The supportive strategies and intervention used to create safety & physical regulation;
- A brief statement of exactly what happened (during the PI);
- Any correspondence with parent/carer
- Will be signed and dated

Monitoring and Evaluation

A designated member of staff will review every Physical Intervention report with the relevant member of staff, taking account of the learner's voice, to confirm it was necessary, proportionate and reasonable; and will counter-sign the record to this effect. If the physical intervention is deemed otherwise, support and intervention for the staff member will be devised by the Lead Teacher, and where relevant will include the learner.

The College Leaders will regularly monitor and analyse the physical interventions records and reports. This will include the frequency and volume of the PIs; the proportion of interventions that are necessary, proportionate, and reasonable; the quality of the evaluations; the prevalence of meaningful learner voice; the overall number of incidents; which staff were involved; which learners were involved; and any other relevant aspect.

The Catch22 Governance Board will be informed of the number of physical interventions and analysis of their use on a termly basis.

Informing Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be informed that a physical intervention has occurred as soon as practical and, wherever possible, before the learner returns home. The contact will:

- Provide information regarding when and where the incident took place, which members of staff were directly involved (anonymised where necessary), why they decided physical intervention had to be used, what physical intervention was used, whether there were any injuries, and what follow up action has been/is being taken in relation to their child.
- Enable parents/carers to discuss the incident and their child's needs arising from it.
- Provide relevant information in the event of a parent/carer expressing a complaint and/or an allegation against a member of staff.

The welfare of learners is paramount and if the college believe a learner could come to harm as a consequence of a parent being notified, a judgement not to inform can be made by the Lead Teacher; whereby both the Local Authority and Catch22 College SLT will be notified. A learner's Social Worker will also be informed where there is one assigned.

Post Physical Intervention Support

Young people

Learners who have been involved in a physical intervention will be closely monitored to ensure their wellbeing, prevent retrigger into crisis, and support their integration to the learning environment.

Where such an incident has occurred close to the end of the learning day, it may be necessary for a learner to remain at college to ensure that the learner can be monitored.

It will be the responsibility of all members of staff involved in a physical intervention to check for injuries, supported where necessary by a trained first aider. Injuries will be reported to and recorded in accordance with the Catch22 College Health & Safety policy.

Adults

Initial support for staff after an incident will be available as part of the recording and debrief procedures; further support will be available and through the SLT or mental health first aider and in post incident clinical supervision support. It is critical that relational repair is facilitated between adult and learner. This may not be immediate but will involve the same adults that were party to the PI.

Related Policies

- **Health & Safety Policy**
- **Safeguarding Policy**

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Legal Framework

The current legal context and guidance is informed by the following documents

- DFE-00023-2014 Behaviour and Discipline in Colleges (updated 2016)
- DFE 00295-2013 Use of Reasonable Force (reviewed 2015) This document has been written to reflect the 2025 draft guidance: Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools
- Bernard Allen 2014 Improving Guidance on Managing Risk and Restraint in Children’s Services

DFE-00023-2014 gives college staff the legal right and power to use reasonable force in specific circumstances to prevent learners:

- committing an offence
- injuring themselves or others
- damaging property
- disrupting good order and discipline in the classroom.

DFE 00295-2013 defines the term ‘reasonable force’ to cover the broad range of actions used that involve a degree of physical contact with children and young people. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a learner to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child/young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. ‘Reasonable in the circumstances’ means using no more force than is needed. Where touch is used to support a child/young person through reassurance, regulation at an early opportunity it is legally deemed to be ‘physical intervention’.

Where the child/young person movement is controlled either through passive physical contact, such as standing between learners or blocking a learner's path, or active physical contact such as leading a learner by the arm out of a classroom, this is legally referred to as 'restrictive physical intervention'. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a learner under control and is used in extreme circumstances where the physical safety of the child/young person or another is in question. This is also referred to as 'restrictive physical intervention'.

DFE 00295-2013 permits all members of college staff have a legal power to use reasonable force when the situation satisfies the circumstances outlined above. This power applies to any member of staff at the college regardless of whether they have received training in restrictive physical intervention or not. It can also apply to people whom the Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of learners such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying learners on a college organised visit or where a professional from another agency is working with the child/young person e.g. therapist Further situations when physical intervention may be required include to

remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;

- prevent a learner behaving in a way that disrupts a college event or a college trip or visit;
- prevent a learner leaving the classroom where allowing the learner to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a learner from attacking a member of staff or another learner, or to stop a fight in the playground;
- restrain a learner at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.