



**PHYSICAL RESTRAINT  
& CONTACT POLICY  
(Children & Young People)**

# PHYSICAL RESTRAINT & CONTACT POLICY

JRH Support fully recognises the contribution it makes to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people (CYP). We recognise that all our staff have a full and active part to play in protecting CYP from harm.

JRH Support believes in promoting the social, physical and moral development of CYP, and recognises the importance of working within the framework for Every Child matters: Change for Children and the five outcomes outlined within it:

To Be Healthy

To Stay Safe

To Enjoy and Achieve

To Make a Positive Contribution

To Achieve Economic Well-Being

JRH Support understand the difficulties surrounding this area of safeguarding and are committed to providing care and support to both the CYP and our staff, whilst understanding the need for sensitivity.

## Physical Restraint

In exceptional circumstances, where there is immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force'. Before intervening physically, staff should wherever practicable, tell the CYP who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if they do not. If physical contact or restraint is required, only the absolute minimum force necessary should be used whilst maintaining a calm and measured approach. The staff member should continue to communicate with the CYP throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

JRH Support staff members should not put themselves at risk of injury. In these circumstances, the staff member should ensure the immediate environment is as safe as possible and leave the area to call for assistance. They should telephone the police if necessary. Until assistance arrives, staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally and try to prevent the situation from escalating.

## Types of Incidents

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate or necessary. These fall into two broad categories:

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is imminent risk of an injury

- Where there is developing risk of injury

Examples of situations:

- A CYP attacks you or someone else
- A CYP puts themselves in imminent danger, such as stepping off a pavement onto a busy road.
- A CYP becomes excessively threatening towards another person and prepares to throw something at them.

### **Application of Force**

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- Physically interposing between two CYP
- Blocking a CYP path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a CYP by the arm
- Shepherding a CYP away by placing a hand in the centre of their back

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force'.

Staff should **not** act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example:

- Holding a CYP by the neck or collar, or in a way that may restrict their ability to breathe.
- Slapping, punching or kicking
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up
- Holding or pulling by the hair or ear

- Holding face down on the ground

## **The Range of Interventions**

In the unlikely event of a staff member needing to use restrictive physical intervention, the following points should be noted:

- Restrictive physical intervention must be consistent with the concept of reasonable force
- The circumstances must warrant the use of force
- The degree of force employed must be directly proportional to the circumstances of the incident and the minimum to achieve the desired result
- Avoid causing pain or injury
- Avoid holding or putting pressure on joints
- In general, if you must hold someone you should ensure you hold long bones

Any member of staff involved in any incident that requires physical intervention must inform their line manager and complete a detailed incident report to help prevent a similar incident occurring in the future.

## **Planning for Incidents**

If JRH Support are aware that a CYP is likely to behave in a way that may require physical restraint, it will plan how best to respond to the situation.

JRH Support will endeavour to:

- Defuse the situation
- Involve the parents/carers to discuss strategies
- Brief staff to ensure that they know exactly what action should be taken and where appropriate provide training or guidance
- Ensure the environment is as safe as possible for all involved

## **Physical Contact**

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a CYP, parent/carer or observer. Touching CYP, including well-intentioned gestures, can if repeated regularly lead to serious questions being raised.

## **Where Physical Contact may be Acceptable**

There are occasions when physical contact with a CYP may be necessary, for example when supporting with physical care. There may also be occasions where a distressed CYP needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same CYP over a period of time.

Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel a CYP needs this kind of emotional support, and remember that wherever possible it should be provided by the child's parent/carer instead of them. Any physical contact should reflect the CYP's needs, age and level of maturity. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek the advice and guidance from their line manager.

## **General Guidelines**

As a general principle, staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with a CYP. There may be some CYP for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example some CYP may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background or special needs or because they have a history of abuse.

Where appropriate, staff should receive relevant information about these children, whilst ensuring that all matters of confidentiality and sensitivity remain of paramount importance.

In addition, there should be a common approach where staff and CYP are of different sexes. Physical contact with CYP becomes increasingly open to question as they reach and go through adolescence and staff should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.