Physical Intervention

(including restraint)

(Version 1.2)

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Authorisation

Date Ratified: January 2025

Signed By: Tricia Brabham
On behalf of school governors

Signed by: James Oakley
Headteacher

Review Date: January 2027

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Introduction

Definition of Reasonable Force:

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used to either control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School 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 the pupil.

When considering the use of physical restraint, two principles need to be taken into account:

- The duty of a member of staff to care for and protect the pupil.
- The rights and liberties of the pupil.

The school recognises the guidance given by the DfE in the document Use of Reasonable Force – advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies.' This policy must be read in conjunction with this document.

Avoiding the Use of Physical Restraint

The behaviour policy at Mendip Green Primary School is designed to prevent physical incidents from occurring. Our aim of creating a calm, well-ordered and secure atmosphere is the best insurance against incidents of aggressive confrontations.

If there are frequent incidents of restraint, or if a pupil is restrained on a regular basis, then certain aspects of staffing, organisation and the environment at Mendip Green Primary School would need to be challenged and examined.

The Conditions of Permissible Forms of Restraint

Staff working with children have a duty to safeguard their welfare. Sometimes, this obligation overrides a child's right not to be touched. The Education Act of 1996 and Use of Reasonable Force (DfE 2013) allows school staff to physically intervene if a pupil is:

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- causing (considerable) damage to property, including their own property.

- engaging in behaviour that prejudices good order and discipline in a classroom or elsewhere within a school or on an authorised school visit or out of school activity.

Staff are authorised to physically intervene in such circumstances and may be deemed negligent if they fail to do so. Examples of types of incidents:

- a pupil attacks another pupil or member of staff
- pupils fighting
- a pupil engaged in, or about to engage in, vandalism
- a pupil misusing dangerous materials or objects
- pupils running in a corridor in such a way that they may hurt themselves or others
- a pupil absconds from class or school (N.B. This only applies if a pupil could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school)
- a pupil places themselves in a place of physical or potential harm (including self-harm)

Using physical restraint is a last resort. Staff must ensure, and be able to demonstrate, that all other means have been exhausted. Physical restraint should never be used as a substitute for behaviour management.

If Mendip Green Primary School is aware of any pupil with needs that may result in behaviour where physical intervention may be necessary, then this will be included in any behaviour plan specific to the individual detailing how to respond (e.g. their Consistency Handling Plan – See Appendix 1). Plans should include staff training, communication with parents and agreed strategies amongst all staff on de-escalating a conflict.

Risk Assessment

Assess whether physical intervention will do more harm than good. Before physical restraint, consideration should be given to:

- Whether the other pupils can be removed from the area rather than restraining the child.
- The presence of a second member of staff to assist, supervise or witness
- The presence of other pupils and the effect they may have
- The scope to secure further assistance
- Spectacles, hearing aids, clothing worn by pupil
- Restrainer's capacity to remain calm
- Location of the restraint and any risks posed by surroundings
- Pupil's previous experience of restraint and their likely reaction
- Presence of any weapons

Staff should always adopt a calm approach. Restraint should never be used to punish, or out of anger or frustration.

Methods of Handling

Any restraint should use minimum force for the minimum amount of time.

Staff should (where possible) try to ensure that a staff member of the same gender is present during the incident.

All restraint should take place with a minimum of two members of staff.

The school will always seek in the first instance to engage a member of staff who is trained in physical restraint and positive handling when restraining a child. If only one member of trained staff is available a non-trained member of staff can be invited to support the physical intervention under their instruction.

In the event a non-trained staff member deems there to be imminent risk to pupils or staff, a dynamic risk assessment should be made and a safe physical intervention may be used. However, a trained member of staff should always be called immediately.

Physical handling should never be used to humiliate or inflict pain.

Staff must avoid touching sensitive areas.

During restraint, staff must:

- Not employ another pupil to assist
- Only move the restrained person for the safety of themselves and others (including staff) and for the shortest distance possible
- Avoid generating a fear of injury
- Continually offer verbal reassurance in a calm manner
- Give clear messages under what conditions the restraint will cease
- Monitor physical well-being

All staff have the right to defend themselves by physical means against attack (Criminal Law Act 1967 Section 3).

Follow-up Action

Physical restraint is upsetting for everyone. Once calm, it is important to explain why restraint was used and to defuse this and any potential further situation.

Any physical restraint must be logged by the member of staff on the appropriate form (see Appendix 2) and this form should be uploaded to CPOMS as soon as possible. Paper records should then be destroyed.

Parents should be informed as soon as possible.

The Senior Management Team and Governors have a duty to monitor logged incidents. If, after receiving the report of an incident, the Headteacher considers the school guidelines have been seriously breached and that further investigation is warranted, the incident should NOT be pursued, but action in accordance with Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures must be taken.

- The Headteacher or delegated person contacts the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and personnel advisor.
- Staff member advised to consult their Professional Association

Summary

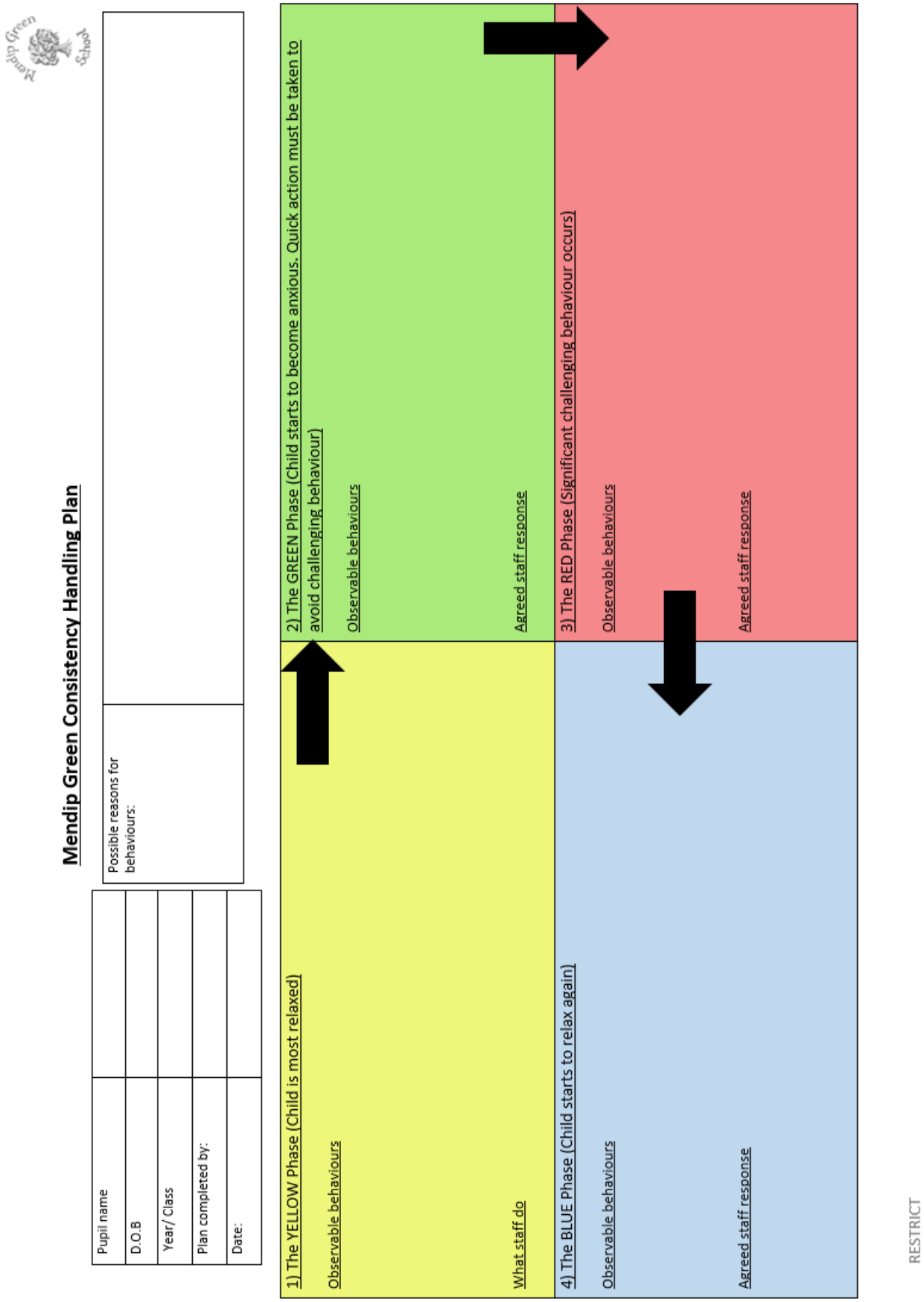
Physical intervention by staff might involve:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pulling or pushing a pupil away from danger
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- (in extreme circumstances) Using more restrictive holds

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

- Holding a pupil by the neck or collar
- Slapping, punching, or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a pupil
- Holding or pulling a pupil by hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground
- Touching or holding a pupil in any way that might be considered indecent.

Appendix 1: Consistency Handling Plan



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Appendix 2: Use of Physical Intervention Report

	Use of Physical Intervention Report
	Name of pupil:
	Name of staff involved:
Date:	Where did the Incident take place?
Time:	
Why was physical intervention necessary?	
What happened before the use of physical intervention was necessary? (Explain de-escalation strategies used)	
Where there any injuries to either party? (Ensure these are appropriately documented via accident books)	
Was any medical intervention required (If yes, please document exactly what and by whom)?	
Child checked over by qualified first aider? Yes/No	
Who informed the parents/carers?	
How were the parents/carers informed?	
Have all staff involved debrief?	
What would the learning be for next time?	
Signed:	Date:
Name:	Role: