



## Shear Soccer

### Behaviour Reasonable Force and Safe Handling of Children Policy

#### Introduction:

Shear Soccer's vision as an alternative provision and sports provider, is to have every child achieving their greatest potential emotionally, socially and academically. Shear Soccer policies and procedures work to keep all adults and children safe and provide firm boundaries and limits as well as setting out the consequences that follow breaking them. Parents, students allocated schools/agencies will be kept informed about breaches of rules as per the Behaviour Support Policy and always when physical intervention has been necessary.

Shear Soccer aims to promote positive behaviour by treating everyone connected with the provision with dignity, respect, equality and fairness always; by creating a trauma informed, safe and secure environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination; by ensuring that users are free from exploitation and abuse. Staff recognise that the use of reasonable force is only one of the strategies available to secure student safety and wellbeing in the case of rare instances where there are no other choices. Shear Soccer does not support the widespread use of restraint as a means of control, discipline or behaviour management and the directors take it seriously, with the utmost importance, to ensure that it is only ever used when there is no other alternative. All directors highly recommend that no restraint is ever used without witnesses present and is only ever used as a last resort. All staff are made aware that any incident of restraint will be questioned with this in mind.

Our policy on physical intervention should therefore be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Support Policy and Safeguarding Policy. When reasonable force and the manual handling of a student is necessary to keep themselves or other students and adults around them safe from harm.

Reasonable force and safe manual handling are used only as a last resort in extreme situations.

*Notes: The 2002 Joint Guidance applies whenever restrictive physical intervention is used. The legal framework is set out in the following legislation: Offences Against the Person Act 1861, The Children and Young Persons Act 1933, Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, Violence at Work 2003, Manual Handling Regulations 1992, The Children Act 1989, Disability Rights Act 2001, The Children Act 2004, Section 93 Education & Inspection Act 2006, Section 45 Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified 1991), Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 and the Human Rights Act 1998.*

## **Using Reasonable Force**

Physical intervention should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him/her/them or others. It is only likely to be needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour. It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical intervention would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the categories below.

- To protect every person in the Shear Soccer community from harm.
- To protect all students against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful.
- To protect vulnerable young persons from physical assault and the infliction of serious harm.
- To protect oneself from physical assault and the infliction of serious harm.
- Physically intervene if a child is at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts. Only if this is an analysed/recorded risk and is contained in an individual risk assessment.
- To provide adequate information and training for staff so that they are clear as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour and to deal effectively with violent or potentially violent situations.
- Any member of staff who has used reasonable force must inform the Safeguarding Designated Lead who will then inform parents and their school of the use of force and the full extent of the situation.

Staff should be aware that when they oversee children, they are acting in loco parentis and should, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure students safety and wellbeing.

Shear Soccer staff have the legal power to use reasonable force within strict criteria, to prevent severe injury of staff, the public and the young person/s. However, this is an absolute last resort, and staff will use PACE and a trauma informed approach to prevent situations from escalating.

Failure to physically intervene in a situation or with a young person who is subsequently injured or injures another, could, in certain circumstances, lead to an accusation of negligence.

Alternative Strategies to Prevent and De-Escalate Behaviours that Precipitate the use of Physical Intervention.

There are some situations in which the need for physical intervention is immediate and where there are no equally effective alternatives e.g. if a student is about to run across a road. In many circumstances, there are alternatives e.g. use of assertiveness skills such as

- repetition until the student complies
- withdrawal of attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened
- techniques designed to defuse the situation, such as the avoidance of confrontation, or the use of humour (in these cases the incident can be dealt with

later when emotions are no longer running high).

- the employment of consequences consistent with the Behaviour Support Policy
- the use of space e.g. changes to the environment, moving around
- the use non-confrontational stance and posture including facial expressions and intonation.
- giving simple positive messages reinforcing any positive behaviour.

### **Physical Contact**

It is not illegal to touch a child. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a child, is proper and necessary (please see the Safe Touch Policy for more in-depth information). Physical Interventions should account for 5% or less of all interventions.

Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical intervention, although there is no absolute definition of this, as what constitutes reasonable force depends upon the situation and the student to whom it is being applied.

At Shear Soccer, we believe that touching a child might be proper or necessary when

- holding the hand of the child when walking together
- comforting a distressed child
- a child is being congratulated or praised
- demonstrating how to use a tool for any activity
- demonstrating techniques during crafts or swimming activities
- to give first aid.

### **Training**

*To be updated after the completion of whole staff Dynamis training.*

Control: Either passive physical contact, such as standing between children or blocking a child's path to approach danger, or active physical contact to lead a child away from danger.

Restraint: To hold back physically or to bring a child under control. It should only be used in more extreme circumstances which can result in death or serious injury. The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional and experienced judgement of the staff member/s concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. Staff will be required to justify their actions and record incidents after a comprehensive debrief and a case-by-case assessment made by the DSL and the director.

### **Manual Handling of Children**

We recognise that staff need to carry out manual handling, especially in relation to lifting children. A variety of injuries may result from poor manual handling and staff must all be aware of and adhere to this policy. We instruct all staff in correct handling techniques and expect them to follow these to minimise the risks of injury as lifting and carrying children is different from carrying static objects.

### **Preventing injuries**

As with other health and safety issues, we recognise that the most effective method of prevention is to remove or reduce the need to carry out hazardous manual handling.

Wherever possible, we review the circumstances in which staff must carry out manual handling and re-design the workplace so that items do not need to be moved from one area to another.

Where manual handling tasks cannot be avoided, we carry out a risk assessment by examining the tasks and deciding what the risks associated with them are, and how these can be removed or reduced by adding control measures.

All staff should consider the following:

- The tasks to be carried out
- The load to be moved (including moving children)
- The environment in which handling takes place
- The capability of the individual involved in the manual handling

We expect staff to follow guidance when carrying out manual handling or reasonable force to reduce the risk of injury to themselves and others.

### **Actions after an incident**

Physical intervention often occurs in response to highly charged, emotional situations and there is a clear need for debrief after the incident, both for the staff involved and the student. The director and the DSL should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the staff should always be involved in debriefing the student involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern, it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of an Individual Behaviour Support and Intervention plan or a Positive Handling Plan, which may include an anger management programme or other strategies agreed upon by the key staff members, the DSL and the director.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately on the Student Physical Intervention Report Form (see Appendix 1) and uploaded to My Concern. All sections of this report should be completed so that in the event of any future complaint a full record is available. A manager or the DSL will contact parents and the school and/or LA as soon as possible after an accident, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

The information will be discussed with a manager and a DSL and the staff member will then be given a debrief.

Information will be recorded on the My Concern online system and records will be kept of the incident.

All agencies and allocated schools of the students will also receive the report and incident log, alongside any further updates.

Student risk assessments and activity risk assessments (where applicable) will be updated.

## Risk Assessments

If we become aware that a student is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises in an Individual Calming Plan/Personal Risk Assessment. Such planning will address

- management of the student (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict, which holds to be used if necessary);
- involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action Shear Soccer might need to take and contribute from their experience
- briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance);
- identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate.

## Complaints

A clear physical intervention policy, adhered to by all staff and shared with parents, should help to avoid complaints from parents. It is unlikely to prevent all complaints, however, and a dispute about the use of force by a member of staff might lead to an investigation, either under disciplinary procedures or by the Police or social services under child protection procedures.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed yearly by the directors and the DSL.

## Appendix 1: Student Physical Intervention Report Form

Student Name: D.o.B:
Member(s) of staff involved:
Adult witnesses to physical intervention:
Student witnesses to physical intervention:
Outline of event leading to physical intervention:

Outline of incident of physical intervention (including physical intervention method used):

Outcome of physical intervention:

Date Parents Informed:

***I have read a copy of Shear Soccer 'Reasonable Force and Safe Manual Handling Policy' and I agree to staff carrying out 'Reasonable Force and Safe Manual Handling' on my son/daughter when and if necessary.***

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of child:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date	Name	Actions	Next Review
16/02/2026	Adam Shearer	Review of policy, updates completed where deemed necessary.	16/02/2027