HERD THYME

Physical Restraint Policy

Policy Overview:
Herd Thyme is dedicated to providing an environment of learning with emotional, mental and physical wellbeing a priority for all students, as well as the welfare of our staff. The policy clarifies when and how physical intervention may be used to safeguard students and staff.

Herd Thyme understands that physical touch is an important part of human relationships, we use touch to reassure, guide, comfort and prompt but it must also be appropriate. In order for touch to be acceptable they need to be:

- In the best interests for the student (e.g. providing first aid or encouragement)
- Non-abusive, with no intention to cause harm, pain or injury
- Have clear educational purposes (to encourage learning, whether academic or personal growth)
- Guided by gender issues (e.g. being aware of male-female interaction)

All staff are made aware of any student that have issues with physical touch, whether that comes from cultural background, personal history, sensitivity, etc.

Legal Basis:
The law allows authorised adults to use reasonable force to prevent a student from:

- Committing a criminal offense.
- Causing harm to themselves, others, or property.
- Disrupting good order and discipline.

Guidelines for Staff:

- Staff should act when necessary but must follow policy and guidance.
- Any intervention should be justifiable to professional colleagues.

Herd Thyme staff members know to **only** use physical restraint when all other procedures to manage behaviour have failed and the student is an obvious danger to themselves or others.

Definition of Terms:

- **Handling:** Any physical intervention necessary to manage student conduct or ensure safety. Strategies can be restrictive or non-restrictive, including shepherding, guiding, supporting, blocking, confining, holding, or, in extreme cases, restraining.
- **Use of Reasonable Force:** The application of appropriate and proportionate force required to carry out a handling strategy safely without further endangering the student, staff, or others.

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- **Restraint:** The positive application of force to actively prevent a child from causing **significant injury** to themselves or others or from seriously damaging property.
    - *Significant injury* includes actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, reckless behavior endangering lives, or self-poisoning.
    - Any use of restraint must be justified by strong indicators that **immediate action was necessary** to prevent significant harm.

Implementation of Physical Intervention:

- All staff working with students are authorised to handle, use reasonable force, or restrain students if necessary.
- No staff member is required to use physical intervention if they are not comfortable or confident in doing so effectively.
- All relevant staff will receive initial training and annual refresher training on physical intervention.
- **Assessing the Situation:**
    - Staff should not intervene if they believe it will worsen the situation.
    - Adult assistance should be requested before intervention, though immediate action may sometimes be required.
    - Students must be given an opportunity to change their behavior before any physical intervention is applied. Staff should continue to give clear instructions during the process.
- **Use of Force:**
    - Minimum reasonable force must be applied for the shortest necessary duration (further guidance is provided in Appendix A).

Physical Intervention

There are two types of physical intervention, restrictive and non-restrictive. Both can either be classed as unplanned/emergency interventions, where something will happen in unforeseen circumstances, or planned interventions, where staff have strategic plans in place ahead of time.

Restrictive refers to any action taken meant to restrict movement. That can be movement of the body but also mechanical, chemical or environmental. For example:

- Holding/containing the body
- Manouvering/escorting
- Blocking escape routes
- Isolating
- Full restraint

This type of intervention carries greater risk and would have greater need for justification.

Non-restrictive refers to interventions where the student can move away if they wish to, such as:

- Physical presence
- Non-verbal prompts
- Physical prompts
- Guiding

Authorisation

Unless specifically instructed by the Director, e.g, in an emergency where there is risk of harm to a student, staff should only use physical restraint if they have had the correct training. Parents, volunteers and visitors do not have authorisation. Staff from referring agencies should have their own policies and procedures in place, which should be shared with Herd Thyme.

Training

Training for staff will be given if deemed necessary by the Director of Herd Thyme. All staff retain the right to safeguard students and themselves.

Recording Physical Intervention

All incidents where staff feel that they have used force to modify behaviour or conduct should be recorded. It is not necessary to record every incident of contact with a child, but where a member of staff perceives that contact has been received at all negatively, they are advised to record the circumstances.

Intervention Recording Forms are available in the staff room and should be submitted to the designated safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Safeguarding. The student's parent/guardian will be informed of the intervention that has taken place.

It is the responsibility of the intervening member of staff to complete the record form on the day that the intervention took place.

The circumstances and nature of the physical intervention will be held on the record of the student involved.

The Head of provision/DSL will inform any necessary agencies/authorities of the physical intervention in accordance with DFE and LA guidance. The Head of provision/DSL will ensure that parents/carers are appropriately informed.

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For the safeguarding of both staff and student, any subsequent investigation of the situation/incident should be undertaken by a member of staff other than the one applying the physical intervention. If the Director or DSL is the one being investigated then

Risk Assessment

Staff should be familiar with the risk assessment relating to physical restraint.

Complaints

Any complaint will be considered in relation to Safeguarding policy and the procedures within. If these procedures are not appropriate then Herd Thyme's complaint policy will be followed.

APPENDIX 1

Confirmation of Compliance – Herd Thyme Physical Restraint Policy

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the above policy.

Name ……..

Position Held ……..

Signed ……..

Date ……

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to the Proprietor for holding on file.