

<b>Manual:</b>	Foster Carers Handbook
<b>Title:</b>	Managing Behaviour (Prohibited Action and Physical Intervention) FCH/010
<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	17/09/2015
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## INTRODUCTION

Many children/young people may display some difficult and/or challenging behaviour. This behaviour is often a response to their previous experiences and the situation a child or young people find themselves in. This procedure sets out the position of Durham Fostering Service regarding physical restraint of children and applies to all carers and staff.

This procedure reflects the legislation and standards the Fostering Service must adhere to and the values set out in the Statement of Purpose including:

- Meeting children's needs to fulfil their potential
- Respecting young people
- Anti-discriminatory practice
- Consistent good quality care

## DEFINITIONS

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (Regulation 13 and Standard 3 of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards) states the Fostering Service shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- No form of corporal punishment is used on any child placed with a foster carer
- No child placed with a foster carer is subject to any measure of control, restraint or discipline which is excessive or unreasonable
- Physical restraint is only used on a child where it is necessary to prevent injury to the child or other persons or likely to cause severe damage to property.

### Definition of "Physical Restraint"

A method of direct physical force which limits or restricts the movement or mobility.

### Definition of "Physical Intervention"

Taking action to alert or move a child away from a hazard.

## TRAINING

Understanding and managing difficult behaviour is a skilled task. Training Foster Carers how to manage behaviour begins at the Preparation Training stage and continues throughout the foster carer's career as part of the extensive ongoing training package provided for carers. Most behaviour management training focuses on the use of rewards and positive reinforcement for good behaviour, as this has been found to be more effective than punishment for bad behaviour.

Training provided for carers is based upon de-escalation techniques using non-violent crisis management interventions. Training involves physical and situational safety and identifying potential threatening/escalating situations.

## **PRE-PLACEMENT/PLACEMENT PLANNING MEETING**

Aspects of a child/young person's behaviour will be addressed at the pre-placement/placement meetings and strategies will be discussed and agreed with the Child's Social Worker and Fostering Social Worker in respect of appropriate ways in which certain behaviours should be managed. The effectiveness of strategies will be monitored continuously and reviewed at Care Team Meetings and Looked After Reviews.

### **Prohibited Punishments**

Prohibited Punishments are any corporal punishment of any form (including slapping, hitting using hands or instruments, shaking, kicking, pulling hair) or any other forms of aggressive or threatening behaviour.

Also prohibited:

- Any punching or pushing in the heat of the moment response to violence from a young person.
- Deprivation of food and drink.
- Using the threat of/or restricting of family contact or restriction/delay in communication by post or telephone or other communication by post or telephone or other communication methods.
- Locking a child in a room or confined space or restraining device.
- Intentional deprivation of sleep.
- Any form of racism or discriminatory practice.
- Use of threatening/abusive/intimidating and/or demeaning language or gesture.
- Bullying of any kind.
- Any form of physical restraint other than physical intervention to prevent a child injuring himself, others or seriously damaging property or where there is significant likelihood of this.
- Intimately frisking/checking through the clothes worn by the young person.

### **In addition to the above we also prohibit the use of the following**

- Criticism of parents, relatives or friends in the presence of a child.
- The use of any measure which deprives the child of dignity e.g. 'send to Coventry', calling the child names.
- Any form of racist, sexist or other discriminatory practice directed towards the child.
- The removal of a child's clothing to prevent him/her running away.
- Any action designed to humiliate the child.

**NOTE: The above prohibited punishments and actions are not under any circumstances acceptable in reprimanding or disciplining a child. These actions are contrary to the principles of the fostering service and any such instances coming to light are required to be reported through the critical incidents safeguarding procedure and may be party to investigation under child protection procedures and possible criminal investigation.**

## **Behaviour Management Strategies**

### **Physical Restraint**

The Fostering Service does not advocate or facilitate the use of “physical restraint” as a behaviour management strategy within foster placements. The planned use of “physical restraint” as a response to potential challenging behaviour is inappropriate and will never be used as part of the safer caring family policy, placement plan or any other care planning documents or plans.

Identifying managing behaviour strategies from all risk assessments, information and children’s needs must be the primary focus in order to develop non-physical approaches to safer caring. The use of physical restraint techniques in domestic settings is unreasonable and impractical. An updated risk assessment will be undertaken by the fostering social worker in conjunction with the child’s social worker, foster carer and all relevant parties. The risk assessment will outline the behaviour management intervention required.

### **Corporal Punishment**

Foster Carers sign the SS147 Foster Carer Agreement and agree not to use corporal punishment on any child placed with them. Carers who have decided to smack their own children need to think carefully about the potential difficulties or dealing with two sets of children in different ways. Corporal punishment is defined as:

*"any intentional application of force as punishment, including slapping, punching, squeezing, shaking, throwing missiles and rough handling and all other humiliating forms of treatment or punishment. It would also include, punching or pushing in the heat of the moment response to violence from a child. It does not prevent a person taking necessary physical action, where any other course of action would be unlikely to avert an immediate danger of personal injury to the child or another person or to avoid immediate danger to property".*

### **When the physical intervention is required the following must be considered:**

Prevention is always the better strategy, however, before any physical intervention is considered, carers must consider:

- What will happen if they do nothing, or leave the area?
- If there is someone else who can intervene to reduce the need for physical intervention?
- Can the child/young person be distracted away from their intended action?
- Is there a root cause that may be addressed to negate the need for intervention?
- Can the situation be calmed by another course of action e.g. asking someone else to leave the vicinity or removing harmful object?
- Can the child/young person be deflected long enough so that they defer their actions, giving an opportunity to talk?

### **Self-Awareness in Physical Intervention**

- Carers may feel a whole range of human emotions when faced with a possible restraint situation.
- Some emotions will be positive and helpful, some negative and destructive.

**If your emotions effect your actions severely, move away and get someone else involved or phone for assistance.**

If physical intervention is unavoidable foster carers need to be aware of the following:

1. An attempt to physically intervene should only be made if there is a reasonable expectation that it is safe to do so.
2. Carers must be acutely aware of their surroundings before any intervention is made, the physical conditions, location, and the group around the event.
3. Under no circumstances should undue pressure be placed on the head or body.
4. Under no circumstances will the child/young person be placed face down on the floor.
5. Under no circumstances will child/young people be held in such a way that will impede their breathing or circulatory system.
6. Carers must only use acceptable forms of physical intervention which does not include hitting, striking, punching, nipping, strangling, biting or squeezing a young person.
7. Carers must have clear intentions of helping a young person regain composure and self-control when holding a young person.
8. Carers must be ready and able to withdraw any intervention as soon as the young person shows signs of resuming self-control.
9. Children/Young People must be afforded as much dignity as possible.

One of the advantages to carers of a no corporal punishment policy is the protection it affords carers against abuse allegations.

The legislation recognises that the Fostering Service and the foster carers have a “duty of care” to children and will safeguard their welfare of children. Not all physical action taken by the carer involving children is seen as physical restraint. In order to ensure the duty of care towards a child “physical intervention” may be appropriate to safeguard. Placing hands on a child to alert them or prevent an imminent danger such as approaching traffic should not be seen as “physical restraint” and would be an appropriate “physical intervention” upholding reasonable action to promote the foster carers duty of care towards the child.

### **Acceptable Forms of Managing Behaviour**

The Fostering Service recognises that there may be occasions when foster carers find a child's behaviour particularly difficult to manage. In these circumstances the following acceptable actions are advised:

- Restitution: Fixing broken items/tidying up/apologising.
- Reparation: Paying back or contributing towards the cost of repairs.

***NOTE: Any pocket money deductions must not exceed 2/3rd's of pocket money.***

- Restriction or Loss of Activities: For a time limited period.
- Grounding: Not allowing a child/young person out for a time limited period - but not restricting their liberty.
- Confiscation of any property which is considered dangerous or inappropriate: Subject to the child/young person's right to the return of the property when circumstances permit.

**When discipline is used it must be:**

- As soon after the event as possible.
- Relevant.

- Just and fair.
- Appropriate to the age, understanding, needs and circumstances of the young person.
- For a specified and time limited period.
- Reasons clearly explained to the young person.

It is very important to note that if there is any doubt about discipline the Fostering Social Worker and/or Social Worker must be informed and able to discuss this with the Foster Carer.

Any punishment or use of disciplinary measures must be recorded and discussed with the Fostering Social Worker/Social Worker as soon as possible after the event.

## **Crisis Management**

It is impossible to plan for every possible situation when caring for children. In some circumstances the agreed planned strategies when managing potential volatile behaviour may not provide an immediate positive outcome.

In crisis situations emotions can run high, keeping calm in order to think through how to manage a situation is important. Resisting acting on impulse or frustration without regard to the potential consequences of any ill-considered action runs the risk of exacerbating the situation.

It is critical that Foster Carers are aware of their own emotions and feelings at times of crisis in order to ensure the safest possible outcome for the child and others. In circumstances for example where children are assaulting one another and serious injury may be likely and all reasonable action has not calmed the situation as a last resort “physical intervention” may be required. This action must be protective, with minimum force, for a minimum period of time and with continued attempts of verbal reasoning not aggressively carried out.

A carer should not attempt “physical intervention” unless they feel confident the action can be undertaken safely, and the action is likely to have a positive outcome.

The carer must always seek help and advice from another responsible adult or professional wherever possible.

## **Reporting Critical Incidents**

All critical incidents must be reported as soon as possible to the child’s social worker/line manager and Fostering Social Worker as soon as possible and the critical incidents safeguarding procedure must be followed. The incident should be recorded on the appropriate form, as well as recorded in detail on the carers recording sheets.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

[Critical Incident and Notifiable Events Reporting and Recording Procedure](#)

Foster Care Agreement