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**For further information visit our website
www.safeguardingwarringtonchildren.org.uk**

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Warrington Safeguarding Children Board



CONTROL WITH CARE **The Dos and Don'ts of** **Physical Restraint**

This guide is intended to provide a checklist for professionals considering referring concerns about a child to Children's Social Care. For fuller information please consult child safeguarding procedures

Control with Care - The dos and don'ts of physical restraint

CONTROL AND RESTRAINT WITH CARE

It is acknowledged that managing challenging and unacceptable behaviour is difficult. In some serious situations, the use of physical restraint is used but only as a last resort.

SENSITIVITY AND SELF CONTROL ARE ESSENTIAL

Current legislation, local procedures and the UN Convention on the right of the child state; 'that the physical restraint of children should be avoided unless their behaviour is likely to cause immediate risk of harm. In such circumstances it must be the last course of action, when all other attempts to diffuse the situation have failed.'

All agencies within their internal Control and Restraint Procedures state that 'physical restraint should be an act of care and used with care, not as an act of punishment, discipline, or reactive aggression'. They should only be used 'to contain behaviours that are likely to cause immediate risk to the child and/or other individuals'.

When working with children who are displaying behaviour likely to cause harm always remember; Newton's Law, 'for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction'. Every act of physical restraint may have consequences for you as well as the child or young person.

Therefore, it is very important that you understand the procedures laid down by your agency, if in doubt about your role and responsibility speak to your line manager.

DON'TS

- **DON'T** make unnecessary physical contact with a child - this can sometimes be misrepresented.
- **DON'T** use physical restraint until an appropriate assessment of the situation has been made.
- **DON'T** use physical restraint in place of verbal persuasion.
- **DON'T** use physical restraint unless there is immediate risk to the child or other individuals.
- **DON'T** use physical restraint as a punishment.
- **DON'T** use physical restraint for longer than is absolutely necessary to make safe a situation.
- **DON'T** (where practicable) use physical restraint without another adult being present.
- **DON'T** speak quickly or loudly or give complex advice/instructions during an incident.
- **DON'T** use physical restraint without documenting the incident.

DO'S

- **DO** make sure you are fully aware of your own agency's policy and procedure on the control and physical restraint of children.
- **DO** remember that it is your responsibility to follow the procedure and document the incident carefully.
- **DO** ensure that wherever possible de-escalation methods should be used to prevent the need for restraint.
- **DO** (where practicable) try to secure the presence of another member of staff before applying restraint.
- **DO** seek to minimise movement as quickly as possible.
- **DO** if possible hold the young person's clothes instead of skin.
- **DO** focus upon helping the young person regain control and behave safely.
- **DO** be sensitive and alert to the young person's verbal communication and body language during the restraint so that control can be given back to the young person as soon as possible.
- **DO** offer sensitive support to the young person following the restraint and ensure that someone explains to him/her why the restraint was necessary.
- **DO** remember to write an account of the incident as soon as possible afterwards.