



Use of Force and Physical Restraint

The right to restrain pupils falls by statute, contract and common law within the teacher's duty of care. Any physical contact with another person may be construed as common assault; the test is one of reasonableness.

In addition to the teaching staff, the Head Teacher will also identify all people who are authorised to have control or charge of pupils and therefore be able to use reasonable force if necessary.

REASONABLE FORCE

The DfE suggests that the application of reasonable force may involve:

- physically interpose between pupils
- block a pupil's path
- hold (but never round the neck or collar)
- push
- pull
- lead a pupil away by the hand or arm
- shepherd a pupil away by placing your hand in the centre of the back
- in extreme cases (such as self defence) more restrictive holds

In our School any physical restraint used will always be the minimum needed. The following is a list of possible situations in which the use of reasonable force may be required:

- when a pupil attacks a member of staff
- when a pupil attacks another pupil
- when a pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism
- when a pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- when a pupil at risk absconds from class or tries to leave the school

All authorised people involved in an incident requiring physical restraint will report to the Head Teacher or senior member of staff.

The School will record all incidents involving physical restraint in writing (using the designated record) at the time including:

- the names of everyone involved, time and place and names of any other witnesses
- how the incident began and progressed with details of behaviour
- what everyone said, as near as possible
- what steps were taken to defuse the situation
- the degree of physical restraint used, how applied and for how long

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- the pupil's response
- the outcome
- details of any injury and of any damage to property
- ensure all parents/carers are informed immediately, orally or in writing and give them a chance to discuss the incident

All authorised people in the School will not:

- hold around the neck
- restrict a pupil's ability to breathe
- slap
- punch
- kick
- twist or force limbs against a joint
- hold or pull by the hair or ear
- hold facedown on the ground
- touch in a way that might be considered indecent
- use any other physical contact deemed to be unreasonable

Principles:

- it is better to defuse than intervene
- establish a code, which is an alarm call for help – 'Can I/you help?'
- drill everyone in leaving the classroom and, if necessary, the playground
- talk over episodes together, find out what you think might have been a good response in difficult situations – debrief following all incidents of restraint
- establish a culture of openness, don't hide behind a notion of professionalism. It is unprofessional not to report incidents

ON BREAKING UP A FIGHT

- remove non-combatants: violence thrives on witnesses
- don't put yourself at risk: alert colleagues, enlist their help
- assess a situation first
- be calm, don't take it personally
- use verbal intervention & distraction techniques first
- think about surprise and noise as more useful than force: a personal alarm may be much more effective than another body in the fray

SUPPORTIVE CONTACT

There are times in a non-restraint context when physical contact between a pupil and a member of staff may be deemed to be appropriate. These situations will be in a caring context when pupils need reassurance and support.

It is important that the member of staff assesses the "reasonableness" of their actions taking the following into account:

- the age of the pupil
- the severity of the distress of the pupil
- the knowledge of the individual child

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- the relationship that exists between the member of staff and the pupil

As with physical contact with pupils the level of contact used should be the minimum necessary to achieve the desired outcome.

Due care needs to be taken to ensure that this supportive contact is agreed and open with the circumstances in which this takes place are clear to all concerned.

The above assessments would equally apply to those situations that demand that a member of staff assist a child in their personal care.

Names of authorized personnel will be maintained on the Safeguarding Training Record, held by the Head Teacher.

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