



Restraint and Safe Handling Policy

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1.0 Introduction

In an emergency, staff very rarely may find it necessary to use physical restraint or reasonable force as a last resort. This policy is in place to explain what reasonable force is, who can use it, when they can use it and the follow up that should take place if it is used. The use of any force should only occur in exceptional circumstances.

This policy has regard to the document- [The Use of Reasonable Force - Advice for head teachers, staff and governors](#) - UK Department of Education July 2013.

2.0 What is Reasonable Force?

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used occasionally by some teachers at some point in their career, which involves a degree of physical contact with students.

In certain circumstances force can be used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as restraining a student to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

Controlling a student, as mentioned above, means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom.

Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

Staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the student. Staff should, however, never restrain a student by the neck or head. Three restraint methods are also banned – the double seated embrace, the double basket hold and the nose distraction technique.

Staff should **always** warn a student that they are going to use force before they do so.

3.0 Who Can Use Reasonable Force?

All members of the School staff have authority to use reasonable force. This applies to the teaching staff but also to all other staff of the School. This also applies to people whom the Executive Principal has temporarily put in charge of students such as voluntary helpers, unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on School organised trips.

4.0 When Can Reasonable Force Be Used?

Reasonable force can be used to control or restrain students in situations, to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

The decision on whether to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff

member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used;

- To remove disruptive students from the classroom where they have refused an instruction to do so.
- To prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts a School event or a School trip or visit.
- To prevent a student leaving a classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety or lead behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- To prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight.
- And to restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

As mentioned before, reasonable force should only be used after other methods have been tried to resolve the situation and a warning has been given to the student.

Force can never be used as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force for such a purpose.

5.0 Following Up the Use of Force

All incidents in which force has had to be used should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will report such incidents to the Executive Principal. A record of all incidents will be kept in the Safeguarding Lead's log.

The School will also communicate with parents should an incident occur that has required the use of force.

Relevant parents of students in the Early Years will be informed of any such event the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

6.0 Other Physical Contact with Students

There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a student is proper and necessary. Examples might include:

- When comforting a distressed student
- To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- To give First Aid
- To demonstrate exercises or techniques during physical education (PE) lessons or sports coaching
- In the Early Years physical contact is often required to assist a student - for example to dress, to reassure a student or to help a student from apparatus in PE. etc.

7.0 Staff Training

This policy is discussed annually in staff meetings. If incidents occur that require further amendments of this policy staff are informed in regular staff meetings. The Designated

Safeguarding Lead is available to discuss the contents of this policy with staff.

8.0 What happens if a student complains when force is used on them?

All complaints about the use of force will be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.

Where a member of staff has acted within the law and in accordance with School policy – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.

When a complaint is made it is the responsibility of the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.

Suspension is not an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. The School will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate. If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the School will ensure that the teacher has access to a named contact who can provide support.

The School Board will, in consultation with the Executive Principal, always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether to take disciplinary action against the teacher.

The School has a duty of care towards employees. The School will provide appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

9.0 Complaints

The School prides itself on the quality of the teaching, co-curricular provision and pastoral care for its students. However, if parents/guardians do have a concern or complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this and the Complaints Policy.