



Policy

Restraint Policy

Staff must be advised to avoid physical contact with pupils unless under prescribed circumstances. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance as to those circumstances in terms of restraint. Corporal punishment is prohibited under any circumstances. This ban applies to all staff, and at all times, whether or not within the school premises.

Staff may very occasionally find it necessary to use reasonable physical force or restraint as a last resort to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Damaging property
- Threatening or harming another person

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force', but these criteria may be used for guidance:

- i. The use of force can be regarded as reasonable if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it.
- ii. The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and in all cases the forces should be kept to the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.
- iii. The degree of force will depend on the pupil's age, understanding, physical maturity and sex.

Guidance during an incident of restraint

Force should be used in all incidents as a method of last resort and if at all possible prior to intervention help from a colleague should be sought urgently. Other pupils should never be involved in restraint. Strategies and techniques that help calm and diffuse the situation should be used wherever possible. These include:

- Before intervening physically a teacher or member of staff should tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and what will happen if she/he does not stop.
- The teacher should attempt to continue communication with the pupil during the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint, if applied, will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.
- An assured, calm and non-confrontational approach is helpful, through tone of voice and body language. Try to allow the pupil to 'save face'.

There are times when a teacher should not intervene in an incident without help. These might include when dealing with a physically larger pupil or group of pupils or when the teacher believes that she/he is at risk. In these circumstances the teacher should remove other pupils at risk and summon help from a colleague, if possible Security.

Physical intervention

This can take a number of forms, such as:

- Physically imposing between pupils
- Standing in the way of a pupil
- Holding, pushing or pulling a pupil
- Leading a pupil away from an incident

Restraint must not be:

- Holding around the neck or any other hold that might restrict breathing
- Kicking, slapping or punching
- Forcing limbs against joints e.g. arm lock

Recording incidents

It is essential that members of staff involved in incidents inform the Deputy Head and submit a written report as soon as possible after the incident. This should include:

- The name(s) of the pupil(s) involved, when and where the incident took place
- The names of other staff witnesses
- The reason force was necessary
- How the incident progressed, including actions of the pupils and teacher
- Details of any injuries suffered.

Staff may wish to seek advice from a colleague or from a representative of their professional body.

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