

Physical Restraint Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard the well-being of pupils and staff when an incident requires the use of physical intervention. Its intention is to develop and encourage consistent and safe practices in the use of physical restraint. Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency provided they follow this guidance; however, they should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of their professional colleagues.

Definition

Physical Restraint is the positive application of reasonable force in order to prevent a child

- a) committing a criminal offence (or what would be a criminal offence if they were old enough);
- b) injuring themselves or others;
- c) damaging property;
- d) acting in a way that is counter to maintaining good order and discipline at the school.

Staff must not use physical force to punish pupils. Corporal punishment is banned in all schools. Staff should be aware that their actions must be considered and appropriate; using excessive force in a situation where it is not appropriate can result in disciplinary action or criminal charges. Reasonable force should be proportionate to the risk posed by the problem behaviour.

Where physical restraint is necessary under d) i.e. there is no immediate threat to property, persons and no criminal offence is being committed, then physical restraint may only be used by the head teacher, or, in her absence, the deputy or senior teachers. Teaching assistant who have been trained in physical restraint and who are allocated to work with pupils with emotional and behavioral difficulties and whose occasional need for constraint is in their iep may also be required to physically restrain pupils. These staff (whether SMT or support staff) will only restrain pupils under d) for as long as is necessary to remove them to a place where their behaviour is no longer undermining good order and discipline. Should the poor behaviour continue for more than 30 minutes, then usually the pupils parents will be summoned to remove the child from school for the rest of the day (a half/whole day temporary exclusion). This in no way interferes with the right of the school to extend this exclusion further should the circumstances warrant it.

Guidance: During an Incident

In any application of physical restraint, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation. Help should be summoned from colleagues; other pupils should never be involved in restraint.

The pupil should be approached calmly but firmly. Where possible, explain the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour and continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident; it should be made clear that the physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach is needed and a teacher must never give the impression that s/he has lost his/her temper, or is acting out of anger or frustration - or to punish the pupil.

The method of restraint employed must use the **minimum force** for the **minimum time** and must observe the following requirements:

Restraint must NOT:

- involve hitting the pupil;
- involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil;
- restrict the pupil's breathing;
- involve contact with sexually sensitive areas.

During any incident the restrainer should:

- offer verbal reassurance to the pupil;
- cause the minimum level of restriction of movement;
- reduce the danger of any accidental injury.

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- physically interposing between pupils;
- blocking a pupil's path;
- holding;
- pushing;
- pulling;
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm;
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or
- (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

Some Dos and Don'ts

DO

- be aware of any feelings of anger
- summon help
- continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- provide a soft surface if possible
- be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil
- hold the pupil's arms by his/her sides

DON'T

- try to manage on your own

- stop talking even if the pupil does not reply
- straddle the pupil
- push arms up the back
- touch the pupil near the throat or head
- put pressure on joints

Recording Incidents

It is important that a written report is kept on any occasion when force is used; the member of staff concerned should advise the head or a senior member of staff immediately following the incident and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. The report should include:

- the name(s) of the pupil(s) involved;
- when and where the incident took place;
- the name(s) of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident;
- the reason that force was necessary;
- how the incident began and progressed;
- the pupil's response, and the outcome of the incident;
- details of any injury suffered by the pupil/another pupil/member of staff, and any damage to property.

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from their professional association or a senior colleague when writing a report.

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