

Restraint Policy 2024-2025

Date: September 2024

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Restraint Policy

Introduction

1. 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.

What is Reasonable Force?

2. 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.

3. Force can be used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as restraining a student to prevent violence or injury.

4. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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. For further information see the DfE advice 'Use of Reasonable Force' (2013).

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

Who Can Use Reasonable Force?

9. All members of the College staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. This applies to the teaching staff but also to all other staff of the College. This also applies to people whom the Headmaster has temporarily put in charge of students such as voluntary helpers, unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on College organised trips.

When Can Reasonable Force Be Used?

10. Reasonable can be used to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

11. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

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

- a. To remove disruptive students from the classroom where they have refused an instruction to do so.
- b. To prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts a College event or a College trip or visit.
- c. 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.
- d. To prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight; and
- e. To restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

As mentioned before, reasonable force should only be used after a warning has been given to the student.

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

Following Up the Use of Force

14. All incidents in which force has had to be used should be reported immediately to the Senior Deputy Head who will report such incidents to the Headmaster. A record of all incidents will be kept in a log.

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

Other Physical Contact With Students

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

- a. When comforting a distressed student
- b. To demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- c. To give First Aid
- d. To demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching.

Further Information

17. Further information can be found in the DfE advice document 'Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies', DfE, 2013, and in Keeping Children Safe In Education, 2023.

18. The DfE launched a consultation on the reasonable force and restrictive practices in schools in February 2023. The results of this are still awaited (Sept 2024).