
SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND CONTACT POLICY

Note: This policy applies to all sections of the school including EYFS

Reviewed Oct 2021

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This policy is drawn up in reference to *'Use of Reasonable Force- Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies.'*

Related policies – Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct.

The Governors and Staff of Saint Nicholas School recognise fully the role that we play with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We recognise that all staff, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and in creating a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical, emotional and moral development of our pupils.

In exceptional circumstances, a member of staff may need to intervene physically, wither restraining or controlling a pupil using 'reasonable force'. These circumstances may range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm or where a pupil may need to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and always depends on individual circumstances. When making this judgement members of staff have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and pupils with SEND. **In no circumstances can force be used as a punishment- it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.**

Before intervening physically, staff should wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if he or she does not. The staff member should continue to attempt to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. In such cases only the minimum force necessary will be used whilst maintaining a calm and measured approach.

Staff members should not put themselves at risk of injury. In these circumstances, the teacher should remove the other pupils who may be at risk and seek assistance from a colleague or colleagues and if necessary telephone the police. Staff should inform the pupil(s) that they have sent for help. Until assistance arrives, staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally and try to prevent the situation from escalating. In all cases, where possible, a second adult witness should be present.

Types of Incidents

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a pupil. They will fall into three broad categories:

- Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

Examples of situations that fall within one of the first two categories are:

- A pupil attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- Pupils are fighting
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- 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
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others

Examples of situations that fall into the third category may include:

- A disruptive pupil who persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom
- A pupil is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

Application of Force

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.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force': for example to prevent a young pupil running off a pavement onto a busy road, or to prevent a pupil hitting someone, or throwing something.

The Range of Interventions: How May Pupils be Restrained?

In the unlikely event of a staff member needing to use restrictive physical intervention, the following points should be noted:

- Restrictive physical intervention must be consistent with the concept of reasonable force.
- The circumstances must warrant the use of force;

- The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the minimum to achieve the desired result.
- Avoid causing pain or injury;
- Avoid holding or putting pressure on joints;
- In general hold long bones;
- Do not hold a pupil face down on the ground or in any position that might increase the risk of suffocation.

Recording Incidents

Any member of staff involved in an incident requiring physical intervention must inform the Head immediately and write a detailed report of the incident to help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the situation.

Planning for Incidents

If the school is aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a way that may require physical control or restraint, it will plan how best to respond in the situation.

The school will try to:

- Manage the pupil and situation by diffusing the situation
- Involve the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school may need to take
- Brief staff to ensure that they know exactly what action should be taken and where appropriate provide training or guidance
- Ensure that additional support can be summoned if appropriate.

Other Physical Contact

There are occasions where physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary. However touching pupils, including well-intentioned gestures can, if repeated regularly and out of context, be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer and lead to questions being raised.

Where Physical Contact may be Acceptable

There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil may be necessary, for example:

- To demonstrate exercises or technique during PE lessons, during sports coaching or when providing first aid.
- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or walking together around the school.
- To demonstrate a musical instrument.
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised.

- When comforting a distressed pupil.

There may be occasions where a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same pupil over a period of time. Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of emotional support and should reflect the child's needs, age and level of maturity. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek the advice and guidance of the Head Teacher.

General Guidelines

As a general principle staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils. There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some pupils may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background or special needs or because they have been abused.

Where appropriate, staff should receive information on these children, whilst ensuring that all matters of confidentiality and sensitivity remain of paramount importance. In addition, there should be a common approach where staff and pupils are of different sexes. Physical contact with pupils become increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence and staff should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.