



Student Restraint Policy

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Outline of Policy on Restraint

Restraint occurs when a member of staff uses physical force intentionally to restrict a child's movement against his or her will. It should rarely be used.

There are some occasions when some form of contact with pupils is either essential or helpful.

Some of these occasions are as follows:

During some physical education lessons it is essential that the teacher physically supports a pupil.

If a pupil is distressed and some reassurance is required e.g. by placing a hand on his / her shoulder.

When a pupil appears likely to be harmed in some accidental way e.g. is about to be burned by a Bunsen burner.

Providing physical prompts e.g. guiding a pupil's hand when drawing.

The term restraint does not extend to these situations. Staff should not be inhibited in providing such contact when it is professionally appropriate to do so but even in these limited circumstances of contact, staff must be alert to the feelings of the child regarding the contact; staff must always take great care they are not likely to be accused of indecent / inappropriate contact with pupil(s).

Using Physical Restraint

Restraint should be avoided wherever possible. Other methods of managing the incident must be tried first unless this would be impractical. The main reason for using restraint is to keep people safe. Staff should make themselves familiar with the information on Restraint of students in the Staff Handbook (currently page 146).

In the case of pupils absconding from the premises, staff should only restrain if the pupils are placing themselves at risk by doing so. It may be reasonable to prevent a pupil from leaving the school, if their emotional state suggests they pose a risk to themselves.

Examples of situations when restraint may be justified:

- When it is likely that a pupil is causing or is about to cause harm to his / herself or another pupil.

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- When it is likely that a pupil is causing or is about to cause harm to a member of staff.
- When pupils are fighting.
- When a pupil is damaging the fabric of a building, including furnishings.
- When 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.

Although a situation may warrant restraint it may be unwise for staff to intervene without support. Staff should not feel obliged to intervene against their better judgement. In these circumstances staff should remove pupils who are at risk and summon assistance initially from other (preferably senior) staff by contacting the General Office or the member of staff on emergency duty directly and if necessary from the Police (in all but exceptional circumstances this would be done by the member of senior staff on emergency duty).

Where it is known that an individual student may need to be restrained the school will develop an individual plan for that pupil for managing situations that may occur. The plan will include strategies for de-escalating the problems, arrangements for securing additional support and clarification of the holds to be used. Medical advice may also need to be sought in order to determine the best method of holding a child with a medical difficulty. Parents will be fully involved in the process; if they are aware of the plan, there is less chance of a misunderstanding

How may pupils be restrained?

What form of restraint to use is subordinate to whether it is warranted to all. Any restraint must be consistent with the concept of '*reasonable force*'. There is no legal definition of '*reasonable force*' but there are two key considerations.

The circumstances must warrant the use of force. Committing a trivial misdemeanour would not constitute grounds for restraint;

The degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances and should constitute the minimum necessary to achieve the desired result.

Using physical contact to punish a pupil or to cause pain, injury or humiliation is explicitly forbidden (Education Act 1996, Section 548-550). Staff are not allowed to restrain:

out of anger;

out of frustration;

in any way which could cause the child injury such as:

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holding around the neck

any hold that might restrict breathing

kicking, slapping or punching

forcing limbs against joints

tripping

holding by the hair

holding children face down on the ground is particularly hazardous as there is an enhanced risk of suffocation (see paragraph 23 Circular 10/98)

During an incident, staff must caution the pupil that restraint may be necessary. This should be done in a calm and measured manner. Staff are also advised to maintain appropriate communication with the pupil throughout an incident.

Staff must avoid touching or holding pupils in ways that could be construed as abusive. Physical contact is likely to become increasingly inappropriate as pupils reach adolescence. Circular 10/95 (*Protecting children from abuse*) provides guidance on dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff. A copy of 'Child Protection Guidance' published by Hampshire County Council in 1997 which includes 'Child protection procedures: guidance for those working in schools and in the Education Department' is available from members of SMT or the School Nurse

There is currently no government approved technique for restraining pupils. It is not always possible to apply procedures as planned, but restraint should be consistent with the general guidance in this document.

Reasonable force may include:

- physically standing between pupils
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm, or by gentle pressure on the centre of the back
- standing in the way of a pupil
- holding, pushing or pulling.

Who may restrain pupils?

Everyone has a right to use reasonable force to prevent an attack against themselves or others, whether they are formally authorised or not. Apart from teachers, only those staff specifically authorised by the Headteacher to have charge of pupils can use physical restraint under other

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circumstances, those authorised include School Nurse, support assistants, the school librarian and technicians who have a supervisory role or voluntary helpers accompanying children on visits (or holidays) organised by the school. A full list is held by the Headteacher.

These arrangements apply at all times the school has responsibility for pupils and extends to times when pupils are off-site on educational trips. The policy does not apply to situations after children have been dismissed from school or are on public transport.

When to involve the Police

The circumstances likely to require police involvement include incidents such as the possession of weapons, assault, physical or sexual abuse. Under normal circumstances the Headteacher would authorise police involvement.

What to do after an incident of restraint

If physical violence has occurred during an incident all those involved must be seen by a First Aider if necessary.

Staff must notify the Headteacher or a senior member of staff as soon as possible after an incident. They must also formally record what happened using the Restraint Incident Report Form (Appendix A – kept in Headteacher’s PA’s office safe) as soon as possible. Support from a colleague or representative from a professional association may be helpful at this point. In addition it may be necessary to complete the accident book and Accident and Aggressive Incident Report which are situated in the Headteacher’s PA’s Office, in accordance with Health and Safety procedures.

To minimise the possibility of restraint being needed in future, a review of the incident will take place in order to identify any lessons that can be learnt. Parents are to be informed promptly once the facts are established and given an opportunity to discuss the incident. The Headteacher is responsible for deciding how and when parents are notified. Should parents have ongoing concerns after an incident they should be encouraged to discuss the situation with the Headteacher, and, if necessary, to use the school’s complaint procedure.

Consistent with the principles of the Children Act, 1989, pupils who have been restrained are entitled to record their views when they have calmed down. Depending on their skills they may need assistance in doing so. Pupils may also need careful debriefing in preparing for their next meeting with those involved in the incident. The school will endeavour to ensure that staff who have been involved in a difficult incident (not just that which involves physical restraint) will have access to internal debriefing and support as required. If staff wish to receive support independent of their school, it can be provided by the County Council’s support and

counselling service. The employee support line is a confidential 24 hour help-line. (01962 846388)

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Appendix A

Use of Physical Restraint Report:

Incident:

.....

Date and Time of incident.....

Name of member of staff:

Other staff involved

.....

Name of pupil(s) restrained

.....

Witnesses

.....

Location of incident.....

Please describe what happened below. Make sure you include:

- Reason why force was necessary
- What steps were taken to avoid the use of force
- The pupil's response
- The outcome of the incident
- Details of any injury and/or damage to property

Continue on reverse of form if necessary.

Name of staff reporting

Signed

Date and Time

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