

ST MARGARET'S
SCHOOL

Physical Intervention (Restraint) Policy

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Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Policy Statement..... | 2 |
| Who can use Reasonable Force?..... | 2 |
| When can Reasonable Force be used?..... | 2 |
| When can Reasonable Force NOT be used?..... | 2 |
| Guidelines for the Use of Physical Restraint..... | 3 |
| With younger pupils there are different levels of physical intervention:..... | 3 |
| What to do in circumstances when the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed..... | 3 |
| Method of Restraint..... | 3 |
| During any incident the person restraining should:..... | 3 |
| Physical restraint can be:..... | 4 |
| Physical intervention can take several forms and may involve staff:..... | 4 |
| Do:..... | 4 |
| Don't:..... | 4 |
| Recording Incidents..... | 4 |
| Record Keeping..... | 4 |
| The report should include:..... | 4 |
| Telling parents when force has been used on their child..... | 5 |
| What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?..... | 5 |

Policy Statement

St Margaret's School fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This policy is a whole school policy and applies to all pupils including those in the EYFS and boarders. Care and consideration will be given to the age of the child when following the guidance in this policy.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the School including governors. It is available to all interested parties and should be read in conjunction with the Rewards, Behaviour & Sanctions and Child Protection policies.

This policy has been written using advice taken from Use of Reasonable Force, Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies DfE July 2013.

The School acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND). Equality Act 2010, SEN and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years January 2015.

For the Purposes of this Policy Document

- reasonable force is defined as using no more force than is needed in the circumstances
- physical restraint is defined as the positive application of force in order to protect/prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others or seriously damaging property. It is necessary in more extreme cases, for example, to stop a physical fight
- injury means 'significant injury'; this would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to, themselves or others, by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning.

Who can use Reasonable Force?

- all members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force
- this power applies to any member of staff at the school
- it can also apply to people whom the Head has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit
- 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.

When can Reasonable Force be used?

Reasonable force can be used

- to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder
- to control pupils or to restrain them
- to remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have persistently refused to follow an instruction to do so
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit and causing distress to others
- to prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground
- to restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts
- to prevent a pupil committing a criminal offence.

When can Reasonable Force NOT be used?

Reasonable force can never be used as a form of punishment.

Guidelines for the Use of Physical Restraint

Professional judgement should be used in circumstances where the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed.

- staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency provided they follow the guidelines in this policy
- staff should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues
- in any application of physical restraint, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation
- help should be summoned from colleagues; pupils should never be involved in restraint.

With younger pupils there are different levels of physical intervention:

| Gentle intervention examples – all of which involve no harm, emotional upset to a pupil, respecting them and their personal space | Positive physical intervention examples which must be reported. These may involve a pupil feeling upset |
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| Teaching fine motor skills (i.e. how to hold a pencil) | When a pupil resists physical intervention of any kind |
| Comforting an upset pupil, perhaps taking them by the hand to encourage participation | When a pupil requires adult assistance to clean themselves in the lavatory |
| Teaching spatial awareness by gently helping to position a pupil | Behavioural circumstances as outlined in the whole school policy |
| Allowing a pupil to briefly hug a staff member, provided that, it is totally initiated by the pupil and kept to a minimum length | |

What to do in circumstances when the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed

- approach the pupil calmly but firmly warning them that they are going to use force before they do so
- where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour should be explained and it should be communicated to the pupil that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary
- a calm and measured approach is required by staff throughout.

Method of Restraint

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

Restraint must not:

- involve hurting the pupil e.g. slapping, punching, kicking, twisting or forcing limbs
- involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- restrict the pupil's ability to breathe
- involve contact with sexually sensitive areas
- involve locking the pupil in a room

During any incident the person restraining should:

- offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- cause the minimum level of restriction of movement

- reduce the danger of any accidental injury
- cease the restraint if there are any signs of physical distress in the pupil such as sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting

Physical restraint can be:

- Partial – restricting and preventing particular movements
- Total – as in the case of immobilisation

Physical intervention can take several forms and may 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

Do:

- summon help immediately - a pupil can be sent to get another adult
- ensure a free passage of air through airways
- be aware of any feelings of anger
- 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 that could cause injury
- monitor the pupil's respiration, circulation and state of consciousness

Don't:

- try to manage on your own
- stop talking, even if the pupil does not reply
- straddle the pupil
- push their arms up their back
- touch the pupil near the throat or head
- put pressure on joints or on arterial pressure points (inside of upper arm, groin, neck)
- use facedown holds

Recording Incidents

- minor or everyday use of reasonable force does not need to be recorded. For example, very young children running off in the playground and being guided back to the line by the teacher or assistant
- all more serious incidents involving the use of physical restraint must be reported to the Head and the Vice Principal or Head of the Junior School as soon as possible after the incident. These must be recorded and a written report submitted.

Record Keeping

It is a requirement that a written report is kept on any occasion when force is used. This should be done using MyConcern and a self-report made on Confide.

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 physical restraint was necessary
- how the incident began and progressed
- the pupil's/pupils' 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. The written record will be completed within one working day and discussed with the Head or Vice Principal. We will regularly review the number and type of incidents in which physical intervention has been necessary. This will be used to ensure that there is adherence to this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the School.

Telling parents when force has been used on their child

- staff need to use their professional judgement on whether to inform a parent, depending on the seriousness of the incident
- in a serious incident where a member of staff has had to physically restrain a pupil, the parent will be informed on the day and the conversation must be followed up in writing to the parent by the Head
- parents and pupil will be invited to discuss the incident with the Head or a member of the Senior Management Team, in which physical control or restraint was used, with a view to understanding the circumstances fully and minimising the chance of repetition.

What happens if a pupil complains when force is used on them?

- all complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated
- where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action
- when a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably
- if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the Child Protection Policy will be followed.