

# Physical Restraint: Guidance & Procedures

*This document is informed by:  
The use of reasonable force; advice for Headteacher, staff and governing bodies  
(July 2013)  
Which all schools and academies must have regard to.*

## Document Control

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## Revisions

Version	Page/Para No.	Description of Change	Approved
2	1	Linked Policies have been added	November 19
3	3	Additional detail in section 3	January 22

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## **1 Introduction**

The Education Act 1996 recognised that, in certain circumstances, necessary reasonable force to control or restrain a student can be used by a Principal or by other staff authorized by the Principal.

National guidance reinforces the fact by establishing the power of teachers and other staff who have lawful control or charge of students to use reasonable force in order to prevent a student causing injury to themselves or others or causing damage to property.

Whilst always a last resort and to be avoided wherever possible, staff must neither feel that they must make a physical intervention nor feel that they will be unsupported if they do.

## **2 Application**

All staff must be aware that any physical intervention including use of force may lead to a complaint, including an allegation of assault. This guidance aims to support their defence in that staff who follow this guidance, use a proportionate response to a situation and do not resort to an emotional or angry response are in a very strong position to demonstrate reasonableness.

Students and parents need to be aware that, in the very rare circumstances described, the Academy does have the right to use reasonable and proportionate physical restraint and may do so quite legally. This guidance is a key document in refuting any complaint from a parent or student.

The overriding purpose of this guidance is to protect young people from coming to harm as a result of their own, or another student's, behaviour whilst also providing adequate protection to members of staff.

## **3 Procedures**

The use of any degree of force is only lawful if it can be regarded as reasonable in the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour. Where force is applied it should reduce rather than provoke further aggressive reaction. If a person has done only what he or she honestly and instinctively believes was necessary at the time to protect themselves or others, then this would be potent evidence that only reasonable force was used.

The number of staff involved should be the minimum necessary to control / restrain the student whilst minimizing risks of injuries to all parties.

The circumstances where physical intervention, as a last resort, may be appropriate are

- Self defence
- Risk of injury or significant damage to property
- Where the student is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline
- Where there is risk of harm to self or others.

Student behaviour is managed using understanding and care to support students in making positive choices. The use of force is reserved for emergency situations and identified, planned circumstances to ensure the safety of the student and those around them. Where a student is acting in a manner that prejudices the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school staff will support students and reserve the use of force as a final emergency measure where the student's behaviour is having a measurable impact on the learning and wellbeing of others. Where force is used in this manner the school will develop a proactive plan to avoid further use of force for similar circumstances.

The nature of the intervention, which must be proportionate, may include

- Escorting, guiding, shepherding away from a situation to a certain place
- Holding with a degree of force in relation to the level of cooperation and compliance being displayed by the young person
- Restrictive physical intervention where reasonable force is applied to prevent movement or mobility or to disengage from dangerous or harmful physical contact

Staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. The following should not be used

- Pushing the student
- Holding round neck or collar or in any other way which might restrict airway or circulation
- Twisting or forcing limbs against the joint
- Holding by hair or ears
- Holding face down to the ground
- Ground recovery holds should not be employed by any member of staff without appropriate training

In a very small number of cases, a risk assessment linked to the challenging behaviour of a student may be required. This may include references to restraint and may lead to an agreed behaviour management plan which will be communicated to the student, parents and staff.

### **Authorisation and Training**

Due to the completely unpredictable nature of events which may lead to physical restraint being required and the size of the Academy site, the Principal may authorize a number of members of staff to take appropriate action, including as a last resort physical intervention, to deal proportionately with a situation. No member of staff should feel, though, that they should place themselves at unnecessary risk or take an action they do not feel competent to take.

It is recommended that at least one member of the senior management team should attend relevant training on physical intervention. Training can also be made available to other members of staff through attendance at LA courses or by use of staff training days. An up to date record of staff authorized to use physical intervention strategies should be kept by the Principal along with a record of any training provided.

### **Recording and Reporting Procedures**

All incidents must be reported and recorded using the Incident Forms held in the House Offices. Any witness statements should be gathered and stored with this record. Parents / Carers should be informed of any incident as soon as possible after the event. All staff and students involved in an event should be provided with support (e.g. time to collect themselves before continuing their duties) and must have access to a first aider for any sign of injury. All injuries must be recorded and reported following the correct medical incident reporting procedures.

### **Monitoring**

The use of physical intervention must be monitored, and this information used for improving Academy processes. Information must be provided to the Academy Council on an annual basis. All injuries must be recorded and reported as part of this monitoring process.

## **4 Conclusion**

It is very rare that incidents requiring physical intervention occur at the Academy but, in order to ensure the safety of all members of the Academy community, it is essential that all staff, students and parents are provided with this clear framework within which the rights of all Academy members can be protected.