

Physical Restraint Policy

Physical Restraint

We hope that the use of any physical force will not become necessary. However, should this ever be required then it is the aim of this policy to clarify the power of staff to use reasonable force to prevent students committing any offence, causing injury or damage to themselves or others, or causing severe disruption.

It must be clear that this clarification does not authorise the use of corporal punishment in any circumstances nor is it intended to encourage the use of inappropriate force.

There are a wide variety of situations in which 'reasonable restraint' may be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a student. Wherever possible, if this is anticipated, appropriate steps should have been taken beforehand to plan responses.

Staff may use such restraint as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a student from doing or continuing to do, any of the following:

- a) Committing any offence
- b) Causing an imminent risk of injury to themselves or others
- c) Causing serious damage to property including their own
- d) Seriously prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at Sandwell Valley School and Sandwell Community Care Trust Training or among any students receiving education at Sandwell Valley School and Sandwell Community Care Trust Training whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

Reasonable restraint

Wherever possible, staff should exhaust the range of behaviour management strategies that are aimed at preventing the situation from reaching the point at which physical intervention becomes necessary. Restraint will therefore only be used as a last resort after all efforts to defuse the situation have been taken.

There is no legal definition of when it is reasonable to use force. It is, therefore, impossible to set out a comprehensive definition of the degree of force that may be used.

Relevant considerations should be:-

The use of physical restraint can be regarded as reasonable **only** if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. If the situation does not warrant the use of physical restraint then **any** degree of force is unlawful.

The degree of restraint employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any restraint used should always be the **minimum required**.

The degree of restraint used, or whether it is reasonable to use any at all, will also be dependent upon the age of the student

Guidelines on the use of restraint

Before using restraint of any type staff should, wherever practicable:

Tell the student who is misbehaving to stop.

Give clear instruction warning the student that unless he/she conforms then physical restraint will be applied.

Continued communication should be attempted throughout the incident.

It should be made clear that restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to become necessary.

Staff should never give the impression that they have lost their temper but should retain a calm measured approach.

If possible summon help from another member of staff to assist.

Staff should never intervene if they believe they are at risk of injury but should call for assistance.

Intervention

This may take several forms:-

physically intervening between students

blocking a student's path

holding, pushing or pulling

leading a student by hand or arm

shepherding a student by placing his/her hand in the centre of the student's back in extreme cases using a more restrictive hold or taking action necessary to prevent injury but this action must be consistent with 'reasonable force'.

In normal circumstances staff should **NOT** act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:-

holding a student by the neck

slapping, punching or kicking a student

twisting or forcing limb joints

tripping a student

holding a student by the hair or ear

holding a student face down on the ground

holding a student in a way which may be interpreted as indecent

It is anticipated at all times that any element of force will **ONLY** be used when all other attempts to defuse the situation have failed.

Reporting and recording

If force is used towards any student, an incident record form must be completed and a copy sent to the Managers as quickly as possible, but always on the same day as the incident.

Monitoring

All staff will have regular awareness sessions on the issues of this policy. The introduction of more formal training will remain under constant review. The Managers will monitor incidents of the use of restraint at their regular meetings.

Date: September 2018

Review Date: September 2019

Sandwell Valley School