

# Physical Restraint Policy



Redbridge Community School

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## **1. Rationale**

At Redbridge School we recognise our responsibility and duty to care for and support one another as adults and students. In general it is important that adults working in school avoid physical contact with students but it is neither desirable nor possible to have a total 'no contact' policy as there are a variety of situations where this would not be responsible (eg providing first aid, demonstrating use of a musical instrument, demonstrating sports techniques). One such occasion where contact may be necessary is where there is a need for appropriate physical restraint or the use of reasonable force, both of which are permitted in law (DFE Use of Reasonable Force Non Statutory Guidance 2013) to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property in such a way that it could cause serious injury to themselves or others or from causing disorder. It is recognised that in practice the use of reasonable force will be a rare event.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- i) Explain the rights of staff to use reasonable force when necessary
- ii) Explain the nature of reasonable force
- iii) Set out the circumstances in which reasonable force may be justified
- iv) Explain the reporting and recording procedure
- v) Set out the complaints process

## **3. Guidelines**

### **i. The rights of staff**

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force within the limitations of this policy and there may be occasions when failure to do so could breach the duty of care towards students. The school will support staff where a member of staff uses reasonable force within the context of this policy.

### **ii. What is reasonable force?**

Force can be used to either control or restrain. Control means either passive physical contact such as standing between pupils or blocking a student's path or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control and is typically used in more extreme circumstances. Regarding both control and restraint, 'reasonable force' means using no more force than is needed. Staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury but it may not always be possible to avoid injury to a student.

### iii. When can reasonable force be used?

a) Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property in such a way that it could cause serious injury to themselves or others or from causing disorder. The decision on whether or not to use reasonable force is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. There is no need for parental consent prior to using reasonable force. In using reasonable force, reasonable adjustments need to be made for disabled students and students with a statement of special educational need.

It is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of all the situations in which it might be appropriate to use reasonable force and they will in practice be rare but some examples of where reasonable force may be necessary to use are to:

- Remove disruptive students from a classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- Prevent a student behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school event
- Prevent a student leaving a classroom where allowing them to leave would seriously risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- Prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student
- Restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts
- Physically separate students found fighting

Wherever possible, assistance should be sought so as to avoid one to one situations. Any other students at risk should be removed from the situation.

## 4. Reporting and Recording

- i) Any incident involving the use of physical force with students **MUST** be reported to a member of SMT as soon as practically possible
- ii) Any incident involving the use of physical force must be written up in full and recorded on CPOMS
- iii) SMT will decide on how best to report the incident to parents/carers

## 5. Complaints

All complaints about the use of force will be investigated thoroughly, speedily and appropriately by a person appointed by the Headteacher.

When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that the allegations are true. Where there is an allegation against a member of staff of using excessive force the school will use the staff disciplinary policy but suspension will not be an automatic consequence of the allegation.

The school will ensure that appropriate pastoral care is made available to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident. Where the decision is taken to suspend a member of staff, the Governing Body will consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action.

Where a member of staff has acted within the law – to use reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage or disorder – this will provide a defence to any potential criminal prosecution or civil action.