

St Patrick's RC High School



USE OF REASONABLE FORCE AND PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Date of Review: Autumn 2020-2021

Prepared By: Mr M Connelly

Delegated Committee: Pupil Welfare

Next review: Autumn 2022-2023

Not statutory

Signed: (Headteacher)

School Mission Statement

Our outstanding school community is guided by the gospel values of; love, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, integrity, humility and truth. Faith and worship are lived, taught and celebrated. We recognise the importance of service to others and the opportunity to be witnesses to Christ in our community.

All are unique and strive for personal growth. We celebrate the pursuit of academic excellence, applaud ambition and value the achievements of all. Our pupils are expected to achieve their best and use their learning to make a difference in the world they live in.

School British Values Statement

St Patrick's teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour. Teachers do this by not undermining fundamental British values and ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

This policy is in line with the Mission and values of St Patrick's R.C. High School. A successful behaviour policy requires the commitment and **consistency of practice of all staff** to ensure that learners know the standards expected of them. **All members of the school** are expected to help maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, with courtesy and mutual respect as basic requirements.

The use of reasonable force is emphasised in the DFE's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 which all staff at St Patrick's RC High School have to read and understand. It reiterates that there are some circumstances when reasonable force might be a possibility, or it might be part of a strategy to deal with an incident of very challenging behaviour. Also, where relevant, individual plans are created in order to minimise the likelihood of challenging behaviour, and when it does occur, that there is less use of physical restraint and other restrictive methods. Our approach is in line with the DFE guidance on the use of reasonable force.

On the rare occasion staff are put in situations where they have to use reasonable force or physical restraint to ensure the health and safety of students. This policy outlines process and procedures involved.

Objectives

- To protect staff and students
- To prevent serious breaches of school discipline
- To prevent serious damage to property
- To reduce the likelihood of actions by staff being successfully challenged in the courts
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What is reasonable force?

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil'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. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

The force is usually used either to **control** or **restrain**, but no more force is used than necessary.

Examples of when force is used to **control** pupils can include:

- In passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path
- In active physical contact, such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom

In contrast, **restraint** means:

- Holding a pupil back physically
- Bringing a pupil under control

Restraint is typically used in more extreme circumstances, such as when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate.

Staff should try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases this may not always be possible.

Certain techniques are unacceptable

The following restraint techniques present an unacceptable risk when used on children, and shouldn't be employed:

- The 'seated double embrace' - two members of staff forcing a person into a sitting position and leaning them forward, while a third monitors breathing
- The 'double basket-hold' - holding a person's arms across their chest
- The 'nose distraction technique' - a sharp upward jab under the nose

Minimising the need to use force

It is important to have a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind.

Wherever practicable, staff will issue a warning to a student that force may have to be used before using it.

Staff authorised to use 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 Headteacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

All teachers and members of staff, who have the Head's authorisation to be in control of or take charge of students, automatically have the power to use force. This power does not apply to prefects.

Deciding when to use force

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

- Causing personal injury to or damage to the property of, any person (including the student himself);
or
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any students receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- Prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- 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
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or stop a fight in the playground
- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

Any force used must be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent.

The greater the potential for injury, damage or serious disorder, the more likely it is that using force may be justified:

- Students fighting
- Student attack on staff or student
- Damage to property
- Rough play
- Use of dangerous objects
- Absconding if likely to involve safety

Using force

Wherever possible, staff should tell the student to stop and be calm and measured. They should not give the impression of acting out of anger, frustration or punishment. *Force should cease quickly.*

Examples include:

Standing between students, leading by the arm, hand on the centre of the back and finally, appropriate restrictive holds.

The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

When exercising the power to use force, we must use professional judgement and also take proper account of any special need and/or disability that a student might have and recognise that reasonable adjustments may need to be made in these circumstances.

- Pupil's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident
- Degree of force used
- Effect on the pupil or member of staff
- The child's age

Staff working with special needs students will have an awareness of situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and de-escalation techniques. They will know of any previous incidents and handling strategies that are recommended.

SLT and medical staff may be called – though not necessarily waited for. They should be involved in post-incident follow up.

Reasonable force may also be used to search students without their consent for weapons. The Department for Education strongly advises schools not to search students where resistance is expected, but rather to call the police.

It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Always avoid touching or restraining in such a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct. Sometimes physical contact may be proper or necessary – such as sport and first aid.

Physical contact other than reasonable force

There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary, such as if you:

- Hold the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- Comfort a distressed pupil
- Congratulate or praise a pupil
- Demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- Demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- Give first aid

Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, the Headteacher and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited items”:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

Staff training

There may be particular needs for staff that work closely with students with additional needs or disability; however, training will be offered to all staff. Staff should be made aware of this policy and procedures during their Induction.

Recording and reporting incidents

Systematic records of any serious incident are kept using the specific form and the school's management information system (MIS) - (See Appendix 1)

It is very important to have a *witness* to what happened. After any recordable incident, parents should always be informed – (telephone first and then confirm in writing).

Post-incident support

First aid and emotional support will be offered for staff and students. Punishments such as exclusions and pastoral support programmes may follow.

Dealing with complaints and allegations

Parents and students have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff and should contact the Headteacher.

Monitoring and review

Members of the Governing Body, the Learning Support Department, the Pastoral Committee and the SLT will review this policy every 2 years.

APPENDIX 1 – Record of Incident Form

St Patrick's RC High School Details of student or students on whom force was used by a member of staff	
Name	
Form	
Date, time and location of incident	
Names of staff involved (directly or as witnesses)	
Details of other students involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of the students involved were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reasons.	
Description of incident by the staff involved, including any attempts to deescalate and warnings given that force might be used.	
Reason for using force and description of force used	

Any injury suffered by staff or students and any first aid and/or medical attention Required.		
Reasons for making a record of the incident.		
Follow up, including post-incident support and any disciplinary action against students.		
Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies		
When and how those with parental responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed.		
Has any complaint been lodged (details should not be recorded here)?		
Report compiled by: Name and role		Signed Date
Report countersigned by: Name and role		Signed Date