

## **Policy Statement: Physical Intervention/Restraint** (ie Staff action towards pupils.)

### **RATIONALE**

- Not all physical contact with pupils constitutes punishment or assault.
- Legal power is given to teachers and other persons who have authorised control over pupils, to restrain pupils in certain circumstances.
- Headteachers may authorise the use of such force as may be reasonable, to prevent certain conduct on the part of pupils.

### **PURPOSES**

- To authorise staff in the use of reasonable force when necessary, to physically intervene or restrain.
- To advise staff of
  - The circumstances in which physical intervention/restraint may be used.
  - The circumstances in which particular caution needs to be exercised.
  - The nature of reasonable force.
  - The avoidance of allegations of either corporal punishment or assault.
  - The action to be taken following physical intervention/restraint.

### **GUIDELINES**

- Prior to physically intervening/restraining, consideration should be given to the appropriateness of alternative means to resolve the situation.
- The circumstances in which physical intervention/restraint may be used:
  - Preventing the committing of a criminal offence.
  - Averting the immediate danger of personal injury, including to the apparent perpetrator.
  - Preventing damage to property including that of the apparent perpetrator.
  - Preventing behaviour which is prejudicial to the good discipline and order of the school whether in the classroom or elsewhere, in situations where the teacher has lawful control of a pupil.
- Great caution should be exercised:
  - Where the enforcement of good order is the motive.
  - Where there is no risk to person or property.
  - Where the aim is compliance with instructions (physical intervention increasingly inappropriate as pupils get older).

- There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. Consideration must be given to:
  - The circumstances ie not a trivial misdemeanour.
  - The appropriateness of other means.
  - The degree of force should be proportional to the incident.
  - The minimum force to achieve the desired result.
  - The avoidance of deliberately causing pain or injury (eg no striking, holding around the neck, pulling hair or ears).
- Authorisation does not permit anything which might be regarded as corporal punishment.

Corporal punishment:

- Is the intentional use of force as punishment.
- Can result in civil action for battery.
- Can be considered a criminal offence if excessive.

NB The dividing line behind acceptable types of physical contact and punishment is often ill-defined and teachers should be forever wary.

- Where physical intervention/restraint has been used the member of staff **must**:
  - Report the incident **immediately** to a member of the Senior Management Board.
  - Provide a detailed written record.

The written record should include:

- Circumstances – when, what, why , who?
- Steps taken prior to force being deemed necessary.
- The nature of the intervention/restraint.
- Pupil(s) response(s).
- Outcome – any injuries, damage to property.
- Names of any witnesses.

## CONCLUSION

It is recognised that circumstances may arise in which staff may need to employ physical intervention/restraint. Staff are authorised to act cautiously within the guidelines outlined.

E W Lyne  
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