



### Introduction

The use of force is a last resort. Wherever possible other means of controlling students' behaviour should be used such as persuasion, issuing a warning, isolation or the summoning of help. In normal circumstances physical force should not be used to deal with defiance, rather the student should be challenged and if the defiance continues use the procedure for help from a senior member of staff.

Staff are expected to avoid situations which increase the likelihood of students reacting in an aggressive manner, such as the use of humiliation, physically cornering a student, the invasion of personal space or unduly threatening language.

Persons authorised to use reasonable force are all those employed within the school on a paid or voluntary basis who find themselves in charge of or in control of students. The use of reasonable force is only lawful where

- The circumstances warrant it;
- The force used is in proportion to the seriousness of the incident being dealt with;
- Is needed to protect students safety and wellbeing or safety and wellbeing of other students

Force may be used to prevent a student

- committing an offence;
- causing personal injury or damage to property;
- engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and discipline at the school or amongst in students
- Reasonable force may also be used in self defence

It is unlawful to use any degree of physical contact where the primary intention is to punish, cause pain or injury or humiliation. After any use of force against a student a senior member of staff should be informed and an incident sheet filed with the relevant Assistant Head (Wellbeing and Achievement). All staff involved in physical restraint must have undertaken team-teach training.

Any injury suffered by a member of staff should be recorded using an accident report form which should be filed in the General Office. Copies of the report should be given to the relevant Head of Year/Key Stage, the Deputy Head and the Headteacher.



**Appendix:** Situations in which physical intervention may be appropriate or necessary

The use of physical intervention should be viewed very much as the final option. It is very important to ensure that all possible preventative steps have been taken to ensure that physical intervention is unnecessary.

Section 550A of the 1996 Education Act applies to a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate to control or restrain a student. The following are some examples of situations in which the use of reasonable force might be appropriate:-

- Students fighting;
- A student engaged in, or on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- Students running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way which might cause an accident likely to injure himself/herself or others;
- A student absconding from a class or trying to leave school but only if the student could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school.

**Application of Force**

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve a member of staff physically interposing him or herself between students or blocking a student's path; it might involve holding, pushing, pulling, leading by the arm or shepherding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or it might involve using classroom furniture to restrict movement.

Where it is necessary to use force a member of staff must not, except in the most exceptional circumstances where there is no alternative, do so in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. For example

- Holding a student around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the ability to breath;
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- Tripping up a student;
- Holding or pulling a student by the hair.

Even when the situation is managed well, the authorised teacher/member of staff could be accused of false imprisonment, assault or battery. Member of staff should also always avoid touching or holding a student in a way that might be considered indecent. Where there is an immediate risk of injury or damage to property, a member of staff may have to intervene physically straight away. For example, to prevent a student running or stepping off a pavement onto a busy road, or to prevent a student hitting someone or throwing something.

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