

Restraint Policy

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THIS POLICY INCLUDES THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE [EYFS] AND EARLY BIRDS AND AFTER SCHOOL CLUB AND HOLIDAY CLUBS

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1. Statement of Intent

The staff at Nottingham High School recognise the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We also recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have an active part to play in protecting our children from harm. All staff should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment promoting the social, physical and moral development of individual children.

2. Physical Contact

During a child's time at school, particularly with the younger children, there will be occasions when the staff will need to have some form of physical contact with the children in their care. The school recognises that close, physical contact is vital in order to help them develop into well balanced, secure and happy individuals. The school is however aware of the need for clear boundaries for physical contact in order to protect everyone involved.

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a child, parent or observer.

Touching pupils, including well-intentioned gestures, can if repeated regularly lead to serious questions being raised.

3. General guidelines

As a general principle staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils. There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some pupils maybe particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background or special needs or because they have been abused.

Where appropriate, staff should receive information on these children, whilst ensuring that all matters of confidentiality and sensitivity remain of paramount importance. In addition, there should be a common approach where staff and children are of different sexes. Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence and staff should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

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4. Where physical contact may be acceptable

There are occasions when physical contact with a child may be necessary, for example to demonstrate exercises or technique during PE lessons, during sports coaching, when providing first aid or during the dressing and undressing of younger children such as at swimming.

Particularly with younger children, there may be occasions where a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance, possibly due to an accident or disagreement, or a child struggling to separate from a parent or carer, which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time. Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of emotional support and should reflect the child's needs, age and level of maturity. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek the advice and guidance of the Headmaster, The Head of IJS, the Deputy Head Teachers or DSL.

5. Reason for acceptable contact

- Consoling and reassuring a child who was upset, possibly due to an accident or disagreement.
- Consoling and reassuring a child struggling to separate from a parent or carer. Occasionally, when separating a child from a parent or carer, it is necessary to physically remove/transfer the child to a member of staff, with adult's consent.
- Helping with dressing or with dressing up clothes, adjusting clothing.
- Holding hands such as for reassurance, in circle games and role play or for safety reasons, e.g. crossing the road.
- Toileting children who still require adult support, e.g. lifting, supporting children on the toilet. Adults will always talk to children about what is happening and why and children will be encouraged to do this themselves.
- Changing the clothing of a child who may have soiled themselves. This may involve removing underwear and replacing with clean clothes, cleaning soiled body parts with antiseptic wipes. Colleagues will always be made aware that a child and staff member have left the room to deal with soiling. Doors should be left open, but modesty preserved.
- Restraining a child for their own protection or the protection of others. This may include guiding children by the arm away from the situation

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6. Physical restraint and Reasonable Force

The Use of Reasonable Force in Schools

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf) advises that there are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve 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 the classroom.

Where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force'. Before intervening physically, staff should wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if they do not. Where at all possible, alternatives should be looked for such as distracting the child or suggesting a move to another area or the use of passive physical contact (such as standing between two fighting pupils). The staff member should continue to attempt to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. In such cases only the minimum force necessary will be used whilst maintaining a calm and measured approach.

Nottingham High School staff should not put themselves at risk of injury. In these circumstances, the staff member should remove the other pupils who may be at risk and seek assistance from a colleague or colleagues and if necessary telephone the police. Staff should inform the child/children that they have sent for help. Until assistance arrives, staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally and try to prevent the situation from escalating. Where possible, staff should have another colleague present whilst restraining the pupil or having physical contact with the pupil.

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, colleagues should in considering the risks carefully recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups. They should also consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010³⁶ in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and their Public Sector Equality Duty.

Where a pupil's SEN, disability or medical condition might suggest that incidents may occur which might require the use of reasonable force, the school will consider planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable

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children, and agreeing them with parents in order to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force.

It should be noted that locking pupils in rooms for any reason (including pupil or staff safety) is potentially illegal and a breach of standards.

7. Types of incidents

There are a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a child. They will fall into three broad categories:

1. Where action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury.
2. Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
3. Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

Examples of situations that fall within one of the first two categories are:

- A child attacks a member of staff or another pupil
- Children are fighting
- A child is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- A child is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- A child is running in the playground in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others
- A child absconds from a class or tries to leave school (N.B. this will only apply if a child could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

Examples of situations that fall into the third category may include:

- A child persistently refuses to obey an order to leave a classroom.
- A child is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson.

8. Application of force

Physical intervention can take several forms. It might involve staff:

- physically interposing between pupils
- blocking a child's path
- holding

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- pushing
- pulling
- leading a child by the hand or arm
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back or in extreme circumstances, using more restrictive holds.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force': for example to prevent a young child running off a pavement onto a busy road, or to prevent a child hitting someone, or throwing something.

In other circumstances staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury.

Staff should not:

- Hold a child by the neck or collar, or in a way that may restrict their ability to breathe
- Slap punch or kick the child
- Twist or force limbs against a joint
- Trip up a child
- Hold or pull a child by the hair or ear
- Hold a child face down on the ground

9. The range of interventions - how children may be restrained

In the unlikely event of a staff member needing to use restrictive physical intervention, the following points should be noted:

- Restrictive physical intervention must be consistent with the concept of reasonable force
- The circumstances must warrant the use of force
- The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the minimum to achieve the desired result.
- Avoid causing pain or injury
- Avoid holding or putting pressure on joints
- In general, hold long bones
- Do not hold a pupil face down on the ground or in any position that might increase the risk of suffocation.

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10. Staff Training

The School will take appropriate decisions about staff training within our School context. If any additional training is needed, following changes in national guidance or within our School context, the School will give relevant staff access to appropriate INSET courses.

11. Recording incidents

Any member of staff involved in an incident requiring physical intervention must inform the Headmaster or Head of IJS as soon as possible following the event and write a detailed report of the incident to help prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the situation.

A guide for recording would be to note:

- The circumstances prior to the intervention
- A description of events during the incident
 - The concern which led to the intervention
 - The alternative methods considered and/or attempted
 - Witnesses to the incident or other staff/pupils involved
- Events following the incident

SMT will be available to help the recording of the incident, if necessary. The Headmaster or Head of IJS will consider if the report should be passed to the DSL.

Parents and/or carers should be informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practical.

12. Planning for incidents

If the school is aware that a child is likely to behave in a way that may require physical control or restraint, it will plan how best to respond in the situation.

The school will endeavour to:

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- Manage the pupil and situation by diffusing the situation
- Involve the parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school may need to take
- Brief staff to ensure that they know exactly what action should be taken and where appropriate provide training or guidance
- Ensure that additional support can be summoned if appropriate.

Information and strategies are shared with all practitioners within the setting.

13. Further Guidance

Further guidance can be found from the DfE in "*Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2013, updated July 2015)*