

Saint Martin's Catholic Academy



Physical Restraint Policy & Procedures

*'Knowing the best that has been thought
and said and knowing that we are loved by God'*

Approved by:	Jim Connolly	Date: 16/05/19
Last reviewed on:	May 2019	
Next review due by:	May 2021	

Saint Martin's Catholic Academy is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of students and staff and, in line with relevant legislation, only permits physical restraint by reasonable and non-injurious means. Physical restraint is used only when immediately necessary for the minimum time necessary to prevent injury to self or others or very serious damage to property. The Principal authorises trained staff to use physical restraint as a positive strategy to de-escalate potentially dangerous situations and to regain control of a student who has temporarily lost control of themselves.

For the purpose of this policy document, physical restraint is defined as the positive application of force in order to protect or prevent a student from causing injury to themselves, other students, or staff. Injury means 'significant injury'; this would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to themselves or others, by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning.

Any incident involving the use of restraint is recorded in writing and the relevant staff member must inform the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Saint Martin's Catholic Academy is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). The Academy seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. This policy applies to all members of our Academy community. This document is available on the Academy website and on request from the Academy. This should be read in conjunction with the following policy documents: Behaviour and Safeguarding. It should also be read in conjunction with the DfE document; Use of Reasonable Force (July 2013) which will always be available in the staff room and school intranet.

Implementation of the Physical Restraint Policy is the responsibility of the Principal of the Academy; in their absence, responsibility lies with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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 students. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student 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/academies generally use force to control students and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact, such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention. Academy 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 injury to the student.

When can reasonable force be used?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. In the Academy, force is used for two main purposes: to control students or to restrain them. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The Academy can use reasonable force to:

- Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- Prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts an Academy event or an educational visit
- Prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety and that of others
- Prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight in the playground
- Restrain a student at risk of harming themselves or damaging property through physical outbursts
- The Academy has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN)D.

Procedures and Guidelines for the use of Physical Restraint

Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency, provided they follow the guidelines in this policy. However, they should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues. In any application of physical restraint, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation. Help should be summoned from colleagues; students should never be involved in restraint. The student should be approached calmly but firmly. Where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour should be explained and it should be communicated to the student that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach is required by staff throughout. The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time.

Restraint must not:

- Involve hurting the student where possible
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the student
- Restrict the student's breathing
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas
- Involve locking the student in a room

During any incident the person restraining should:

- Offer a verbal reassurance to the student
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury

Cease the restraint if there are any signs of physical distress in the student such as sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting

Physical restraint can be:

- Partial: restricting and preventing particular movements
- Total: as in the case of immobilisation

Physical intervention can take several forms and may involve staff:

- Physically interposing between students
- Blocking a student's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a student by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back, or in extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds

Do:

- Summon help
- Ensure a free passage of air through airways
- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Continue to talk to the student in a calm way
- Provide a soft surface if possible
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the student that could cause injury
- Monitor the student's respiration, circulation and state of consciousness

Don't:

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking, even if the student does not reply

- Straddle the student unless absolutely necessary for others' safety
- Push their arms up their back
- Touch the student near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints or on arterial pressure points (inside of upper arm, groin, neck)
- Use holds that may cause serious injury

Recording Incidents

It is a requirement that a written record is kept on any occasion when physical restraint is used. The member of staff concerned must advise the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately following an incident, and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards.

The report should include:

- **The name(s) of the student(s) involved and age**
- **When and where the incident took place**
- **The name(s) of any other staff or students who witnessed the incident**
- **The reason the physical restraint was necessary. Consider student's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time**
- **How the incident began and progressed**
- **Degree of force used**
- **The student (s) response and the outcome of the incident**
- **Details of any injury suffered by the student/another student/member of staff and any damage to property**

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from their professional association or a member of the Senior Leadership Team when writing a report.

Contact should be made with the parents/carers as soon as practically possible to explain the seriousness of the incident.

What happens if a student complains when force is used on them?

The Academy will investigate all complaints about the use of force thoroughly, speedily and appropriately. Where a member of staff has acted within the law - that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder - this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action. When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true - it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably. Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. The Academy will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.

Power to search students without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described in this policy, the Principal and delegated members of the Senior Leadership Team can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following 'banned 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 can be used to search for items banned under the Academy rules.

Useful guidance

- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders (2002)
- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for students with Severe Behavioural Difficulties (2003)
- Screening, searching and confiscation – advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies
- Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff – guidance for local authorities, headteachers, school staff, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools