

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION BETWEEN STAFF AND STUDENTS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is based on DfEE circular 10/98 and the corresponding Cambridgeshire LEA document 'Guidance on Physical Intervention for Teachers and Other Employees Working with Young People in Schools and other Educational Settings'.
- 1.2 Sir Harry Smith Community College recognises that there is a need, reflected in common law, to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to its students, staff and property.
- 1.3 Sir Harry Smith Community College is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour, and only use physical intervention as a last resort in line with DfEE and LEA advice. If used at all it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the student. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to students and staff.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all staff who are authorised to use physical intervention (see Section **10** for details).

2. Our Approach to Best Practice

- 2.1 The best practice regarding physical intervention outlined below should be considered alongside other relevant policies in the College, specifically those policies involving behaviour, bullying and health and safety.
- 2.2 In the following situations, staff must judge whether or not physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate:
 - (a) risk to the safety of staff, students or visitors or;
 - (b) where there is a risk of serious damage to property or;
 - (c) where a student's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline or;
 - (d) where a student is committing a criminal offence.

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This judgement will take into account the circumstances of the incident. All staff should be aware that the use of physical intervention in response to a clear or developing danger of injury will always be more justifiable than the use of force to prevent damage or misbehaviour.

- 2.3 Staff will view physical intervention or restraint of students as a last resort to maintain a safe environment. If students are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation.
- 2.4 Staff will understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment which is generally calm and supportive, especially when dealing with students who may have emotional and behavioural needs which may increase their despair and aggression.
- 2.5 All staff will understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child which lie beneath the behaviour, as well as to the behaviour itself.

3. Our Practice re Specific Incidents

- 3.1 Staff intervening with children will seek assistance from other members of staff at as early a stage as possible, since single-handed intervention increases the risks of injury to both parties and does not provide a witness.
- 3.2 All staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a student will have a responsibility to provide a presence, and to offer support and assistance should this be required.
- 3.3 When there is time to do so, consideration will be given to whether or not other staff are available to assist.
- 3.4 Where possible, staff who have not been involved in the initial confrontation leading up to an incident may be in a better position to intervene or restrain the student, if this proves necessary.

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- 3.5 A student's behaviour may be adversely affected by the presence of an audience. Wherever possible, the audience will be removed, or if this is not possible, the student will be removed from the audience. The student and member(s) of staff will withdraw to a quiet, but not completely private, place (eg two members of staff should be present or a door left open so that others are aware of the situation).
- 3.6 Staff will be aware of the need to tell the student being restrained, in a calm and gentle manner, that the reason for the intervention is to keep the student and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the student calms down, she/he will be released.
- 3.7 All staff are aware that we operate a back-up system to enable staff to call for help in emergencies. A student should be sent to the main office requesting urgent assistance.

4. Physical Intervention/Restraint Approaches which can be regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances

- 4.1 The following approaches are regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances:
- (a) holding for security and to reduce anxiety where there is potential risk, even if the student is not yet out of control. This is best used when the student is anxious or confused. Its purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation. Staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted by the student as aggression;
 - (b) physically interposing between students;
 - (c) blocking a student's path;
 - (d) pushing if restricted to situations where reasonable force is used to resist a student's movement, rather than a forceful push that might cause the student to fall over;
 - (e) pulling;
 - (f) leading a student by the hand or arm;
 - (g) shepherding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back;
 - (h) in extreme cases using restrictive holds (see **5** below).

5. Holds to be avoided except for the most extreme circumstances

5.1 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 student running off a pavement onto a busy road, or to prevent a student hitting someone, or throwing something.

In other circumstances, staff should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- (a) holding a student around the neck or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict a student's ability to breathe;
- (b) slapping, punching or kicking a student;
- (c) twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- (d) tripping a student;
- (e) holding a student by the hair or ear;
- (f) holding a student face down on the ground (NB If a student turns and faces the floor, do not use force to turn him/her over).

6. Recording an Incident

- 6.1 All incidents that result in non-routine interventions will be recorded in detail.
- 6.2 Contemporaneous notes (ie written within 24 hours of the incident's occurrence) will be made by the staff member involved in the original incident. The notes should be made in a bound book with numbered pages.
- 6.3 Similarly, contemporaneous notes will also be made by any other members of staff involved (ie as witnesses or additional providers of support). The notes will be signed and dated.

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- 6.4 The notes will contain the following information:
- (a) the name(s) and job title(s) of the member(s) of staff who used reasonable force;
 - (b) the name(s) of the student(s) involved;
 - (c) when and where the incident took place;
 - (d) names of staff and students who witnessed the incident;
 - (e) the reason that force was necessary;
 - (f) the progress of the incident. Include details of:
 - behaviour of the student which led up to the incident
 - any attempts to resolve the situation
 - what was said by staff and students
 - the degree of force used
 - how it was applied
 - how long it was used for;
 - (g) the student's response and the eventual outcome;
 - (h) details of any injuries suffered by either staff or students;
 - (i) details of any damage to property;
 - (j) details of any medical treatment required (an accident form will be completed);
 - (k) details of any follow-up, including contact with the parents/carers of the student(s) involved;
 - (l) any other relevant details, eg the involvement of any other agency, eg the Police.

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- 6.5 Student witnesses may also be asked to provide a written account if appropriate.
- 6.6 These notes should be retained until the student reaches the age of 24. (A photocopy of the record from the bound book will be kept in the child's file.)

7. The following procedures for managing students with physical or learning needs who routinely require control or physical intervention will be used

- 7.1 Any student who falls into this category will have a clear plan for physical intervention agreed in advance with parents. The plan, which may form part of the child Pastoral Support Plan, should be regularly updated. The plan will include:
 - (a) what physical intervention techniques (ie specific holds) may be used with the child and in what circumstances; if used, these will be briefly recorded routinely;
 - (b) what briefing and/or training has been given to staff;
 - (c) arrangements for additional support where necessary;
 - (d) any medical requirements of the child.

All details of any possible physical intervention will be discussed fully with parents/carers in advance. Each time there is a physical intervention a note will be made of the date and the type of intervention used (eg type of hold). Any departures from the agreed plan will be recorded and discussed with parents/carers.

8. Debriefing Arrangements

- 8.1 The student and the member of staff will be checked for any sign of injury after an incident. First aid will be administered in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy to anyone who requires it.

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- 8.2 The student will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise her/him. When the student regains complete composure, a senior member of staff (or her/his nominee) will discuss the incident with the student and try to ascertain the reason for its occurrence. The student will be given an opportunity to explain things from her/his point of view. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish the relationship between the student and the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.
- 8.3 In cases where it is not possible to speak to the student on the same day as the incident occurred, the debrief will take place as soon as possible after the student returns to College.
- 8.4 All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff (or her/his nominee) will provide support to the member of staff involved.
- 8.5 The Principal will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity of any incidents where physical intervention or restraint was used. The Principal (or his/her nominee) will initiate the recording process, if not already underway, (see **Section 6**) and review each incident to ensure that any necessary lessons are learned.

[See paragraph **11.1** about informing parents.]

9. Training Needs of Staff

- 9.1 In cases where it is known that a student will require physical intervention on occasions, appropriate training will be provided (accessed through the LEA) for relevant staff. Staff involved will identify their training needs in this area.

10. Authorisation of Staff to use Physical Intervention

- 10.1 We recognise that physical intervention will be used infrequently, that is, as a last resort to maintaining a safe environment.

- 10.2 All teaching staff are, by the nature of their roles, authorised to use physical intervention as appropriate. Non-teaching staff will require specific authorisation, either temporarily or permanently. This authorisation can only be given by the Principal or someone deputising for the Principal when s/he is absent. Authorised staff will be notified formally. Permanent authorisations are noted in Appendix 1. Because this Appendix applies mainly to schools with a high proportion of students with disabilities or special educational needs, it is not included here. However, a copy may be obtained from the Principal's Personal Assistant if required.
- 10.3 The Principal will inform Governors termly of the number of physical interventions, highlighting any acts which they may need to know in order to minimise the probability of further physical intervention in future.

11. Arrangements for Informing Parents

- 11.1 Parents will be informed of the College's policy regarding physical intervention in the following ways:
- (a) at the outset of the introduction of this policy, all parents/carers will be sent a letter outlining its introduction, with information about obtaining a copy for their own information;
 - (b) thereafter a section about the College's legal obligations to maintain a safe environment and the possible use of physical intervention (as a very last resort) with students will be included in the College Prospectus.