

CITY OF LONDON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

PHYSICAL CONTACT AND RESTRAINT POLICY DRAFT JULY 2014

This policy was written in June 2014 and will be sent to the governors for approval in October 2014. To be next reviewed by June 2017.

Physical Contact

Physical contact with a pupil may be proper or necessary in order to:

- Demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE or music instrumental lessons
- Administer First Aid
- Provide younger children with physical prompts or help
- Comfort a pupil in distress
- Reassure younger pupils

Be aware that some pupils may dislike physical contact of any kind because of their cultural background or because they have been abused.

If it is necessary to make physical contact with a pupil, as far as possible the member of staff should explain to the pupil why they need to do so.

Restraint

City of London School for Girls is committed to safeguarding the well-being of pupils 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 Head authorises staff to use physical restraint as a positive strategy to de-escalate potentially dangerous situations and to regain control of a pupil who has temporarily lost control of herself.

City of London School for Girls is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Please refer to the school's and the City of London's Equal Opportunity Policies.

City of London School for Girls seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. This document is available to all interested parties on our website and on the school portal.

Rationale

Whilst wishing to resolve serious incidents without the use of physical intervention, the Board of Governors and staff understand that very occasionally there may be some situations in which the use of physical intervention may be the appropriate course of action. As outlined below, members of staff are encouraged to avoid this eventuality if at all possible. However, the right of teachers to use reasonable force is

laid down in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, revised guidelines (August 2010) and the DFE document “Reasonable Use of Force” (2012) all clarify the following:

- Force may be used to prevent pupils committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others or damaging property
- Force may be used to maintain good order and discipline
- Force may not be used as a form of punishment
- Incidents where force is used should be recorded and parents informed
- Schools should not adopt a ‘no-contact’ policy
- Teachers have a duty of care to pupils but are not required to put their own safety at risk

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy document, physical restraint is the positive application of force in order to protect/prevent a child from causing injury to herself or others or seriously damaging property. Injury means ‘significant injury’; this would include: actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, and other behaviour which puts a pupils own life or the lives of others at risk.

It must be shown that on any occasion where physical restraint is used there were strong indicators that if immediate action had not been taken, injury or the committing of a criminal act would have followed.

Planning Ahead

When the school is aware that a pupil is likely to behave in a way that may require physical control or restraint it is sensible to plan how to respond if the situation arises. This planning should address:

- Managing the pupil
- Involving the parents to ensure that they are clear about what specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should take
- Ensuring additional support can be summoned if appropriate
- Taking medical advice if necessary as to the safest way to hold pupils with specific health needs

Some examples of when it may be necessary to use physical restraint

- A pupil attacks a member of staff, or another pupil
- Pupils are fighting
- A pupil is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- A pupil is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- A pupil is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others

- A pupil absconds from a class or tries to leave school putting themselves at risk

Guidance during an Incident

Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency provided they follow this guidance; however, they should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience.

In any application of physical restraint, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation. Help should be summoned from colleagues; other pupils should never be involved in restraint.

The pupil should be approached calmly but firmly. Where possible, explain the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour and continue to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident; it should be made clear that the physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach is needed and a member of staff must never give the impression that she/he has lost his/her temper, or is acting out of anger or frustration - or to punish the pupil. The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following:

Restraint must NOT:

- involve hitting the pupil
- involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- restrict the pupil's breathing
- involve contact with sexually sensitive areas
- involve locking the pupil in a room

During any incident the person restraining should:

- offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- 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 pupil such as sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting

Physical intervention can take several forms. It can be:

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

It might involve staff:

- physically interposing between pupils
- blocking a pupil's path
- holding
- pushing

- pulling
- leading a pupil 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

Some Dos and don'ts

Do:

- be aware of any feelings of anger
- summon help
- continue to talk to the pupil in a calm way
- ensure a free passage of air through airways
- provide a soft surface if possible
- be aware of any accessories worn by you or the pupil that could cause injury
- hold the pupil's arms by his/her sides
- monitor the pupil's respiration, circulation and state of consciousness

Don't:

- try to manage on your own
- stop talking, even if the pupil does not reply
- straddle the pupil
- push their arms up their back
- touch the pupil near the throat or head
- put pressure on joints or on arterial pressure points (inside of upper arm, groin, neck)
- use facedown holds

Recording Incidents

It is a requirement that a written report is kept on any occasion when force is used; the member of staff concerned must advise the Headmistress or in her absence, another member of the SMT immediately following the incident and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards. The Head or other member of the SMT will inform parents on the same day – or as soon as practically possible – that physical intervention was used.

The report should include:

- the name(s) of the pupil(s) involved
- when and where the incident took place
- the name(s) of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident
- the reason that physical restraint was necessary
- how the incident began and progressed
- the pupil's / pupils' response and the outcome of the incident
- details of any injury suffered by the pupil / another pupil / member of staff, and any damage to property

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from their professional association or a senior colleague when writing a report.

The Headmistress will keep a confidential file detailing when restraint has been necessary.

References

Behaviour Management Policy

Child Protection Policy

Pastoral Care, Discipline and Exclusions Policy

First Aid Policy

SEND Policy

Supporting Children with Severe and/or Long Term Medical Condition in School Policy

Student Mental Health Policy

Pupil Code of Conduct

School and City of London Equal Opportunities Policies