



**CHESTERTON
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**Chesterton Community College
Physical Intervention Policy
March 2015**

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION POLICY

Chesterton Community College

1. WHY WE HAVE THIS POLICY

All school staff need to feel that they are able to manage inappropriate behaviour, and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviours might be communicating. They need to know what options are available for managing behaviour, and they need to be free of undue worries about the risks of legal action against them if they use appropriate physical intervention.

Parents need to know that their children are safe with us, and they need to be properly informed if their child is the subject of a Restrictive Physical Intervention, including the nature of the intervention, and the rationale for its use.

It is also important to set out when other physical intervention with children that is not restrictive may occasionally be appropriate (Section 6).

2. DEFINITION OF “RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION”

“Restrictive Physical Intervention” is the term used to describe interventions where bodily contact using force is used to control or manage a child’s behaviour. It refers to any instance in which a member of staff has to use “reasonable force” to control or restrain students in circumstances that meet the following legally defined criteria:

- To prevent a child from committing a criminal offence (*this applies even if the child is below the age of criminal responsibility*)
- To prevent a child from injuring self or others
- To prevent or stop a child from causing serious damage to property (*including the child’s own property*)
- To stop the child from engaging in any behaviour which is prejudicial to maintaining the good order and discipline at the school.

There is no legal definition of “reasonable force”. However, there are two relevant considerations:

- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of an incident warrant it;
- the degree of force must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or consequences it is intended to prevent.

The definition of physical force also includes the use of mechanical devices (eg splints on the student prescribed by medical colleagues to prevent self-injury), forcible seclusion or use of locked doors. It is important for staff to note that, although no physical contact may be made in the latter situations, this is still regarded as a Restrictive Physical Intervention.

3. WHEN THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS MAY BE APPROPRIATE

Restrictive Physical Interventions will be used when all other strategies have failed, and therefore only as a last resort. However there are other situations when physical handling may be necessary, for example in a situation of clear danger or extreme urgency. Certain students may become distressed, agitated, and out of control, and need calming with a brief Restrictive Physical Intervention that is un-resisted after a few seconds.

The safety and well-being of all staff and students are important considerations. Under certain conditions this duty must be an over-riding factor.

4. WHO MAY USE RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

All school staff have the legal power to use Restrictive Physical Intervention. Staff should not be expected to put themselves in danger and should always remember that removing other students and themselves from risky situations may be the right thing to do. We value staff efforts to rectify what can be very difficult situations and in which they exercise their duty of care for the students.

5. PLANNING FOR THE USE OF RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS The principles relating to the intervention are as follows:

- Restrictive Physical Intervention is an act of care and control, not punishment. It is never used to force compliance with staff instructions
- Restrictive Physical Intervention will only be used in circumstances when one or more of the legal criteria for its use are met (Section 2).
- Staff will only use it when there are good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary and that it is in the student's and/or other students' best interests for staff to intervene physically.
- Staff will use the minimum force needed to restore safety and appropriate behaviour.
- Where possible, staff will take steps in advance to avoid the need for Restrictive Physical Intervention through dialogue and diversion. The student will be warned, at their level of understanding, that Restrictive Physical Intervention will be used unless they cease the unacceptable behaviour
- Only the minimum force necessary will be used
- Staff will be able to show that the intervention used was a reasonable response to the incident
- Every effort will be made to secure the presence of other staff, and these staff may act as assistants and/or witnesses
- As soon as it is safe, the Restrictive Physical Intervention will be relaxed to allow the student to regain self-control
- Escalation will be avoided at all costs, especially if it would make the overall situation more destructive and unmanageable
- The age, understanding, and competence of the individual student will always be taken into account
- Procedures are in place, through the pastoral system of the school, for supporting and debriefing students and staff after every incident of Restrictive Physical Intervention, as it is essential to safeguard the emotional well-being of all involved at these times.
- A written record will be made of any use of Restrictive Physical Intervention which will include the circumstances requiring the RPI to be used, the rationale for its use, the nature of the RPI and the debriefing
- Parents will be fully informed on the same day of the circumstances requiring the RPI, the rationale for it and nature of it. This will happen as soon as possible after the incident.

6. ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

There are occasions when staff will have cause to have physical contact with students for a variety of reasons other than restrictive physical intervention. For example:

- to comfort a student in distress (so long as this is appropriate to their age);
- to gently direct a student;
- for curricular reasons (for example in PE, Drama etc);
- in an emergency to avert danger to the student or students;
- in rare circumstances, when Restrictive Physical Intervention is warranted.

In all situations where physical contact between staff and students takes place, staff must consider the following:

- the student's age and level of understanding;
- the student's individual characteristics and history;
- the location where the contact takes place (it should not take place in private without others present).

Physical contact is never made as a punishment, or to inflict pain. All forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Physical contact will not be made with the participant's neck, breasts, abdomen, genital area, other sensitive body parts, or to put pressure on joints. It will not become a habit between a member of staff and a particular student.

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