

The St Michael Steiner School

Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy and Procedure

Policy

This policy and procedure is drawn up with regard to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and the Staff Code of Conduct. It is concerned with the use of holding to control or restrain pupils when it becomes necessary.

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. In addition, adults other than teachers who may be authorised to be in charge of children, e.g. assistants, after school care and voluntary helpers including parents, need to know exactly what they may do, and under what circumstances. This policy provides that guidance.

We recognise that there are times when physical contact with a pupil may be **appropriate or** necessary; for example: giving first aid, if a child is in distress or needs comfort or calming down.

We also recognise that there are some children for whom touching is unwelcome because of their cultural background or personal history. Staff should make themselves and each other aware of these children as far as possible and take their feelings into account in situations where restraint becomes necessary.

Staff will always try to use strategies and techniques other than physical restraint to deal with difficult situations. In a non-urgent situation restraint will only be used when all other strategies have failed.

Staff should not risk their own safety by trying to physically restrain older pupils, but should move other pupils away and call for help.

Procedure

Whenever a member of staff is met with a situation where they need to consider holding a child, they will first give verbal signals that are repetitive and familiar, and which warn the child that holding may be necessary, e.g. 'I won't let you hurt your friends/me', 'Please, stop hitting', 'I won't let you do that, it's not safe', 'If you don't stop, I will have to hold you'

If the child does not modify their behaviour as a response to these signals, or in a more escalated situation, and needs to be held, the member of staff will:

- Adopt a calm and measured approach
- Attempt to hold the child around their waist and sit with the child.

In the case of a small child, the staff member may need to lift the child, holding them underneath their arms. If needed, all other children will be asked to leave the room, and another teacher will be called to assist the group.

If this does not help or calm the child quite quickly, an attempt will be made, appropriate to the child's age, to take the child into another space and allow them the freedom to cry or speak out, always being supervised by a member of staff.

If the child is striking out (e.g.: hitting, scratching, biting, kicking, or pulling hair) at a teacher or another child, they may need their hands and or feet holding (restraint) until they can be removed from the situation.

It is important for staff to have an inward intention of love and care, to be aware of holding the child with firmness, not rigidity or hardness. Check your grip.

A child/student may be held (restrained) under the following circumstances:

- If they are causing injury to themselves or another child/student
- If they try to physically attack a teacher/assistant
- If they are causing damage to property
- If they are engaged in behaviour that compromises good order and discipline
- If they try to run out of the building or school grounds or into a place where they could endanger themselves.
- If the child suffered a medical emergency, is refusing first aid, and not providing first aid could lead to a serious health consequence

In addition, any member of staff can use reasonable force, should it become necessary, to conduct a search for the following prohibited 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 cannot be used to search for other items banned under the school rules.

Every effort will be made to prevent injury when using restraint and to avoid holding or touching a pupil in an inappropriate way.

In an emergency, any member of staff is entitled to intervene, and should do so.

In the case of a child with a disability or special educational needs (SEN), we have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments in line with their needs should physical intervention become necessary.

Record keeping

A written record of any incident where restraint was used must be made promptly using the Incident form on 'Engage', (the school's online portal), and the Kindergarten/Class Teacher or Class Guardian of the pupil involved must be informed. If one can't access Engage immediately after the incident, please make a note of:

- the names of those involved
- any witnesses
- the reason for intervention
- details of the incident
- any steps taken to defuse the situation
- what action was taken
- the outcome
- any injuries or damage sustained

The incident **should** be reported in the relevant faculty meeting and at the next College meeting.

The pupil's parents will be informed of any incident involving the use of restraint.

A risk assessment may be drawn up and put in place if relevant for a particular pupil.

It also recognises that there are some children for whom touching is unwelcome because of their cultural background or personal history. Staff will aim to make colleagues aware of any individuals for whom touching is difficult and to develop clear common practice in relation to them, and generally in response to situations where holding may become necessary.

Complaints about physical restraint

Any complaints from pupils or parents will be dealt with through the Parents' Complaints Procedure.

Any inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Updated by P. Brewin, June 2024

Review date: June 2025

Note: this policy was updated in line with the 2013 'Use of reasonable force' guidance from the DfE. There was a 'call for evidence' in February 2023 in relation to this guidance, which may therefore change in the near future.