

RESTRAINT of STUDENTS

POLICY

Rationale:

- The physical restraint of a student is a matter often clouded in misinformation. The physical restraint of a student by staff can (and sometimes should) occur in certain circumstances, but is generally a measure of last resort to prevent an individual harming themselves or others.

Aims:

- To clarify misconceptions relating to the restraint of students, and to identify the circumstances by which the restraint of a student is the proper course of action.

Implementation:

- Regulation 15 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 states: *“A member of the staff of a Government school may take any reasonable action that is immediately required to restrain a student of the school from acts or behaviour dangerous to the member of staff, the student or any other person.”*
- The regulation authorises ‘reasonable’ action which is ‘immediately’ required to ‘restrain’ a student.
- In less serious cases, the reasonable action would involve a warning or instruction to the student not to proceed.
- In emergency cases where an imminent threat of injury to a student or others is reasonably predicted, and there is no reasonable alternative, the reasonable action may involve the physical restraint of the student.
- The object of the restraint is to avert the danger to themselves or another person. It should therefore be measured (i.e. reasonable in the circumstances) and removed once the danger has passed. Staff should make it clear to the student when and why the restraint is to be applied. Staff should also calmly explain that the restraint will stop once it is no longer necessary to protect the student and/or others.
- Examples of students being lawfully restrained by staff members may include restraining students from fighting after they have ignored instructions to do so, restraining a young student from running out of the school grounds onto a busy road, or restraining a student who is emotionally reacting in a way that they may injure themselves.
- It is not uncommon that parents will threaten legal action if ever their child is touched by a staff member. Such threats or the possibility of such threats should not prevent staff members from carrying out their duty of care.
- The staff member(s) involved in the restraint must immediately notify the principal of the incident, who will contact the parents, record the incident, and ensure follow-up support is provided to both the students and staff as required (including bystanders). Disciplinary action for students who have needed to be restrained may also be warranted.
- It is recognised that some students with intellectual or physical disabilities may at times have difficulty controlling their bodies, and therefore may need to have flailing limbs etc guided or restrained by staff as a normal procedure.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in...

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