

Westlink is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of students and staff and, in line with relevant legislation, only permits physical restraint by reasonable and non-injurious means. Physical restraint shall only be used in emergency situations (unless specifically identified in a student's IEP) and only after less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and always with extreme caution. 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 CEO / Principal authorises staff to use physical restraint as a positive strategy to de-escalate potentially dangerous situations and to regain control of a student who has temporarily lost control of him/herself.

For the purpose of this policy document, physical restraint is defined as the positive application of force in order to protect or prevent a student from causing injury to him/herself, or other students, or staff. Injury means 'significant injury'; this would include actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or sexual abuse, risking the lives of, or injury to themselves or others, by wilful or reckless behaviour, and self-poisoning. Any incident involving the use of restraint is recorded in writing and the relevant staff member must inform the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. Use of physical restraint must not be used in the following circumstances:

- As a means of punishment
- As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with an Academy rule or staff directive, disrespectful verbal comments that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious or physical harm

Implementation of the Physical Restraint Policy is the responsibility of the Principal of the Academy; in their absence, responsibility lies with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. WHAT IS REASONABLE FORCE? The term 'reasonable force' covers a broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involves a degree of physical contact with students. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances, such as breaking up a fight, or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

As mentioned above, schools/academies generally use force to control students and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between

students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact, such as leading a student by the arm out of a classroom.

Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention. Academy staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injury to the student.

When can reasonable force be used?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. In the Academy, force is used for two main purposes: to control students or to restrain them determined by the extreme circumstances outlined above. The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The School can use reasonable force to:

- Prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk their safety and that of others
- Prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight
- Restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

The School has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEND). PROCEDURES GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency, provided they follow the guidelines in this policy. However, they should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues. In any application of physical restraint, the minimum reasonable force should be used to calm down the situation. Help should be summoned from colleagues; students should never be involved in restraint.

The student should be approached calmly but firmly. Where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour should be explained and it should be communicated to the student that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach is required by staff throughout. The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time.

Restraint must not:

- Involve hurting the student
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the student
- Restrict the student's breathing
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas
- Involve locking the student in a room During any incident the person restraining should:
- Offer a verbal reassurance to the student
- 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 student such as sudden change in colour, difficulty breathing or vomiting

Physical restraint can be:

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

Physical intervention can take several forms and may involve staff:

- Physically interposing between students
- Blocking a student's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a student by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back, or in extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds

Do:

- Summon help
- Ensure a free passage of air through airways
- Be aware of any feelings of anger
- Continue to talk to the student in a calm way
- Provide a soft surface if possible
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the student that could cause injury
- Monitor the student's respiration, circulation and state of consciousness

Don't:

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking, even if the student does not reply
- Straddle the student
- Push their arms up their back
- Touch the student 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 record is kept on any occasion when physical restraint is used: the member of staff concerned must advise the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately following an incident, and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards.

The report should include:

- The name(s) of the student(s) involved and age
- When and where the incident took place
- The name(s) of any other staff or students who witnessed the incident
- The reason the physical restraint was necessary. Consider student's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time
- How the incident began and progressed
- Degree of force used
- The student's response and the outcome of the incident
- Details of any injury suffered by the student/another student/member of staff and any damage to property
- Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from their professional association or a member of the Senior Leadership Team when writing a report

Contact should be made with the parents as soon as practically possible to explain the seriousness of the incident.

What happens if a student complains when force is used on them?

The School will investigate all complaints about the use of force thoroughly, speedily and appropriately.

When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted

reasonably. Suspension must not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force.

**Power to search students without consent** In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described in this policy, the Principal and delegated members of the Senior Leadership Team can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following ‘banned items’:

- knives and weapon
- 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 can be used to search for items banned under the Academy rules.