

St Benedict's Catholic College



Physical intervention policy

Date reviewed	February 2025
Noted by Governors	March 2025
Due for review	Spring Term 2028

St Benedict's Catholic College

Physical intervention / positive handling policy



1. Introduction

At St Benedict's Catholic College we have high expectations in all that we do including student behaviour. We also recognise our responsibility and duty to care for and support one another as adults and students.

In general it is important that adults working in schools avoid physical contact with students but it is neither desirable nor possible to have a total 'no contact' policy as there are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a student is proper and necessary. (e.g. providing first aid, demonstrating use of a musical instrument, demonstrating sports techniques or when comforting a distressed student.)¹

One such occasion where contact may be necessary is where there is a need for appropriate physical restraint or the use of reasonable force, both of which are permitted in law (**DfE Use of Reasonable Force Non Statutory Guidance 2025**) to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property in such a way that it could cause serious injury to themselves or others or from causing disorder. It is recognised that in practice the use of reasonable force will be a rare event.

The Governing Body is committed to supporting the College policy of 'de-escalation'. De-escalation is defined by the College as '**reducing the intensity of a conflict or potentially violent situation**'. All college staff do everything possible to de-escalate situations as appropriate.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the DfE Searching, screening and confiscation at school guidance and Essex County Council's Understanding and Supporting Behaviour – Safe Practice for Schools and Educational Settings <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Explain the rights of staff to use reasonable force when necessary
- Explain the nature of reasonable force
- Set out the circumstances in which reasonable force may be justified
- Set out the complaints process

3. Guidelines

3.1 The rights of staff and others

All members of staff have a legal power to use reasonable force² within the limitations of this policy and there may be occasions when failure to do so could breach the duty of care towards students. The college will support staff where a member of staff uses reasonable force within the context of this policy.

3.2.1 What is reasonable force?

Reasonable force is physical contact by a member of staff on a pupil to control or restrain their actions or movements. Reasonable means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances. Any use of reasonable force may or may not involve the use of restraint.

¹ (DfE 'Use of Reasonable Force' non- statutory guidance 2013)

² Section 93 - Education and Inspections Act 2006

Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools 2025

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3.2.2 What is a restrictive intervention?

Restrictive interventions are any planned or reactive action which limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently. Restrictive interventions may include the use of equipment, medication or seclusion. Restrictive interventions may or may not involve the use of reasonable force.

3.2.3 What is restraint?

Restraint is a form of restrictive intervention involving direct physical contact and force where the intention is to prevent, restrict or subdue movement of the body or part of the body, of a pupil. Restraint may include mechanical or chemical restraint. Restraint may or may not involve the use of force.

3.3 When can reasonable force be used?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property in such a way that it could cause serious injury to themselves or others or from causing disorder.

The decision on whether or not to use reasonable force is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. Staff should always consider three matters when deciding if reasonable force is required:

- 1) Is it necessary? Are there other ways to achieve the desired outcome? Will reasonable force reduce the situational risks?
- 2) Is it proportionate? Staff should use the least amount of force or least restrictive intervention necessary for the least amount of time to reduce the relevant and situational risks.
- 3) Have you considered the student's welfare? Staff should consider the overall impact on the student's welfare balanced against any actions taken. Staff should clearly and calmly communicate to the pupil what is happening if possible.

There is no need for parental consent prior to using reasonable force. In using reasonable force, reasonable adjustments must be made for students with special educational needs or disabilities.

It is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of all the situations in which it might be appropriate to use reasonable force and they will in practice be rare but some examples of where reasonable force may be necessary are to:

- Remove a disruptive student from a classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to leave
- Prevent a student behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a college event
- Prevent a student leaving a classroom where allowing them to leave would seriously risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the learning or behaviour of others
- Prevent a student from harming a member of staff or another student
- Restrain a student at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts
- Physically separate students found fighting

The use of reasonable force to search students without consent is explained in the college search protocol which can be found within the behaviour for learning policy published on the College website.

4. Complaints

All complaints about the use of force will be investigated thoroughly, speedily and appropriately by a person appointed by the Principal or where appropriate the Chair of Governors.

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5. Review & monitoring

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. After each use of reasonable force, a thorough review will be undertaken by the college to understand why such actions were used, what the impact has been on students and staff, any patterns or trends and how such actions might be avoided in the future.

If necessary, after such incidents, medical assessment and treatment will be sought for any injuries. The college will monitor student and staff wellbeing through follow up conversations, counselling or other relevant methods. Any student who has witnessed restraint or the use of reasonable force and is distressed will also be supported appropriately.

Next Review: Spring 2028

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Appendix A

Record of incident Requiring Physical Intervention (RPI)

Child name:	DoB:	Year group:

Reporting member of staff:	
Date of incident:	
Start time of incident:	
End time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of additional staff witness:	Name(s) of additional child witness:

Stressors leading up to the hyperarousal and distress

Co-regulation prior to the decision to use of RPI			
Verbal advice and support		Swapping of staff	
Calm talking and Reassurance		Distraction/diversion	
Personalised co-regulation script		Offering choices and options	
Humour		Offering safe space	
Other (specify)			

Why the RPI was deemed absolutely necessary	To prevent harm to self	
	To prevent harm to another child (children)	
	To prevent harm to adults	
	To prevent damage to property	
	To prevent harm from absconding (in accordance with policy)	
The harm predicted to be prevented by the RPI (e.g. bruising to peers, lacerations, destruction of computer, climbing over high fence, climbing on roof)		
Unresolved harm/ details of damage to property (costs and details of harm to people including medical intervention or damage to property)		
Was a medical record completed	Yes / No	

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Specific details of the RPI including sequence of techniques, time and staff involved			
Time	Technique	Staff name	
Duration of RPI:		Duration of the incident:	
Was there any physical mark or harm caused by the use of RPI to the child?	Yes / No	Details	
What action has been taken?			
Has the incident been reported to the Children Safeguarding Team (Local Authority Designated Officer)?	Yes / No	Details	
Incident reporting and monitoring			
	Name	Time and date	
Incident reported to Senior staff by:			
Parents / Carer verbally informed by:			
Parents / Carer letter sent:			
Child wellbeing check by:			
Staff wellbeing verified by:			
Restorative conversation with child			

Care for Child following the RPI

Verification of account of incident		
Staff name	Staff signature	Date
Reporting staff name		RPI checker and approver name
Signature		Signature