



THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF
ALMERÍA

USE OF REASONABLE FORCE OR PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

OWNER	THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF ALMERIA
TYPE OF PAPER	POLICY
TOPIC AREA	SAFEGUARDING
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LANGUAGE	ENGLISH

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A. PURPOSE

THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF ALMERIA expects that all staff and volunteers in our school recognise where a student is at risk of, or is actually being harmed and do all they can to reduce further risk or harm. The school seeks to ensure that every student is free from physical harm but it does recognise that there will be instances where a member of staff has to resort to the use of reasonable force to ensure the safety of all students. This document highlights the procedures to be followed in the event that Reasonable Physical Force is required to ensure the safety of a student or students. It is important to note that **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT SHALL ONLY BE USED IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, AFTER OTHER LESS INTRUSIVE ALTERNATIVES HAVE FAILED OR BEEN DEEMED INAPPROPRIATE.**

B. DEFINITIONS

“Reasonable force” refers the broad range of actions used by a member of staff that involves a degree of physical contact with students. 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.

“Physical restraint” refers to the use of bodily force to limit a student’s freedom of movement.

“Physical escort” refers the touching or holding of a student without the use of force for the purpose of directing the student.

“Seclusion restraint” refers to physically confining a student alone in a room or limited space without access to school staff. **The use of a seclusion restraint is expressly prohibited!**

“Chemical restraint” refers to the administration of medication for the purpose of restraint. **The use of a chemical restraint is expressly prohibited!**

C. USE OF INTERVENTIONS

There are a variety of appropriate responses to student behaviour that may require immediate intervention. These alternative methods should be used first when seeking to prevent student violence, self-injurious behaviour and/or de-escalating potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student.

Examples of interventions and less intrusive methods that may preclude the need for the use of physical restraint, include but are not limited to the following:

- **Verbal Prompt** – A verbal prompt is communicating what is expected behaviour by clearly stating instructions and expectations.

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- **Full or Partial Physical Cue** – A full or partial physical cue is anytime a member of staff needs to place their hands on a student or physically redirect a student. These are used at increasing levels as needed to return a student safely back to task.
- **Physical Escort** – A physical escort is utilised if a student inappropriately wanders or does not comply to walk to a specific location. A member of staff “escorts” them back to appropriate location. A physical escort is done by standing just behind the student, grasping the child above the elbow with one hand and placing the other hand between the student’s shoulder blades and then “escorting” the student in a firm and brisk manner to the task.

Note- No grasp should be too firm as to leave a bruise/mark on the student.

- **Physical Redirection** – When a student inappropriately gets out of his or her seat or leave the classroom, the student should be physically “redirected” back to his or her chair. A physical redirection is done by placing one hand on each of the student’s shoulders and returning the student back to the learning area.
- **Time Out** – A time out is a period of time in which the student is unable to access any form of rewarding consequences. **A student should never be left unsupervised during a Time Out**

D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DE-ESCALATING POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS BEHAVIOR OCCURRING AMONG GROUPS OF STUDENTS OR WITH AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT:

- **Remain calm** - To possibly help prevent the likelihood of a student experiencing distress from escalating his/her behaviour, use a neutral and level tone of voice, control one’s facial expressions and use a supportive non-threatening body language.
- **Obtain Assistance** – Whenever possible, a member of staff should immediately take steps to notify other school personnel of a potentially dangerous situation to obtain additional assistance.
- **One Person Speaks** - In order to minimise the likelihood of confusion and/or the likelihood of a student experiencing distress from escalating his/her behaviour, having one person providing overall direction to the response and the follow up procedures is advisable. This often may be the person with the most information about the particular situation.
- **Remove Student If Possible** – Having a student experiencing distress leave an area with other students and move to another more private and safe area in order to de-escalate should be considered.
- **Remove Other Students** – If it is not feasible to have a student experiencing distress move to a more private and safe area in order to de-escalate, consider having other staff assist and monitor the removal of other students to another area within the school until the student de escalates.

E. DETERMINING WHEN TO USE A PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

If all other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate to prevent student violence, self-injurious behaviour and/or de-escalating potentially dangerous behaviour occurring among groups of students or with an individual student, a physical restraint may be used.

In other words, a physical restraint can only be used when non-physical interventions would not be effective and **the student's behaviour poses a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to himself/herself or others**. Any physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

F. PROHIBITIONS ON USE OF A PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

The use of a physical restraint as a means of punishment or as a response to the destruction of property, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm is **expressly prohibited**.

G. PROPER ADMINISTRATION OF A PHYSICAL RESTRAINT:

- Whenever possible, the administration of the physical restraint shall be witnessed by at least one member of staff who does not participate in the physical restraint.
- When administering a physical restraint, school personnel shall use only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury.
- Additionally, school personnel administering a physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation and shall discontinue the restraint as soon as possible.
- During the restraint the member of staff should verbally reassure the student that they are performing those actions to keep the student and others safe and that they will let go once the student is calm.

Prohibited restraints:

1. Prone physical restraints (student face-down on his/her stomach)
2. Supine physical restraints (student face-up on his/her back)
3. Any physical restraint that places pressure or weight on chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back, neck, or throat.
4. Mechanical restraints of any kind.
5. Chemical restraints of any kind.

H. SAFETY REQUIREMENTS:

No restraints shall be administered in such a way that a student is prevented from breathing or speaking.

- During the administration of a restraint, school personnel shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin colour and respiration.
- A restraint shall be immediately released upon a determination by the school personnel administering the restraint that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm to himself, herself or others.

- If, at any time during a physical restraint the student demonstrates significant physical distress, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
- School personnel should remember that at any time during the administration of a physical restraint, they may seek to contact the Special Education Coordinator and/or the school nurse

I. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Any physical restraint of five minutes or longer and/or any physical restraint that results in an injury to a student or staff member must be reported.
- The member of staff involved in the restraint shall complete a **CAUSE FOR CONCERN FORM** and notify the Headteacher or Safeguarding Lead of the physical restraint as soon as possible (no longer than **15 minutes** after restraint took place)
- The Headteacher or designee will immediately notify the parent/guardian of the physical restraint.
- The Headteacher or designee will also send a written notification via email to the parent/guardian.
- The school shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint of five minutes or longer and/or any physical restraint that results in an injury to a student or staff.

J. FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

At an appropriate time after a student has been released from a restraint, the school shall implement the follow-up procedures below:

- The student should be offered a safe place to recuperate as they are likely to be physically exhausted after being restrained.
- Review the restraint with the student to address the behaviour that precipitated the restraint;
- Review the incident with school personnel who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed
- Consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for the students who witnessed the incident.

K. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

A parent/guardian, who has concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint, may seek to resolve their concerns by raising the issue with the Headteacher of the school.

- The parent/guardian should direct their concerns the Headteacher within 5 days of the written notification from the school.
- The Headteacher shall attempt, within his/her authority to work with the individual to resolve the complaint fairly and expeditiously.
- If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the resolution the incident will be referred the ISP Regional Director for further investigation.

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