USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

This College-wide guidance applies to all pupils including those in the EYFS. Care and consideration will be given to the age of the child when following this guidance.

This guidance applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the College including governors.

This guidance has been written using advice taken from *Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies* (DfE 2013). The College acknowledges its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN) as per the Equality Act 2010.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this guidance

- **Reasonable force** is defined as using no more force than is needed in the circumstances
- **Physical restraint** is defined as the positive application of force in order to protect/prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others or seriously damaging property. It is necessary in more extreme cases, for example to stop a physical fight.
- **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.

WHO CAN USE REASONABLE FORCE?

- All members of the College staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school.
- It can also apply to people whom the Headmaster has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a College organised visit.
- 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.

Reviewed – January 2022
Next review – January 2023

WHEN CAN REASONABLE FORCE BE USED?

Reasonable force can be used:

- To prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- To control pupils or to restrain them.
- To remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.
- To prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a College event or College trip or visit.
- To prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to a behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- To prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff of another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground.
- To restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

WHEN CAN REASONABLE FORCE NOT BE USED?

Reasonable force can **never** be used as a form of punishment.

GUIDANCE FOR THE USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Professional judgement should be used in circumstances where the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed.

- Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency provided they follow the guidelines in this policy.
- Staff 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; pupils should never be involved in restraint.

What to do in circumstances when the use of physical restraint and reasonable force is needed

- Approach the pupil calmly but firmly.
- Where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behaviour should be explained and it should be communicated to the pupil 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.

Method of restraint

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time and must observe the following:

Restraint must not:

- Involve hurting the pupil

- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the pupil
- Restrict the pupil's breathing
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas
- Involve locking the pupil in a room

During any incident the person restraining should:

- Offer verbal reassurance to the pupil
- 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 pupil 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 pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Holding
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back or in extreme circumstances using more restrictive holds.

Do:

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

Don't:

- Try to manage on your own.
- Stop talking, even if the pupil does not reply.
- Straddle the pupil.
- Push their arms up their back.
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head.
- Put pressure on joints or on arterial pressure points (inside of upper arm, groin, neck)
- Use facedown holds.

RECORD KEEPING

- Minor or everyday use of reasonable force does not need to be recorded. For example, very young children running off in the playground and being guided back to the line by the teacher or assistant.
- All more serious incidents involving the use of physical restraint must be reported to the Headmaster and the Deputy Head Pastoral or the Head of the Junior School (as appropriate) as soon as possible after the incident. These must be recorded on MyConcern.

INFORMING PARENTS

- Staff need to use their professional judgement on whether to inform a parent, depending on the seriousness of the incident.
- In a serious incident where a member of staff has had to physically restrain a pupil, the parent will be informed on the day and the conversation must be followed up in writing to the parent.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PUPIL COMPLAINS WHEN FORCE IS USED ON THEM?

- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- 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.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed (P1).