



**THE CHERWELL SCHOOL**  
OPPORTUNITY, RESPONSIBILITY, EXCELLENCE

## **POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY**

Person responsible for policy: Deputy Headteacher

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Governor Committee: SIC



## THE CHERWELL SCHOOL

### POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY

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Our policy has been written with guidance from the 'Use of Reasonable Force' advice published by the DFE.

#### **When physical contact can be used?**

There are occasions when physical contact with a student is "proper and necessary".

These may include:

- Comforting a distressed pupil
- Congratulating or praising a pupil
- Demonstrating how to use a musical instrument
- Demonstrating exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- Giving first aid

At The Cherwell School, we are committed to a positive behaviour policy, which encourages students to make positive behaviour choices. We do however recognise that students sometimes do make the wrong choices. On rare occasions, this may result in a situation that requires some form of physical intervention by staff. Our policy for physical intervention is based upon the following principles:-

- Physical intervention should be used only as a last resort when other appropriate strategies have failed
- Any physical contact should be only the minimum required
- Physical intervention must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned
- **Incidents must be recorded and reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible**
- Parents and Carers will be informed of each incident

#### **Our approach**

At The Cherwell School, we aim to avoid the need for physical intervention and regard this as a last resort in a minority of situations. We always aim to deal with behaviour using a positive approach and therefore this policy should be read in connection with our Behaviour for Learning Policy



It is not possible to define every circumstance in which physical intervention would be necessary or appropriate and staff will have to exercise their own judgement in situations which arise within the above categories. Staff should always act within the our Behaviour for Learning policy, particularly in dealing with disruptive behaviour

Staff should be aware that when they are in charge of children during the school day, or during other supervised activities, they are acting in *loco parentis* and have a 'Duty of Care' to all children they are in charge of. They must, therefore, take reasonable action to ensure all pupils' safety and well being

Staff are not expected to place themselves in situations where they are likely to suffer injury as a result of their intervention. In all cases staff should send for assistance. Reasonable force may be used as an intervention and there are staff in school who have been trained in restraint using the 'Team Teach' principles'.

### **What is reasonable force?**

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.

Force is usually used to either control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil 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 generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.

Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example, when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

Cherwell 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 injuring the pupil.

### **Who can use reasonable force?**

All members of Cherwell School staff have a legal power to use reasonable force.

This power applies to any member of staff at Cherwell. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.



## **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.

At Cherwell School, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.

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 following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

### **Schools can use reasonable force to:**

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, e.g. to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

**Schools cannot use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.**

### **Searching Students**

Head teachers and authorised school staff may also use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances when conducting a search without consent for knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images or articles that have been or could be used to commit an offence or cause harm.

Schools can also identify additional items in their school rules which may be searched for without consent. Force cannot be used to search for these items. At Cherwell the Headteacher authorises his Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Year Leaders to conduct such searches. Please refer to our Right to Search Policy for further information

### **Use of physical restraint**

Physical restraint should be applied as an act of care and control with the intention or re-establishing verbal control as soon as possible and, at the same time, allow the student to regain self-control. It should never take a form which could be seen as punishment.



Cherwell Staff are only authorised to use reasonable force in applying physical restraint, although there is no absolute definition of this. What constitutes reasonable force depends upon the particular situation and the student to whom it is being applied. However, as a general rule, only the force necessary to stop or prevent danger should be used, in accordance with the guidelines below.

In all circumstances, alternative methods should be used as appropriate with physical intervention or restraint, a last resort.

When physical restraint becomes necessary:

- Tell the student what you are doing and why
- Use the minimum force necessary
- Involve another member of staff if possible
- Tell the student what s/he must do for you to remove the restraint (this may need frequent repetition)
- Use simple and clear language
- Hold limbs above a major joint if possible e.g. above the elbow
- Relax your restraint in response to the pupil's compliance

### **Actions after an incident**

Physical restraint often occurs in response to highly charged emotional situations and there is a clear need for debriefing after the incident, both for the staff involved and the pupil. The Headteacher should be informed of any incident as soon as possible and will take responsibility for making arrangements for debriefing once the situation has stabilised. An appropriate member of the teaching staff should always be involved in debriefing the pupil involved and any victims of the incident should be offered support, and their parents informed.

If the behaviour is part of an ongoing pattern it may be necessary to address the situation through the development of an appropriate behaviour support plan, which may include an anger management programme, or other strategies, agreed by the Headteacher. This may require additional support from, other services.

In some circumstances an Early Help Assessment may be appropriate to help identify an additional need for a particular student.

It is also helpful to consider the circumstances precipitating the incident to explore ways in which future incidents can be avoided.

All incidents should be recorded immediately on the Pupil Restraint Report Form (attached). All sections of this report should be completed so that any patterns of behaviour can be identified and addressed.

A copy will be filed in the child's appropriate file and in a central school file in order to inform individual and school risk assessments.



A member of the pastoral team will contact parents as soon as possible after an incident, normally on the same day, to inform them of the actions that were taken and why, and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss it.

### **Risk Assessments**

If we become aware that a student is likely to behave in a disruptive way that may require the use of reasonable force, we will plan how to respond if the situation arises. Such planning will address:

- Strategies to be used prior to intervention
- Ways of avoiding 'triggers' if these are known
- Involvement of parents to ensure that they are clear about the specific action the school might need to take
- Briefing of staff to ensure they know exactly what action they should be taking (this may identify a need for training or guidance)
- Identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate
- The school's duty of care to all pupils and staff

It is our intention to inform all staff, pupils, parents and governors about these procedures and the context in which they apply.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies

- Behaviour for Learning
- Right to Search



**THE CHERWELL SCHOOL**

**RECORD OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION OR RESTRAINT**

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| STUDENT :  | FORM:             |
| DATE OF INCIDENT:  | TIME OF INCIDENT: |
| MEMBER OF STAFF INVOLVED:  |                   |
| ADULT WITNESS TO RESTRAINT:  |                   |
| STUDENT WITNESS TO RESTRAINT:                                      |                   |
| OUTLINE OF EVENT LEADING TO RESTRAINT                              |                   |
| OUTLINE OF INCIDENT OF RESTRAINT (including restraint method used) |                   |



OUTCOME OF RESTRAINT

DESCRIPTION OF ANY INJURY(IES) SUSTAINED BY INJURED STUDENT  
AND ANY SUBSEQUENT TREATMENT

DATE PARENT/CARER INFORMED OF INCIDENT:

BY WHOM INFORMED:

OUTLINE OF PARENT/CARER RESPONSE

SIGNATURE OF STAFF COMPLETING REPORT:

DATE:

SIGNATURE OF HT:

DATE:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ANY SUBSEQUENT INJURY/COMPLAINT OR  
ACTION