



St Mary's School  
Gerrards Cross

## PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY

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### MONITORING AND REVIEW

Person Responsible	Deputy Head
Reviewed by	SLT
Approved by	SLT
Frequency of Review	Annually
Date of Last Review	March 2026
Date of Next Review	March 2027

The School refers to all staff and students in St Mary's School, which includes the Early Years/Foundations Stage (EYFS), the Preparatory Department (Years 1-6), Senior House (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form (Years 12-13).

The term 'parent' refers to those who have parental responsibility for a child.

### AIMS

The aims of this policy are:

- To inform Governors, staff, and parents of the powers of staff in circumstances where a student may need to be restrained and to describe other circumstances in which physical contact with a student may be required
- To ensure that the School has regard to Department of Education (DfE) non-statutory guidance "The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils"

## STATEMENT

St Marys School recognises that on some occasions it may be necessary, in the interests of all children and for the safety of all children, to physically restrain a child who is in danger of hurting themselves or others.

Parents will be informed of any incident where it has been necessary to restrain their child.

## WIDER REFERENCES

This policy operates within a wider national policy framework, which includes:

- Department for Education – Use of Reasonable Force
- Department for Education – Guidance on Searching, Screening, and Confiscation in schools (2023)
- Department for Education – Behaviour in Schools, Advice for head teachers and school staff (2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against teachers and Other Staff

## RELATED INTERNAL POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with St Mary's School:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Complaints Procedure

## CONTEXT

S. 93 *Education and Inspections Act 2006* enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing any offence
- Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the student himself/herself)
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs during a teaching session or otherwise

This policy recognises that there is a need to be sensitive to cultural and religious expectations of parents, students and staff.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection, low level concerns and/or disciplinary procedures. Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on themselves or on another, and then only as a last resort, when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents

of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the Head who will decide what to do next.

## AUTHORISED PHYSICAL CONTACT

The Head may authorise members of staff (including persons whom the Head has temporarily put in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit) to use such physical contact as may accord with good practice and be appropriate and proper for teaching and instruction and for providing comfort to a student in distress or to maintain safety and good order, or in connection with the student's health and welfare.

As a general principle, **teachers should not make unnecessary physical contact with their students.** However, there are occasions when physical contact is appropriate and/or necessary e.g. on those occasions in the course of teaching when, for example, a student is being shown how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during PE or ICT. In these situations, the member of staff should always explain what they are going to do and why, and ensure the student is comfortable with that action before proceeding.

## FIRST AID

The administration of First Aid will inevitably involve physical contact and First Aiders should ensure that others are present in circumstances when physical contact could be misconstrued. The First Aider will always explain to the student what they are doing and why, and check that the student is happy with the action to be taken if possible.

## UNAUTHORISED PHYSICAL CONTACT

Staff should not act in a way that could be expected to cause injury or take away the dignity of the student, for example:

- Holding a student around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the student's ability to breathe or to speak
- Slapping, punching or kicking a student
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping up a student
- Holding or pulling a student by the hair or ear
- Holding a student face down on the ground
- Using items of clothing or belts to restrict movement

## POWER TO RESTRAIN / REASONABLE FORCE

The Head may authorise any member of the teaching staff and also other staff (including persons whom the Head has temporarily put in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit) who have control or charge of students to use reasonable force only in circumstances where it is necessary to restrain a student. At St Marys School senior students given positions of responsibility (such as House Captains, or Duty Prefects) will **not** be authorised by the Head to use reasonable force to restrain or control a student.

Staff should take all reasonable steps to avoid using physical restraint and diffuse the situation. The staff member should be able to demonstrate that those steps were taken. Examples where restraint of a student is permitted include:

- Fighting
- On the verge of committing deliberate damage or vandalism to property
- Causing themselves or others to be at risk of injury by accident through rough play, or the misuse of dangerous materials or objects

Physical restraint should always be the last resort. Staff should delay if at all possible. However, in some circumstances e.g. a student running out onto the road, it might be deemed negligent if staff do not intervene.

The action taken must always be for the good of the student to keep them safe. It should be made clear to the student that the restraint is not a punishment.

Wherever possible staff should seek the assistance of another member of staff, as a witness to proceedings.

Other students should never be used in the process of restraint.

Restraint may involve blocking the path of students, positioning oneself between students, touching, holding, pushing, pulling or leading a student by the arm or shepherding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a student in a way that might be considered indecent. Staff should ensure, where possible, that the student maintains their dignity.

## REPORTING

The Head must always be informed immediately in cases of reasonable force or restraint. The circumstances must be recorded as soon as possible, including the student's behaviour and level of risk presented at the time of the incident, stating the time, duration, the degree of force and hold used, injuries, the effect on the student or member of staff, the student's age, witnesses and further actions or events. The incident should be followed up with time for the adult and student to talk about the situation; this should take place in the presence of a Senior Leader. In addition, there should be follow up and support for any student who witnessed the incident. The parents of the student should be informed by an appropriate Senior Leader.

## REVIEW OF PUPIL RESTRAINT PROCEDURES

When the situation has been resolved, the Head will review the reasons for the event happening and make any necessary amendments to School procedures.

A written record of any use of restraint on a student, the action taken and the reason given for the restraint, will be held centrally by the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the School who is responsible for matters relating to safeguarding, child protection and welfare. These records will be reviewed annually by the Head and members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

## COMPLAINTS

Where there is a complaint by a student about the use of force used on them, it will be speedily and appropriately investigated in line with the government guidance on 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against teachers and Other Staff' and the school Complaints Policy. Please see Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy for details on allegations against staff and the Whistleblowing Policy.