



Sacred Heart School

Service Before Self

Mission Statement:

The Sacred Heart is a Community committed to the education of its pupils in a Catholic Christian ethos, where each person is invited to serve God and others in faith, hope and love.

Aims:

- To foster spiritual growth in Christian faith and values
- To value, appreciate and enjoy learning
- To work for excellence
- To further curiosity and creativity
- To aspire to high ideals

Safeguarding

Restraint Policy

Aim:

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

It is very rare for restraint to be used at Sacred Heart but occasionally situations arise when it proves necessary for an adult in the school to use force (restraint) on a pupil. This policy describes the school's approach to the use of restraint. It is informed by non-statutory guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. EYFS staff are trained in means of restraint.

Who is authorised to use restraint?

All members of staff and voluntary helpers supervising school functions and those accompanying school expeditions are authorised to use restraint but it is expected that this right will be exercised sparingly and only under the circumstances described in this policy.

When is it appropriate to use restraint?

Reasonable force can only be used when the pupil who is misbehaving has been instructed to stop and has been warned about the consequences of failing to comply.

The only exception to this is if there is an immediate risk of injury.

It is appropriate to use restraint in certain circumstances if other strategies have not worked. However, it is important to note that often decisions to use restraint have to be made very quickly and under pressure and so all other strategies may not have been used on every occasion.

Examples of situations where it may be appropriate to use restraint are:

- A child attacks another child or member of staff
- Children are fighting or misusing dangerous materials or objects and causing risk of injury to themselves or others
- A child is committing, or on the verge of committing, damage to property
- A child persistently refuses an instruction to leave a classroom
- A child is seriously disrupting a lesson
- A child is attempting to abscond from school e.g. during a disciplinary incident
- A child is about to put themselves in danger e.g. a young child attempting to leave a room or the playground

How do we avoid the use of restraint?

Standards of behaviour in the school are generally high. If expectations of children's behaviour are high then there are fewer problems.

Clearly, a few children are more prone to outbursts and it is the responsibility of every member of staff to keep a special eye on those children and to attempt to make interventions suitable for each individual child before a situation escalates.

What is the definition of reasonable force?

There is no legal definition of reasonable force. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the circumstances do not warrant it. Any force should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result. The following kinds of physical intervention are reasonable:

- interposing between pupils
- blocking a pupil's path
- holding, pushing, pulling

- leading a pupil by the arm
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.

The following would be deemed unreasonable:

- holding a pupil by the neck or collar
- slapping
- punching
- twisting limbs
- holding or pulling by the hair.

The use of force could result in complaint from parents and criminal prosecution or a civil action cannot be ruled out.

It remains unlawful for a teacher to use any degree of physical contact to punish a pupil, or which is primarily intended to cause pain, injury or humiliation.

If a teacher has had to use reasonable force in the circumstances outlined above what should happen next?

Any incident where force has been used would be considered to be serious .

Any teacher who has had to use force in whatsoever circumstances must immediately make an oral report to one of the SMT and prepare a signed and dated written incident report, preferably by the end of the day, at latest by the beginning of the next working day. This report should include:

- the name(s) of pupil(s) involved
- the names of other witnesses to the incident
- the reason that force was necessary
- how the incident began and progressed, including details of the pupil's behaviour and any words used
- the steps taken to defuse/calm the situation
- the degree of force used, how this was applied and for how long
- the pupil's response and the outcome of the incident
- details of any injury suffered by the pupil, another pupil, a member of staff or anyone else
- any damage to property

The member of staff should retain a copy of the written report. The copy to the SMT will be lodged in the "Incidents" file.

It is important that parents are informed of the need to use restraint on their child on the same day if possible.

Is physical contact with pupils acceptable in other circumstances?

Since the Children Act some teachers have believed that any physical contact with children is unlawful. This is not the case, particularly in Early Years where hand-holding and physical comforting, such as any caring parent would give, are acceptable.

A degree of contact is obviously appropriate when issuing first aid or when demonstrating techniques e.g. in P.E.

Some physical contact may be appropriate where a pupil is in distress and needs comforting.

Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same pupil over a period of time. Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel a pupil needs this kind of emotional support and it should reflect the child's needs, age and level of maturity.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek the advice and guidance of the SMT.

As a general principle staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with their pupils. It is particularly unwise to attribute touching to their teaching style or as a way of relating to pupils.

There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some pupils may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background or special needs or because they have been abused. Where appropriate, staff should receive information on these children, whilst ensuring that all matters of confidentiality and sensitivity remain of paramount importance.

In addition, there should be a common approach where staff and pupils are of different sexes. Physical contact with pupils becomes increasingly open to question as pupils reach and go through adolescence and staff should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

Refer also to the Code of Practice and Manual Handling (H&S).

(Written Jan 2012 SG; reviewed Jan 2013, 2015 / next review Jan 2016)