

Harrogate Ladies' College

Safe Handling Policy



Purpose of Policy

1. To establish clarity amongst Governors, staff, parents and pupils as to the circumstances in which physical intervention may be appropriate
2. To describe what actions staff may take when incidents occur that may require the physical restraint of a pupil.
3. To define the procedures that must be taken immediately after any such incident.

Circumstances in which physical intervention may be appropriate

The policy of HLC is that physical intervention will only be used if a pupil is:

- committing a criminal offence injuring themselves or others
- causing damage to property (including the pupil's own property)
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere

In the context of this policy, physical intervention is the application of "reasonable force".

The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of a particular incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Therefore physical force could not be justified to prevent a pupil committing a trivial misdemeanour or any situation that can clearly be resolved without force.

The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. **Any force should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.**

The first priority is the health and safety of pupils and staff

Preventative Strategies:

Techniques for calming pupils or re-directing their outbursts should always
The first priority is the health and safety of pupils and staff

Preventative Strategies:

Techniques for calming pupils or re-directing their outbursts should always be used prior to the use of any physical contact.

What actions staff may take

Physical intervention will only be used in order for the school to carry out its duty of care towards the pupil concerned, other users of the building and property.

Staff faced with a situation where physical intervention may be required immediately should adhere to the following sequence wherever possible:

1. Send for help immediately (if not to help with the incident itself then to ensure that there are adult witnesses).
2. Appraise the situation quickly and honestly and decide whether or not it is controllable by oneself - especially in terms of physical strength.
3. Send away any other pupils who may be at risk or who may be exacerbating the situation
4. Intervene non-physically as quickly as possible, using a calm voice and displaying a calm and authoritative demeanour.
5. Try to interpose oneself between the protagonists (or between the protagonist and the object at risk) without using physical contact, and without putting oneself at risk.
6. Use physical contact to restrain the pupils), bearing in mind the constraints listed below, whilst explaining in a calm and measured way why the action is being taken, and where the pupil is going.
7. Continue to talk calmly and *non-judgementally* to the protagonist(s) while they regain their composure and become able to follow normal verbal instructions.

Physical intervention Techniques

If physical intervention appears to be likely, staff should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Remove other pupils from the area immediately
- Whenever possible ensure that two members of staff carry out any physical intervention
- Send for a senior member of staff
- Proceed as previously listed

Do **not** use any of the following types of physical contact:

- holding a pupil around the neck or by the collar or in any other way that might restrict the pupil's ability to breathe (this includes double arm locks) twisting or forcing limbs against joints
- tripping up a pupil
- holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear
- holding a pupil face down on the ground
- holding a pupil in any way that may be considered to be indecent

School Procedures following an incident

If any incident takes place that requires physical intervention or the physical

restraint of a pupil, the following actions should be taken:

1. The Headmistress, Deputy Head or Head of Boarding should be informed immediately.
2. The staff involved should complete a written report for the Headmistress (see attached pro-forma) as soon as possible after the incident and within 24 hours
3. The Headmistress should make a decision as to the following issues:
 - whether or not medical help is required
 - whether or not the incident should be reported as a Child Protection issue
 - whether or not to contact the police
 - when and how to contact parents
4. A record of the incident and a copy of any reports must be retained for future reference

NB If a complaint is made by parents/carers that the pupil concerned has been assaulted by a member of staff, Child Protection procedures should be followed automatically.