

Dunottar School

Physical Restraint

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Policy Statement

Dunottar School is committed to safeguarding the well-being of pupils and staff and, in line with relevant legislation, only permits physical restraint by reasonable and non-injurious means. Physical restraint will only be used to avert an immediate danger of personal injury to, or an immediate danger to the property of, a person (including the student themselves) as per Education Act 1996, Section 548(5). Dunottar School does not permit the use or threat of corporal punishment during any activity whether on or off the school premises. Any incident involving the use of restraint is recorded in writing and notified to the Head.

In line with Section 131 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, corporal punishment of students is prohibited by law and is therefore forbidden. Dunottar School does not permit the use or threat of corporal punishment during any activity whether on or off the school premises. This prohibition applies to all members of staff including all those acting in loco parentis.

Dunottar School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including teaching and non-teaching staff and forms part of our School commitment to the United Learning Framework for excellence. This includes 'The best from everyone', 'Powerful Knowledge', 'Education with Character', 'Leadership in every role' and 'Continuous Improvement'. This policy should be read in conjunction with 'Use of reasonable force' published by the DfE.

Dunottar School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the School's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

This policy is available to relevant parties in accordance with our statement on the provision of information.

In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the Main School Office and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy

This document is annually reviewed by Mr John Weiner (Deputy Head, Pastoral) or as events or legislation change requires. The next scheduled date for review is October 2026.

Key Personnel Implementation of the Physical Restraint Policy is the responsibility of Mr John Weiner.

Definition

Physical restraint is the positive application of force in order to protect/prevent a pupil from causing injury to themselves or others or seriously damaging property.

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.

It must be shown that on any occasion where physical restraint is used there were strong indications that if immediate action had not been taken, injury would have followed.

Guidelines for the Use of Physical Restraint

Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency, provided they follow the guidelines in this policy. However, they should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues. Corporal punishment is not permitted under any circumstances.

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.

The pupil should be approached 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.

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

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

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
- 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

Don't:

- Try to manage on your own
- Stop talking, even if the pupil does not reply
- Straddle the pupil
- Push arms up the back
- Touch the pupil near the throat or head
- Put pressure on joints
- Hold pupil's arms down by their side

Recording Incidents

It is a requirement that a written record is kept on any occasion when physical restraint is used: the member of staff concerned must advise the Head Mr Mark Tottman or a member of the Senior Leadership Team Mr John Weiner (Deputy Head Pastoral) or, Rhona Stringer (Deputy Head Operations) immediately following an incident and provide a written report as soon as possible afterwards using the "Physical Restraint Report Form" available via Subject Share and attached as an appendix to this document.

The report should include:

- The name(s) of the pupil(s) involved
- When and where the incident took place
- The name(s) of any other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident
- The reason the physical restraint was necessary
- How the incident began and progressed
- The pupil's(s') response and the outcome of the incident
- Details of any injury suffered by the pupil/another pupil/member of staff and any damage to property.

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from their professional association or a member of the Senior Leadership Team when writing a report.

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) John Weiner will keep a physical restraint log and the Head of Year or a member of SLT will inform the parents of the pupil restrained following any incident. The Log of incidents of physical restraint will be regularly monitored by the Head Mr Mark Tottman and Deputy Head Mr John Weiner to identify whether a review or change in practice is needed.

Appendix 1: Physical Restraint Report Form

Physical Restraint Report Form This form must be returned to the Head

Name of pupil(s) restrained	
Date of the Incident	
Time of the Incident	
Location of the incident	
Name of the person who restrained	
Name of other staff or pupils who witnessed the incident	
The reason the physical restraint was necessary	
How the incident began and progressed	
The Pupil's response and the outcome of the incident	
Details of any injuries suffered to pupil / another pupil / member of staff	
Details of any damage to property	
Reporter's signature and date	

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