Physical Intervention and Contact Policy

Responsible Senior Manager:	Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality
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Contents

Introduction 3
1. Purpose 3
2. Scope 3
3. Procedure and Key Responsibilities 4
   3.1 Physical Intervention for Non-Medical Reasons 4
   3.2 What staff will do before and during any physical intervention:- 4
   3.3 Ways in which staff may use reasonable force 5
   3.4 Staff who are permitted to use reasonable force to control or restrain a student 5
   3.5 Searching a student for a weapon 5
4. Training 6
5. Quality and Monitoring 6

Introduction

HSDC is committed to ensuring that all its students and staff can live and work in a supportive and caring environment, demonstrating mutual respect, so that teaching and learning can take place to maximise each Student's potential and achievement.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to plan for the needs of individual students. The College aims to identify, together with Parents/Carers, any student whose behaviour is potentially thought to require physical intervention, and to consider the needs of those students in relation to:

- Individual medical, social, behavioural, learning, or cultural factors.
- Individual Education Health and Care plans, pastoral support programmes or personal education plans which support the student.

Any student known at admission to potentially require physical intervention will be the subject of a full risk assessment detailing any control/intervention measures to be taken to address the medical need, or either diffuse challenging behaviour or negate its effects. Parents/Carers will be informed about these strategies.

2. Scope

All students have the right to be treated with respect and dignity including in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour. Havant and South Downs College does not support the routine use of physical intervention, however, acknowledges there may be circumstances that may require physical intervention, and the purpose of these guidelines is to support staff in making decisions regarding this.

The College believes that some use of appropriate, positive, physical contact with students can contribute to its development as a safe and friendly college. Some physical contact may be necessary or unavoidable when members of staff are working with:

- Students with special educational needs who may need physical prompts for help or guidance.
- Students requiring First Aid.
- Students receiving coaching in a practical subject.
- Students in distress.
- Students with physical disabilities requiring support for personal care.
- Students who are placing themselves or others in danger and who will not or cannot co-operate with attempts to de-escalate the situation.

Staff will make professional and sensitive judgements about the nature and extent of their physical contact with Students, considering cultural sensitivities and gender differences, the needs of adolescent Students and those who may be particularly vulnerable following previous trauma and abuse.

3. Procedure and Key Responsibilities

3.1 Physical Intervention for Non-Medical Reasons

Circumstances when physical intervention for non-medical reasons may be appropriate include:

- Action is necessary in self-defence or because there is an imminent risk of injury to someone or of significant damage to property.
- A student attacks another student or a member of staff.
- A student could be at risk if not contained.

It may be necessary to physically intervene to move a student in the following situations, but only when all other tactics have been tried. In either of the following cases, physical intervention will be limited to a request to leave the classroom or other current location in the College and then physical presence only needed as a deterrent (for example, a blocking stance with the use of arms to direct the student to the door).

- A student persistently refuses to obey instructions to leave the area of the College.
- A student is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting the teaching and learning of others.

A member of staff will sometimes need to rely on their professional judgement about whether to physically intervene by placing themselves in a hazardous situation, or to stand back and allow a student or colleague to face a potential hazard. Staff must balance the level and duration of their intervention against the seriousness and likely affects resulting from the incident.

3.2 What staff will do before and during any physical intervention: -

Before physically intervening, staff will:

- Remain calm and attempt to create calm.
- Tell the student to stop and explain to them what will happen if they do not.
- Use a range of non-physical alternatives aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation. These might include:
    - Continuing to speak and listen to the student(s).
    - Employing an appropriate level of eye contact during any dialogue.
    - Diverting, distracting, cajoling, or humouring the student where appropriate.
    - Reasoning with and offering appropriate choices to the student(s).

Sometimes a staff member should not intervene in an incident without help. For example, when dealing with groups of students, or if the staff member believes they may be at risk of injury. In this situation they should remove other students who may be at risk and summon the duty manager. The staff member should then tell the students that help has been summoned. Until assistance arrives, the staff member should continue to diffuse the situation through talking to the students and try to prevent the incident from escalating. On arrival, the duty manager will lead the incident management and in extreme circumstances call the police. They should also take witness statements in response to an incident.

Whilst physically intervening, staff will:

- Use the minimum amount of force required to achieve the desired result.
- Tell the student that physical restraint will stop as soon as it is no longer necessary.
- Continue to use a range of non-physical alternatives aimed at calming or defusing situations to prevent further escalation, as above; and/ or

- Remove the rest of the class when a student persistently refuses to leave or offers any kind of resistance to being removed from the area. Communication with the student concerned can continue in isolation.

3.3 Ways in which staff may use reasonable force

DFE Use of Reasonable Force advises: “Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding 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”. A person may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances which means that any force used should be proportionate to the threat being faced.

A potentially dangerous situation may involve staff in:

- Physically stepping in between students.
- Blocking a student’s path.
- Holding.
- Pushing.
- Pulling.
- Leading a student by the hand or arm.
- Guiding a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back.
- (In more extreme circumstances) Using more restrictive holds.

Staff are not permitted to act in a way that might cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a student round the neck, by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the student’s ability to breathe.
- 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.

The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force.

Physical force cannot be justified in a situation that could clearly be resolved without force, for example to prevent a student from committing a trivial offence.

3.4 Staff who are permitted to use reasonable force to control or restrain a student

Legislation permits adults who have lawful charge or control of students to use reasonable force to control or restrain them. This includes all teaching and support staff working on college premises or accompanying students on out of college activities, for example, during field trips. All members of staff are entitled to intervene in an emergency.

3.5 Searching a student for a weapon

If a member of staff has reasonable cause to believe that a student is carrying a weapon that could cause harm to themselves or others, then they may search the student in line with the following guidelines:

There should normally be 2 members of staff present during the search - the person doing the search and the search witness. Searches should normally be done by someone the same sex as the student.

The search witness must also be the same sex as the student if possible. The student must not be asked to remove clothes, other than outer clothing like a coat.

If there's a risk of serious harm to a person if the search is not conducted immediately, the student may be searched by a person of the opposite sex and without another member of staff present.

4. Training

The College aims to identify, address, and review the training needs of staff, with a view to developing a shared awareness of:

- How and when to intervene.
- How to prevent, defuse and/or resolve disputes, including the appropriate use of anger management, de-escalation and conflict resolution skills and techniques.

The Safeguarding Panel is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff and students are familiar with the policy.
- Monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the College's policy by regularly reviewing the number and type of incidents in which physical intervention has been necessary. This will be used to ensure that there is adherence to this policy and to identify improvement needed in other policies and procedures of the College.

Assistant Principals/Support Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all relevant members of staff have been identified and received training in non-physical interventions in order to reduce the need for physical intervention.
- Ensuring that named personnel have received training in physical intervention techniques.

5. Quality and Monitoring

I. The College will keep electronic logs of all incidents against the student record on ProMonitor.

II. All members of the College community should know of the existence of this policy. In principle, as few people as possible should know of any specific incidents and staff should maintain maximum confidentiality. This is so that managers and staff involved in any consequence or complaint can investigate without prejudice.

III. Complaints following a dispute about the use of physical intervention by a member of staff should, if an informal resolution is not possible in the first instance, be referred through the official complaints process.

IV. Should a member of staff allege that a student has assaulted them the Back on Track Policy will be invoked and a full investigation into the circumstances of the allegation will take place.