

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT & CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

PROCEDURE

Reviewed 31 October 2017 – See Procedure 5.22 (Health & Safety)

**RATIONALE:**

Given that physical contact is unavoidable, there is an inherent risk that certain types of physical contact can be construed as assault, which may carry penalties or conviction.

In the course of their work, teachers and support staff may have physical contact with students:-

* During classroom instruction, and one to one teaching
* Physical education and EOTC activities
* Giving comfort and first aid
* Restraint in the interests of student safety
* Lifting and carrying disabled students
* Less formal situation such as supervising duties.

**GUIDELINES:**

CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

The following practices are to be observed by all members of staff:-

1. Staff are, generally, not alone with a student an exception being if the teaching or support task requires it, for example Reading Recovery and toileting/giving personal care to a student. Parents/caregivers are advised if this is the case.
2. The transportation of students should not be done on one’s own unless the Principal/DP has granted permission. Generally this task will be done by the office staff or the Principal.
3. Trained support staff are permitted to assist with toileting tasks as part of identified needs in consultation with parents/caregivers and G.S.E in accordance with the IEP plan development.
4. Corporal punishment in schools is illegal. Serious issues requiring disciplining of a child will be dealt with by the Principal/Deputy Principal or other designated staff.
5. When undertaking the swimming programme, encourage students to change and dress themselves. Where young children require assistance with dressing do this in an open and viewable way.

**PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

The school is committed to maintaining the best possible care, welfare and safety of students and staff. School staff have the Board’s and Principal’s authority to physically restrain students in order **to ensure student and staff safety.**

**Physical Intervention – Criteria**

* Physical intervention is a last resort.
* Appropriate physical intervention is used only to reduce possible harm of students to themselves or others.
* Non-physical management of situations is used first and foremost in order to de-escalate and reduce the need for physical intervention.

**De-escalation**

Intent and purpose: to safety handle situations in a professional manner and maintain rapport with student.

* Calming - verbal intervention.
* Exclude - “time out”.
* Call for support. Phone room 1 and/or Principal’s office.
* Use your judgment in regard to student and teacher safety.
* Remove non-participants.
* Intervene physically only to reduce possible harm and only if this can be achieved safely for student and teacher.
* Containment of situation and then return to normal as quickly as possible.
* System of recording – complete an Incident Report as soon as possible.
* Report to Principal immediately.

**If physical removal from situation is required use one of the following procedures:**

* **Two staff members**, one on either side of child. Hand on wrist, other hand on upper arm. Child encouraged to walk upright to a suitable quiet space or Principal’s office.
* **One staff member.** Child’s hands held behind back. Staff member behind child to encourage him/her to walk forward to a suitable quiet space or Principal’s office.

**CONCLUSION:**

Physical contact is unavoidable and there is an inherent risk that certain types of physical contact can be construed as assault.

In the course of their work, teachers and support staff may have physical contact with students therefore clear procedures must be in place for the protection of staff and students.

**Review Responsibility: *Principal, DP, Staff Rep. OM, BOT Chairperson***

**Date Confirmed: …………………………………………………….**

**Principal: ………………………………………………………………..**