



## Policy Statement

### THE USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN STUDENTS

#### Rationale:

Section 550A of the 1996 Education Act came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1998. This clarifies the law on physical contact between school staff and students. It also requires the College to have a formal policy setting out which categories of staff come under the new legislation and what response there should be when an incident occurs.

#### Objectives:

1. To state the categories of staff covered by the provisions of Section 550A of the 1996 Education Act.
2. To provide guidelines on the use of force to control or restrain students
3. To establish the reporting route when an incident of the use of force has taken place

#### Guidelines:

1. Those categories of staff who are authorised to "have control or charge of students" and so are authorised to use reasonable force to control or restrain students are:

Teachers

Learning Support, Curriculum and Student Support Assistants

Library Staff Office Staff

Catering Manager and Assistant Catering Manager Site

Manager and Site Officers

2. Situations in which the use of reasonable force could be appropriate include:
  - a. in self- defence or where there is imminent risk of injury to another student or member of staff
  - b. where there could be risk of an injury or damage to property
  - c. where a student's behaviour is compromising good order or discipline

Examples of such situations include:

- a. a student attacking another student or a member of staff
- b. students fighting
- c. a student damaging or vandalising property (or is about to do so)
- d. a student is putting others at risk by misuse of materials or objects
- e. a student is running in corridors or on stairs
- f. a student leaves a class or the College without permission and in doing so may be at risk
- g. a student persistently refuses an order to leave the classroom
- h. a student's behaviour is seriously disrupting a lesson (including use of inappropriate or extreme language)

3. "Reasonable Force" is difficult to define but the term can only be applied to circumstances that warrant the use of force (i.e. are not trivial). Force must be proportional to the circumstances and should be the minimum to achieve a result (taking into account the age, understanding and sex of the student)

Wherever possible a verbal warning should be given before force is used. A member of staff should not intervene physically if they are going to put themselves at risk but instead should immediately seek assistance.

Examples of reasonable force include:

- a. blocking a student's path
- b. physically interposing between students
- c. holding a student
- d. pushing or pulling
- e. leading a student by the hand or arm
- f. shepherding a student by a hand on the back
- g. in more extreme circumstances, using a restraining hold

4. Warnings:

- a. staff should not act in a way that might be expected to cause injury unless there is an immediate risk of serious injury
- b. staff should avoid any contact that could be considered indecent
- c. except in an extreme emergency, striking a student or any form of corporal punishment remains strictly against the law

#### 5. Reporting of incidents.

A record must be kept of any incident involving the use of force on a student and the matter must be reported immediately to the student's Support Manager and a member of the Headship Team.

The record should note briefly:

- a. name of student and place of incident
- b. names of witnesses (staff and students)
- c. reasons for the use of force

- d. details of the event
- e. outcome of the incident
- f. any injuries or damage to property

The Student Support Manager should discuss the incident with the member of the Headship Team dealing with the matter and should then contact parents and give details of the incident.

**Conclusion:**

Notwithstanding all the details in the legislation and this policy, the strong advice to all staff is to avoid physical contact unless absolutely necessary.

**Reviewed by Personnel Governors  
April 2008**