

What to do ... Care and Control Policy at Dixons Brooklands Academy

Why?

At Dixons Brooklands Academy our primary responsibility is to ensure that all staff and students are safe, so they focus on being the best version of themselves each day. Our culture is based on integrity and kindness. A huge part of this is respecting other people's personal space and as a result we try to keep the level of contact with others to a minimum.

As a school we narrate the behaviours we want to see and use verbal and non-verbal instructions to ensure students are safe, inside and outside of the classroom. However, we also recognise that there are times when some passive or supportive physical contact is inevitable and that this, along with some rare instances of reasonable force, are necessary in ensuring the wellbeing and safety of both students and staff, as well as for maintaining the climate of the academy.

In order to ensure that physical contact is appropriate and proportionate, and to maintain the dignity of all students and professionalism of all staff, we aim to use the guidance provided by the DfE, Dixons Academies Trust policies and our own staff training and support to provide clarity and consistency for all parties involved. In our DAT Care and Control Policy we have identified three levels of reasonable force that might be used:

Definitions

PASSIVE PHYSICAL CONTACT – 'light touch' contact either to care for or guide students who may be distressed, have an additional need or disability, or in PE / sports or other practical subjects.

- Does not constitute 'positive handling' and does not need to be recorded.
- Excessive use / abuse of this concept may constitute 'low level concern' under KCSIE21 definitions.
- Examples include a comforting hand on the shoulder, a guiding hand on the elbow, or 'hand over hand' support with writing.

ACTIVE PHYSICAL CONTACT

- This may be used to divert a student from destructive or disruptive action and is defined by the compliance of the child i.e. once blocked, guided etc. they do not resist.
- If used regularly as part of a student's support a Positive Handling Plan should be in place.
- Incidents may escalate if the student is not compliant.
- If physical contact has been used to move or block a student, an Incident Form should be completed.
- Examples include blocking a student's path, stepping in between students who are fighting, or linking arms with a student to walk them away from a situation (escorting).

RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION (CONTROL AND RESTRAINT)

- This will involve the use of reasonable force when there is an immediate risk to students, staff or property and its defining characteristic is non-compliance of the student.
- If being used regularly a Positive Handling Plan should be in place.
- Every incident should be recorded, reported and stored on CPOMS.
- Use of this level of reasonable force should always be a last resort.
- Any use of this level of reasonable force should be proportionate i.e. no more force than is needed and no longer amount of time than is needed.
- Although use of reasonable force may, at times, be necessary and legitimate, there will always be implications for the student(s), staff member(s) and witnesses involved, including impact on future relationships.
- Staff cannot, under any circumstances, use force as a form of punishment.

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force' but the term is generally accepted to cover the broad range of actions used by most teachers in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with students.

Force is used to either control or restrain.

Control = blocking, leading, or moving a student.

Restrain = to physically hold a student to prevent movement / action.

'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed for no longer amount of time than is needed.



Use of Reasonable Force

Reasonable force can be used by the Principal and anyone who has been authorised by the Principal (at DBK that is any member of staff) in order to prevent a student from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the student were not under the age of criminal responsibility).
- Injuring themselves and others.
- Causing damage to property (including their own property).
- Engaging in behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at school or among any of its students, whether in the classroom or elsewhere.

When using reasonable force remember to:

- Consider what it could mean and what would be proportionate and 'reasonable'.
- Consider impact on future relationships, behaviour management, other students etc.
- Ensure that you keep yourself and others safe.

Recording an Incident

It is important there is a detailed, contemporaneous, written report of any occasion (except minor or trivial incidents) where force is used. At Dixons, there is a simple Trust form (<https://www.dixonsat.com/uploads/files/About/Policies/Care-and-Control-of-Students.pdf> - see Appendix 1 and 2) for staff to complete to prevent any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the incident; it will be helpful should there be a complaint. Following any such incident, the member of staff concerned should immediately tell the Principal and provide a written report as soon as possible). This report should include:

the name(s) of the student(s) involved and when, and where, the incident took place •

the names of any other staff or students who witnessed the incident • the reason that force was necessary (e.g. to prevent injury to the student, another student or member of staff)

how the incident began and progressed, including details of the student's behaviour, what was said by each of the parties, the steps taken to defuse or calm the situation, the degree of force used, how that was applied and for how long

the student's response and the outcome of the incident

details of any injury suffered by the student, another student, a member of staff and of any damage to property

The statement and completed Appendix should be uploaded onto CPOMS and logged against the names of the students involved. You must also tag the relevant staff to the post (Principal, DSL team).

Staff may find it helpful to seek advice from a senior colleague or a representative of their professional association when compiling a report. They should also keep a copy of the report. Incidents involving the use of force can cause the parents of the students involved great concern. It is academy policy to inform parents of an incident involving their child and give them an opportunity to discuss it. The Principal will need to consider whether that should be done straight away, or at the end of the school day and whether parents should be told orally or in writing.

