



Physical Restraint Policy and Practice

1. Purpose

Marymount International School Rome (hereinafter also the “**School**”) declares that in the exercise of the educational activity shall not be tolerated the use of means of coercion, both physical and moral, which may integrate a criminal offence under the Italian Law. At the same time, the School is committed to ensuring that students and staff are safeguarded in situations where the use of physical restraint proves necessary to protect students from posing a risk to themselves or others.

In this regard, the School recognizes that there may be occasions in which a degree of physical contact with the students as well as a certain degree of force may be used by the staff (this can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight).

No degree of force can be used as a punishment.

For the purposes of this Policy

- “*Reasonable Force*” is defined as using no more force than is needed in the circumstances.
- “*Physical Restraint*” is defined as the positive application of force in order to protect/prevent a student from causing injury to themselves or others or seriously damaging property. It is necessary in more extreme cases, for example to stop a physical fight.
- “*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 willful or reckless behavior, and self - poisoning.

2. Scope

This policy is a whole School policy and applies to all students including those in the Early Childhood, Kindergarten, Elementary and Secondary Schools. Care and consideration will be given to the age of the child when following this guidance. The policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, paid and unpaid, working in the School, including Regents and Trustees, or parents accompanying students on a school organized visit.

3. Policy Statement

Marymount International School Rome fully recognizes the responsibility it has to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

4. Practice

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

Reasonable Force be used exclusively in the following cases:

- To prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder;
- To remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have repeatedly refused to follow an instruction to leave the room;
- To prevent a student behaving in a way that disrupts a School event or a School trip or visit;
- To prevent a student leaving the classroom where allowing the student to leave would risk his safety or lead to behavior that disrupts the behavior of others;
- To prevent a student from attacking a member of staff or another student, or to stop a fight in the playground;
- To restrain a student at risk of harming himself through physical outbursts

School's staff members are requested to comply with the following:

- Staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency provided they follow the guidelines in this policy;
- Staff should always satisfy themselves that the action they take would be considered justifiable by a wider audience of professional colleagues;
- In any application of Physical Restraint, the minimum Reasonable Force should be used to calm down the situation;
- Help should be summoned from colleagues; students should never be involved in restraint.

In circumstances when the use of Physical Restraint and Reasonable force is needed:

- Approach the student calmly but firmly;
- Where possible, the consequences of refusing to stop the behavior should be explained and it should be communicated to the student 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.

5. Method of Restraint

The method of restraint employed must use the minimum force for the minimum time.

Restraint must not

- Involve hurting the student;
- Involve deliberately inflicting pain on the student;
- Restrict the student's breathing;
- Involve contact with sexually sensitive areas;
- Involve locking the student in a room.

During an incident the person restraining should

- Offer verbal reassurance to the student;
- Cause the minimum level of restriction of movement;
- Reduce the danger of any accidental injury;
- Cease the restraint immediately if there are any signs of physical distress in the student such as sudden change in color, difficulty breathing or vomiting.

Physical Restraint can be:

- Partial – restricting and preventing particular movements;
- Total – as in the case of immobilization.

Physical intervention can take several forms and may involve staff

- Physically interposing between students;
- Blocking a student's path;
- Holding;
- Pushing;
- Pulling;
- Leading a student by the hand or arm.

Do

- Summon help immediately - a student can be sent to get another adult;
- Ensure a free passage of air through airways;
- Be aware of any feelings of anger;
- Continue to talk to the student in a calm way;
- Provide a soft surface if possible;
- Be aware of any accessories worn by you or the student that could cause injury;
- Monitor the student's respiration, circulation and state of consciousness.

Do not

- Try to manage on your own;
- Stop talking, even if the student does not reply;

- Straddle the student;
- Push his arms up his back;
- Touch the student near the throat or head;
- Put pressure on joints or on arterial pressure points (inside of upper arm, groin, neck);
- Use facedown holds.

Recording Incidents

- Minor or everyday use of Reasonable Force does not need to be recorded. For example, very young children running off in the playground and being guided back to the line by the teacher or assistant.
- All more serious incidents involving the use of Physical Restraint must be reported to the Headmistress and the Principal as soon as possible after the incident. These must be recorded on the Record of the Use of Physical Restraint.

Informing parents when force has been used on their child

- Staff need to use their professional judgement on whether to inform a parent, depending on the seriousness of the incident.
- In a serious incident where a member of staff has had to physically restrain a student, the parent will be informed on the day and the conversation must be followed up in writing to the parent.

If a student complains when force is used on him

- All complaints about the use of force should be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- When a complaint is made, the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the procedures set out in the Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

This Document was reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents in May 2021.

Next review date: May 2024