

## Positive Handling Agreement – Guidance for Parents and Carers

This is an area which parents and carers are understandably often concerned about. It is also something which misunderstandings and myths can be built upon. Thankfully physical restraints are a rare occurrence in the Newbridge School, but we do understand that this is something about which you may well want some reassurance. Like everything else at the Newbridge School, we try to keep things simple so we have outlined a summary of the Newbridge School policy below.

The Law (**1996 Education Act**) allows the use of reasonable physical force in relation to pupils and links this to safety. Where the behaviour of a pupil is *threatening their own safety, that of others or could cause significant damage to equipment or property*, it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically. The law also allows for **physical interventions** to be used where a pupil's behaviour is threatening the **'good order of the school'** and also indicates that this can take place anywhere a teacher is in charge of a group of youngsters (i.e. even off school premises). It is important that you also understand that in most cases a range of strategies will have been tried before the need for a physical intervention has arisen. You may also be reassured to know that all staff at the Newbridge School are trained in a wide range of **non-aversive** techniques for supporting pupils physically. These interventions follow a **gradient** system where the minimal amount of support to help a pupil regain self-control is used for the minimum amount of time. Wherever possible situations will be talked through and pupils will be given clear guidance about their behaviour and the likely consequences of it. This is of course dependent on the pupil being in a receptive state of mind.

If a pupil needs physical support this must happen in such a way as to allow the youngster to feel secure as this helps reduce anxiety. The support must be made in such a way that it cannot be interpreted as aggression, but for everyone's safety. The support will be reasonable, proportionate and in the best interest of the young person.

***Team-Teach techniques seek to avoid injury to the service user, but it is possible that bruising or scratching may occur accidentally, and infrequent side effect of ensuring that the service user remains safe.***

- 1. There are no circumstances in which appropriate physical intervention can reasonably include slapping or hitting a pupil, or striking them in any other way.*
- 2. It is an accepted fact that pupils will often 'play up' to an audience as a result of this we do one of two things; remove the pupil from the audience or remove the audience from the pupil. This act also reduces the possibility of youngsters feeling humiliated or embarrassed in front of their peers.*
- 3. Pupils will not be alone in a closed room with one adult whilst physical intervention is in progress. Either the door will be left wide open or other adults will attend the situation. This minimizes risks to all concerned.*
- 4. Whilst all members of staff have the right to defend themselves there is a clear expectation that they will adopt the principles outlined above.*
- 5. Incidents involving physical intervention will always be recorded and, as the parent or carer of the youngster concerned. You will of course be kept informed.*

We hope the above will go some way towards answering any questions or concerns you may have about physical interventions, but please do not hesitate to ask should you want to discuss the matter further. We ask that you sign below to indicate that you have read and understood our policy on physical support for the young people in Newbridge School.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_