

SAFETY AND RESTRAINT - GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

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

The law (1997 Education Act) allows the physical restraint of 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 to apply a physical restraint. The Law also allows for restraint to take place where a pupil's behaviour is threatening the 'good order of the school' and also indicates that restraint can take place anywhere a teacher is in charge of a group of youngsters (ie 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 restraint has arisen.

- 1 Wherever possible situations will be talked through and pupils will be given clear guidance about their behaviour and the likely consequences of it. This of course is dependent on the pupil being in a receptive state of mind.
- 2 If a pupil needs to be held this must happen in such a way so as to allow the youngster to feel secure - this helps reduce anxiety. The hold must be applied in such a way that it can not be interpreted as aggression, but as safety and restraint.
- 3 **There are no circumstances in which appropriate physical restraint can reasonably include slapping or hitting a pupil, or striking them in any other way.**
- 4 It is an accepted fact that pupils will often 'play up' to an audience and 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 action also reduces the possibility of youngsters feeling humiliated or embarrassed in front of their peers.
- 5 Pupils will not be alone in a closed room with one adult whilst a restraint is in progress. Either the door will be left wide open or other adults will attend the situation. This minimises risks to all concerned.
- 6 Whilst all members of staff have the right to defend themselves there is a clear expectation that they will adopt the principles outlined above.
- 7 Incidents involving physical restraint 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 restraint, but please do not hesitate to ask should you want to discuss the matter further.