

USE OF REASONABLE FORCE POLICY

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Essence Summary

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines on the use of reasonable force by staff members to ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors within the school environment. The policy aims to create a safe and supportive learning environment while respecting the rights and dignity of all individuals.

This policy applies to all staff members, including teachers, administrators, support staff, and any other individuals authorized to supervise students within the school premises or during school-related activities.

Rationale

Staff who are authorised by the Principal/Head of School to have control or charge of students are allowed under Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and DfE Guidance issued in July 2013 to use such force as is reasonable in all the circumstances to prevent a student from doing or continuing to do, any of the following:

- committing any offence,
 - causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself), or
 - prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any pupils receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise, including it use to:
 - remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
 - prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
 - prevent a pupil leaving the classroom, where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
 - prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- The legislation and guidance are clear that 'force' must not be used as a 'punishment'

Definition of Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to the minimum necessary physical intervention required to prevent or stop a dangerous or disruptive situation. This may include actions to protect oneself, others, or property from harm or to prevent a student from causing injury to themselves or others.

When can we apply reasonable force?

Reasonable force may be used in the following circumstances:

- To prevent a student from harming themselves or others.
- To stop a student from engaging in disruptive behaviour that threatens the safety of others.
- To prevent significant damage to school property or the property of others.

- To remove a disruptive student from a classroom or any part of the school premises when they have refused to follow an instruction to leave.
- To prevent a student from leaving the school premises if leaving would put their safety at risk.

Application of Reasonable Force

- **Proportionality:** The degree of force used must be proportionate to the situation and the potential harm being prevented. Staff should always use the least intrusive intervention necessary to achieve the desired outcome.
- **Last Resort:** Physical intervention should only be used when all other de-escalation techniques and non-physical interventions have been attempted and proven ineffective.
- **Minimum Force:** Staff should use the minimum amount of force required for the shortest duration possible to achieve the desired outcome.
- **Respect and Dignity:** Staff should respect the dignity and rights of the student at all times, ensuring that physical interventions do not cause unnecessary pain or distress.

Considerations

Using reasonable force in a school setting involves careful consideration of various factors to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff. Here are the key practical considerations:

Assessment of the Situation

- **Immediacy of Threat:** Evaluate whether the situation poses an immediate threat to the safety of students, staff, or property.
- **Nature of the Threat:** Identify whether the threat involves physical harm, significant disruption, or damage to property.
- **De-escalation Attempts:** Ensure that all non-physical de-escalation techniques have been attempted and proven ineffective before resorting to physical force.

Proportionality and Necessity

- **Minimum Force:** Use the least amount of force necessary to control the situation.
- **Duration:** Apply force for the shortest possible time to achieve the desired outcome.
- **Proportionate Response:** Ensure that the level of force used is proportionate to the severity of the threat.

Training and Preparedness

- **Staff Training:** Ensure all staff members are adequately trained in the use of reasonable force, including techniques for de-escalation and safe physical intervention.
- **Refresher Courses:** Provide regular refresher training to maintain staff competence in handling such situations.

Physical and Emotional Safety

- **Avoiding Harm:** Take care to avoid causing unnecessary pain or injury to the student.
- **Emotional Support:** Be mindful of the emotional impact on the student and provide support following the incident.

Legal and Ethical Considerations

- **Compliance with Laws:** Ensure that any use of force complies with relevant local, state, and federal laws.
- **School Policies:** Adhere to the school's policies and procedures regarding the use of force.
- **Rights and Dignity:** Respect the rights and dignity of the student at all times.

Documentation and Reporting

- **Incident Reporting:** Document the incident in detail, including the circumstances leading up to the use of force, the actions taken, and the outcomes.
- **Parental Notification:** Inform the student's parents or guardians about the incident as soon as possible.
- **Review and Follow-up:** Participate in a review of the incident to identify any lessons learned and to plan any necessary follow-up actions, such as counselling or additional support for the student.

Debriefing and Support

- **Debriefing Sessions:** Conduct debriefing sessions with the staff involved and the student to discuss the incident and address any ongoing concerns.
- **Support Services:** Provide access to support services for both staff and students affected by the incident, including counselling if necessary.

Environmental Considerations

- **Safe Environment:** Ensure that the environment where the force is used is as safe as possible, minimizing the risk of accidental injury (e.g., removing obstacles that could cause tripping or falling).
- **Witnesses:** When possible, have another staff member present as a witness to the intervention.

Communication

- **Clear Instructions:** Communicate clearly with the student throughout the intervention, explaining why the force is being used and what is expected of them.
- **Calm Demeanour:** Maintain a calm and controlled demeanour to help de-escalate the situation and reassure the student.

After using Reasonable Force

- **Reporting:** Any use of reasonable force must be reported to the designated school administrator immediately and documented in the appropriate incident report form.
- **Parental Notification:** Parents or guardians must be informed of the incident as soon as possible.
- **Debriefing:** The staff member involved, and the student should participate in a debriefing session to discuss the incident and any underlying issues that may have contributed to the situation.

- Review: Each incident will be reviewed by the designated school administrator to ensure compliance with this policy and to identify any areas for improvement in the school's behaviour management strategies.

Complaints

If a student complains about the force used, then the matter will be investigated using our complaints process and taking in consideration 'Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and non-teaching staff' DfE guidance documents:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/allegations-of-abuse-against-teachers-and-non-teachingstaff>

Related Policies

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Search, Screening and Confiscation

Appendix 1 - Reasonable Force Incident Form

Physical and positive intervention. INCIDENT REPORT FORM			
All Information contained in this document is strictly confidential.			
Student full name:		☐ M ☐ F	DOB:
CEG number:		School name:	
Time of incident:		Date of incident:	
Incident report completed by:		Date:	
Position:			
Copies to:			
Events leading to this incident?			
Where did this incident take place?			
How did the incident begin?			
Describe the incident			
What was happening at the time?			
Was anyone else involved?			
Did anyone else see what happened? (Give details)			
What behaviour was the student presenting that warranted restraint?			
Was there damage to property or an assault on a student or staff during the incident			
What did you do to try to defuse the situation before using restraint?			
How was the student restrained? (describe) <i>e.g. two people escort; one person wrap; supine control</i> . For how long? By how many staff members? Were they authorised?			
Injuries sustained			

Was anyone injured?			
☐ Yes ☐ No			
Details if "Yes"			
Was this recorded in the accident book?			
☐ Yes ☐ No			
Was the student checked for injuries by a member of staff who was not involved in the incident?			
☐ Yes ☐ No			
If Yes, By Whom?			
Implications for future planning			
What do you think this behaviour was about? e.g. attention; emotional release; task escape mechanism; other			
What would you do differently next time to avoid the need for physical restraint?			
Are other staff aware of the need for a planned response to the pupil?			
☐ Yes ☐ No			
Follow up Action:			
The incident was reported by:			
Parent/Carer was informed by (tick correct option(s)):			
☐ Email			
☐ On-line meeting			
☐ Face to face meeting			
☐ via MDM			
☐ via Agent			
When were they informed?			
Time:		Date:	

Appendix 2 - Associated Resources

Behaviour and Discipline in Schools DfE Guidance 2016

Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards DfE (2022)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64787a31b32b9e000ca96010/National_Minimum_Standards_for_boarding_schools.pdf

Use of Reasonable Force DfE July 2013 [Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/244842/Use_of_reasonable_force_in_schools.pdf)

Keeping children safe in education-Statutory guidance for schools and Schools September 2024
[Keeping children safe in education 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/123456/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf)

Use of Force against Those Committing Crime DfE

http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/self_defence/#

Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools July 2022 [Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/123456/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_Advice_for_schools_July_2022.pdf)



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