



Rural Primary School Use of Reasonable Force and Physical Restraint Policy and Procedures

Ratified by Governors: Feb 2021

Review date: Feb 2026

Aims of this policy:

Our school is committed to the achievement of all children and all our policies and practice must support this commitment.

A Christian school is recognisable by the quality of its community within which Christian principles are fostered, both within the curriculum and through the relationships which exist between pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, governors, and the wider community. It strives to be a welcoming place offering the support necessary for individuals to develop and achieve fully their potential. Such a positive and caring ethos demands an active antibullying policy.

It follows that, within a Christian school any behaviour which is the abuse of power and results in hurting others is totally unacceptable. Pupils and their parents must be confident that such bullying behaviour will be dealt with seriously.

To be read and used alongside Dfe guidance available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

Physical Restraint Objectives

- To protect staff and pupils
- To prevent serious breaches of school discipline
- To prevent serious damage to property
- To reduce the likelihood of actions by staff being successfully challenged in the courts

What is reasonable force?

1. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
2. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a pupil needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
3. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
4. As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them.



5. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
6. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
7. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

Minimising the need to use force

It is important to have a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind. Wherever practical, staff will issue a warning to a pupil that force may have to be used before using it.

Staff authorised to use force

All teachers and members of staff, who have the Headteacher's authorisation to be in control of or take charge of pupils, automatically have the power to use force.

Deciding when to use force

Staff can use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- a. Causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil themselves); or
- b. 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.

Any force used must be in proportion to the consequences it is intended to prevent

The greater the potential for injury, damage or serious disorder, the more likely it is that using force may be justified:

- Pupil attack on staff or pupil
- Pupils fighting
- Damage to property
- Rough play
- Use of dangerous objects
- Absconding if likely to involve safety

Using force

Wherever possible, staff should tell the pupil to stop and be calm and measured. They should not give the impression of acting out of anger, frustration or punishment. Force should cease quickly. Examples include:

- Standing between pupils, leading by the arm, hand on the centre of the back and finally, appropriate restrictive holds.

The degree of force used should be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result

When exercising the power to use force, staff must also take proper account of any special need and/or disability that a pupil might have.



Staff working with special needs pupils will have an awareness of situations that may provoke difficult behaviour, preventative strategies and de-escalation techniques. They will know of any previous incidents and handling strategies that are recommended. SLT and medical staff may be called – though not necessarily waited for. They should be involved in post-incident follow up.

Reasonable force may also be used to search pupils without their consent for weapons. The Department for Education strongly advises schools not to search pupils where resistance is expected, but rather to call the police.

It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Staff should always avoid touching or restraining in such a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct. Sometimes physical contact may be proper or necessary – such as sport and first aid.

Staff training

There may be particular needs for staff that work closely with pupils with additional needs or disability; however, training will be offered to all staff.

Staff should be made aware of this policy and procedures during their induction.

Recording and reporting incidents

Systematic records of any serious incident are kept using the specific form and the school's management information system (MIS) - (See Appendix 1).

It is very important to have a *witness* to what happened. After any recordable incident, parents should always be informed (telephone first and then confirm in writing).

Post-incident support

First aid and emotional support will be offered for staff and pupils. Punishments such as exclusions and pastoral support programmes may follow.

Dealing with complaints and allegations

Parents and pupils have a right to complain about actions taken by school staff and should contact the Headteacher.

Monitoring and review

Members of the Local Governance Committee and the Senior Leadership Team will review this policy every 3 years.



APPENDIX 1 – Record of Serious Incident Form

NAME OF SCHOOL Details of pupil or pupils on whom force was used by a member of staff	
Name	
Class	
Date, Time, location	
Names of staff involved (directly or as witnesses)	
Details of other pupils involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of the pupils involved were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reasons	
Description of incident by the staff involved, including any attempts to deescalate and warnings given that force might be used	
Reason for using force and description of force used	
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and/or medical attention required	
Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies	
When and how those with parental responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed.	
Has any complaint been lodged (details should not be recorded here)?	
Report compiled by: Name, role and date	
Report countersigned by: Name, role and date	

