

Ursula Taylor Church of England School



Policy Statement for the use of Reasonable Force

February 2024

Introduction:

This policy is based on section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and DfE Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force, July 2013. This act enables school staff to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Prevent pupils from hurting themselves
- Hurting others
- Damaging property
- or causing disorder.

Minimising the need to use force:

In this school we aim to create an environment which minimises the need to use force. We set out to achieve this by:

- Creating a calm environment that minimises the risk of incidents that might require using force
- Using various strategies and systems to support children's social, emotional and pastoral needs and by providing nurture and behavioural support to teach children how to manage conflict and identify and manage strong feelings
- De-escalating incidents if they do arise
- Only using force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risk involved in not using force
- Implementing risk assessments and positive handlings plans / Behaviour Support Plans for individual pupils

Staff authorised to use force:

All staff at Ursula Taylor C of E School have the legal power to use reasonable force. This includes all teachers who work at the school and support staff whose job involves supervising pupils: e.g. Teaching Assistant and Lunchtime Supervisors. It does NOT include Teachers who are not on the school payroll, e.g. Delivering specialist teaching for Music.

Ursula Taylor C of E School is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour, and only use reasonable force as a last resort. If used at all it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the child. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.

Our approach to best practice:

The best practice regarding physical intervention outlined below is considered alongside other relevant policies in the school, specifically those policies involving behaviour / exclusions, anti-bullying and Safeguarding.

In the following situations, staff must judge whether or not physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate:

- Risk to the safety of staff, pupils or visitors
- Where there is a risk of serious damage to property
- Where a pupil's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline
- Where a pupil is committing a criminal offence

Staff will view physical intervention or use of force of pupils as a last resort to maintain a safe environment. If pupils are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation.

Staff will understand the importance of listening and respecting children to create an environment which is generally calm and supportive especially when dealing with pupils who may have social, emotional and behavioural needs which may increase their despair and aggression.

All staff will understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child which lie beneath the behaviour as well as the behaviour itself.

We cannot:

We cannot use force as a punishment. It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Our Practice:

Staff intervening with children will seek assistance from other members of staff at as early a stage as possible, since single-handed intervention increases the risks to both parties and does not provide a witness.

All staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a pupil will have responsibility to provide a presence, and to offer support and assistance should this be required.

Before intervening in a non-emergency, consideration will be given to whether or not staff are available to assist.

Where possible, staff who have not been involved in the initial confrontation leading up to an incident may be in a better position to intervene or restrain the pupil if this proves necessary.

A pupil's behaviour may be adversely affected by the presence of an audience. Wherever possible, the audience will be removed, or if this is not possible, the pupil removed from the audience. The pupil and member(s) of staff will withdraw to a quiet, but not completely private, place (e.g. two members of staff should be present or a door left open so that others are aware of the situation.)

Staff will be aware of the need to tell the pupil receiving the use of force, in a calm and gentle manner, that the reason for the intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the pupil calms down, she/he will be released.

Physical Intervention/Restraint Approaches which can be regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances:

- The following approaches are regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances.

- Light holding for security and to reduce anxiety where there is potential risk, even if the pupil is not yet out of control. This is best used when the pupil is anxious or confused. *Its purpose is to defuse or prevent escalation.* Staff should take care that their actions should in no way be capable of being interpreted by the pupil as aggression
- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- In extreme cases using restrictive holds.

Holds to be avoided except for the most extreme circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of reasonable force. For example to prevent a young pupil running off a pavement into a busy road, or to prevent a pupil hitting someone, or throwing something.

In other circumstances staff should not act in a way that reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any way that might restrict a pupil's ability to breathe
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping a pupil
- Holding a pupil by the hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground (NB If a pupil faces the floor, do not use force to turn him/her over)

Recording an Incident

All incidents that result in non-routine interventions will be recorded in detail, using the attached form.

Debriefing Arrangements

The pupil and member of staff will be checked for any signs of injury after an incident. First aid will be administered in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy to anyone who requires it.

The pupil will be given time to become calm while staff continue to supervise her/him. When the pupil regains complete composure, a senior member of staff will discuss the incident with the pupil and try to ascertain the reason for its occurrence. The pupil will be given the opportunity to explain things from his/her point of view. All necessary steps will be taken to re-establish the relationship between the pupil and the member(s) of staff involved in the incident.

In cases where it is not possible to speak to the pupil on the same day as the incident occurred, debrief will take place as soon as possible after the pupil returns to school.

All members of staff involved will be allowed a period to debrief and recover from the incident. This may involve access to external support. A senior member of staff will provide support to the member of staff involved.

The Headteacher will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity of any incident where physical intervention or restraint was used. The Headteacher or her nominee will initiate the recording process if not already underway and review each incident to ensure that any necessary lessons are learnt.

Training Needs of Staff

In cases where it is known that a pupil may require physical intervention on occasions, appropriate training will be provided for relevant staff. Staff involved will identify their training needs in this area.

This policy will be reviewed and updated every 2 years or earlier as necessary.

Arrangement for Informing parents

Parents will be informed of the school's policy regarding physical intervention in the following ways:

- At the outset of the introduction of a policy or on update of a policy, on our school website
- Staff who work with particular children who have learning or physical needs (or who have Learning Support Plans –LSPs, Individual behaviour Plans and/or Pastoral Support Plans) may need to use specific techniques routinely to manage challenging behaviour. Such arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers in advance. Parents will sign the agreed plan. All interventions will be routinely recorded.
- All parents will be informed after a non-routine incident where physical intervention is used with a child. Parents will be contacted by telephone by a Senior member of staff and provided with a completed written form detailing what happened, what actions were taken and any additional relevant information (See form below)

Policy updated February 2024

Policy due for renew February 2026

'Use of Reasonable Force' Incident reporting form

Details of pupil(s) on whom force was used by a member of staff (Name, class)	
Dates of any previous use of force / restraint of this pupil	
Date, time and location of incident	
Names of staff involved (directly or as a witness)	
Details of other pupil's involved, including any attempts to de-escalate and warning given that force might be used	
Reason for using force	
Any injury suffered by staff or pupils and any first aid and / or medical attention required	
Reasons for making a record of the incident	
Follow up, including post incident support and any disciplinary	
Any information shared with staff not involved in the incident 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:	Report Counter signed by:
Name and Role:	Name and Role
Signature / date	Signature / date