

Brandwood Primary School

Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Approved by the Personnel, Finance & Premises Governor Committee: May 2026
Review Date: May 2027

Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Introduction

The Governors, Head Teacher and staff have adopted the following policy and aim to offer a safe and secure environment for all members of the school community whilst promoting and sustaining excellent standards of behaviour. Section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent learners committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others or damaging property and to maintain good order and discipline. This policy gives clear guidelines on when and how restraint or reasonable force may be used to secure the safety of all members of the school community or where there is a serious breach of school discipline and how such incidents must be reported and recorded.

Aims

As a school community we strive to:

- ◇ Create a learning environment in which all members of the school community feel safe and secure
- ◇ Maintain the safety of all members of the school community, including learners and staff
- ◇ Protect all learners against any form of physical intervention which is unnecessary, inappropriate, excessive or harmful
- ◇ Prevent serious breaches of the school behaviour and anti-bullying policies
- ◇ Prevent serious damage to school or personal property
- ◇ Develop and implement guidance for all members of staff so that they are clear about the circumstances in which they might use reasonable force for learner restraint or intervention and how such force should be applied

In addition, we aim to minimise the need to use reasonable force by:

- ◇ Actively and consistently promoting positive behaviour and high expectations in all aspects of school life
- ◇ Creating a calm environment, where all learners feel safe and secure, that minimises the risk of incidents arising that might require reasonable force
- ◇ Ensuring all staff are aware of and follow the behaviour management policy to promote and positively reinforce good behaviour but also to de-escalate and refer incidents appropriately if they do arise
- ◇ Using social and emotional aspects of learning approaches i.e. PHSE & Relationships Education or as part of the SMSC programme, to teach learners how to manage conflict and strong feelings
- ◇ Assigning key workers to those who have been identified as having social, emotional or mental health difficulties to promote home-school liaison and to support each individual in controlling their actions, encouraging them to discuss and understand the consequences of their actions
- ◇ Ensuring there are regular, planned discussions whereby the inclusion of those identified as having difficulties is discussed, e.g. half termly inclusion meetings with SENDCo, weekly meetings with senior lead
- ◇ Completing risk assessments, referral procedures and behaviour contracts for individual learners
- ◇ Developing strong home-school links through regular liaison with parents and carers involving the use of home-school diaries, interpreters (where necessary), regular meetings with senior leaders and phone calls (as appropriate)
- ◇ Utilising the support of external agencies e.g. SALT, Behaviour Support, Aspire, Woodbridge Outreach, Educational Psychologist as appropriate
- ◇ Only using force when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force

Definition of Reasonable Force

There is no statutory definition of 'reasonable force' and whether the force is reasonable will always depend on the circumstances of individual cases and the context in which the reasonable force is used. In terms of this policy, the definition of 'reasonable force' is the minimum force necessary to prevent any learner from physically harming themselves or others or seriously damaging property but used in a manner to preserve the dignity and safety of all concerned.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head Teacher and all members of the teaching staff have the statutory power to use restraint or reasonable force at all times. In addition, members of school staff including: any member of support staff, lunchtime welfare assistants

and office staff may be authorised by the Head Teacher to do the same. Temporary authorisation will be given to others who do not normally supervise learners, for example, volunteers accompanying classes or year groups on organised visits. The Head Teacher has the responsibility to ensure that staff are fully informed of this policy and understand what authorisation entails.

In the event of an incident occurring where reasonable force has been used, a member of the Senior Leadership Team must be contacted immediately. This does not necessarily mean waiting for them to arrive before taking action if the need for action is urgent but informing them of the incident during or after it has happened, as soon as is possible. Staff are advised that, as far as possible, they should not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance.

Purpose of Reasonable Force or Restraint

Restraint or reasonable force will be used for two different purposes.

1. To control an individual - this can mean passive physical contact (i.e. standing between more than one learner or blocking the path of an individual) or active physical contact (i.e. leading the individual by the hand or arm or ushering a learner away by placing a hand in the centre of the back).
2. To restrain - when members of staff use restraint, they physically prevent a learner from continuing what they were doing after they have been told to stop, particularly if this is causing persistent disruption to a whole class or threat to another individual or group. However, the use of restraint techniques is usually in more extreme cases and where there is no viable alternative, such as where two learners are involved in a fight and physical intervention is needed to separate them or a learner is physically attacking an adult.

Authorised staff will only use force when:

- ◇ The potential consequences of not intervening are likely to be sufficiently serious to justify considering the use of force
- ◇ The chances of achieving the desired result by other means are low
- ◇ The risks associated with not using force outweigh those of using force

Wherever possible these judgements will take account of the particular characteristics of the learner including age, SEN and/or disability. Reasonable force or restraint may be used when the individual concerned is on the school premises, outside of school premises during school hours or elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of a staff member, for example on the school visit.

Training

Key staff will receive training from their colleagues and from reputable training agencies, when possible they will also be informed of:

- ◇ How to deal with those who present particular risks to themselves or others (as a result of SEN and/or disabilities or other personal circumstances, such as domestic violence)
- ◇ How to minimise the highest risks, for examples, by calling the police if an individual suspected of having a weapon seems likely to resist a search
- ◇ The types of restraint that could be used

Reasonable Force or Restraint Procedures

In situations where reasonable force or restraint may need to be used, the staff member dealing with the incident should send for the nearest member of the teaching staff if they are alone with a learner and for a member of the Senior Leadership Team to attend the situation (a sensible learner may be asked to send for an appropriate member of staff if necessary). It also may be appropriate to remove others from the room if they are at risk of physical harm or there is significant disruption to their learning. When using reasonable force, the health and safety of all involved must be considered, physical interventions should involve the minimum amount of force necessary to resolve the situation and calm the learner. Staff will also be advised that, as far as possible, they should not use force unless or until another responsible adult is present to support, observe and call for assistance but not if anyone is in direct risk of harm (unless a weapon is involved). A calm and measured approach should be used at all times and the following procedure must be followed:

- Tell the learner to stop what they are doing (remind them of their behaviour contract if applicable)
- Clearly state the desired behaviour
- Tell them that physical intervention will take place if the inappropriate behaviour continues
- Intervene in a measured way, the use of force must be proportionate to the level of risk

Types of Restraint

Types of restraint that could be used:

- ◊ Standing between more than one individual or blocking the path of an individual
- ◊ Leading a learner by the hand or arm
- ◊ Ushering the learner away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- ◊ Using appropriate restricting holds in more extreme circumstances

The law strictly prohibits the use of force which constitutes corporal punishment, the use of force as a punishment or to intentionally cause pain, injury or humiliation contravenes our child protection and safeguarding policy. Staff should never act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by:

- ◊ Using unacceptable restraints such as: the seated double embrace, the double basket hold or the nose distraction technique (see physical control in care medical panel report 2008 for details on these techniques)
- ◊ Holding around the neck
- ◊ Adopting any hold that might restrict breathing
- ◊ Forcing limbs against joints
- ◊ Tripping
- ◊ Holding or pulling by the hair
- ◊ Holding the learner face down on the ground
- ◊ Touching or holding a learner in any way that might be considered indecent

Recording Incidents

It is important that there is a detailed, accurate written report on CPOMS of any occasion where force is used. Any incidents involving the use of reasonable force in the form of passive or active physical contact ('passive' - blocking the path of a learner and 'active' - leading or ushering a learner away), will be categorised as a 'Reasonable Force Incident'. However, incidents that require full restraint and removal from the situation will be categorised as a 'Serious Reasonable Force Incident'.

The incident record form (attached) will be completed as soon as possible after any incident has occurred. Similarly, all injuries will be recorded in accordance with the health and safety policy. A copy of the incident record form will be uploaded onto CPOMS, and all relevant parties alerted. In considering whether an incident needs to be recorded, the following will be taken into consideration:

- ◊ The level or risk presented at the time of the incident
- ◊ The degree of force used
- ◊ Any effect on the learner or member of staff

Reporting Incidents

Parents or carers will be informed of any recordable incident. They will be given an opportunity to discuss the incident with the Head Teacher or a Deputy Head Teacher and given a copy of the policy and form. Afterwards arrangements will be made for supporting staff and learners involved in the incident, including meeting immediate and physical needs and rebuilding relationships, to ensure that lessons are learned from the incident. In some cases, the appropriate external agencies (for example: Local Authority Children's Services, the local children's safeguarding board, the health and safety executive and/or the local PCSOs) will also be informed.

Complaints & Allegations

Should there be any complaint or allegation following an incident, then the arrangements or dealing with complaints and allegations of misconduct will be followed (see the managing allegations policy and complaints policy).

Monitoring & Evaluation

The Head Teacher will make an annual report to the Governing Board of the recordable incidents after which the impact of the policy will be considered, and the policy amended if necessary. The Governors and Head Teacher give

serious consideration to any comments from parents or carers about this policy and make a record of all such comments. This policy will be reviewed annually, by the Personnel and Finance Governor Committee, or earlier if necessary.

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Use of reasonable force to control or restrain: incident record

Details of learner on whom reasonable force was used by a member of staff.	Name: Class:
Date, time and location of incident.	Date: Time: Location:
Names of staff members involved (directly or as witness).	
Details of others involved directly or as witnesses, including any learners involved who were vulnerable - SEN, disability, medical or social reasons.	
Description of incident by staff involved, including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings that reasonable force might be used.	
Reason for using reasonable force or restraint and description of force or restraint used.	
Any injury suffered by a staff member or learner and any first aid required.	
Follow up, including post-incident support, any disciplinary action against the learner.	
When and how parents or carers were informed, and any views expressed.	
Has any complaint been lodged?	

Report compiled by:

Name: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Report countersigned by:

Name: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____