

THE USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN STUDENTS

Rationale

This policy is written to comply with the non-statutory guidance The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils 2007.

Policy

This policy is intended to clarify the powers of staff, including CSAs, lunch time supervisors and learning support staff, who have lawful control or charge of students, to use reasonable force to prevent students committing a crime, causing injury or damage or causing disruption.

Guidelines

1 Types of Incidents

There is a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary to control or restrain a student. The following are examples of such situations:

- a student attacks a member of staff, or another student;
- students are fighting;
- a student is engaged in, or is on the verge of committing, deliberate damage or vandalism to property;
- a student is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage by accident, by rough play, or by misuse of dangerous materials or objects;
- a student is running in a corridor or on a stairway in a way in which he or she might have or cause an accident likely to injure him or herself or others;
- a student persistently refuses to obey an order to leave the classroom or area;
- a student is behaving in a way that is seriously disrupting a lesson;
- a student absconds from a class or tries to leave school (NB this will only apply if a student could be at risk if not kept in the classroom or at school).

2 Reasonable Force

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force'.
There are two relevant considerations:

- 2.1 The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. Physical force would not be justified to prevent a student from committing a trivial misdemeanour, or in a situation that clearly could be resolved without force.
- 2.2 The degree of force used must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended

to prevent. Any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

3 **Practical Considerations**

Before intervening physically, a member of staff, should wherever possible tell the student who is misbehaving to stop, and what will happen if he or she does not.

The member of staff should continue to attempt to communicate with the student throughout the incident, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

A calm approach to the situation is needed and staff should not give the impression that they have lost their temper, or are acting out of anger or frustration, or to punish the student.

Sometimes a member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help (unless it is an emergency). For example, when dealing with an older student, or a physically large student, or more than one student or if the member of staff believes he or she may be at risk of injury. In such a situation the member of staff should remove the students who might be at risk, summon assistance from a colleague or where necessary telephone the police.

The member of staff should inform the student(s) that he or she has sent for help. Until assistance arrives the member of staff should continue to attempt to defuse the situation orally, and try to prevent the situation escalating.

4 **Application of Force**

Physical intervention may take several forms: It might involve members of staff:

- physically intervening between students;
- blocking a student's path;
- holding;
- pushing;
- pulling;
- leading a student by the hand or arm;
- leading a student away by placing a hand in the centre of their back; or
- in extreme circumstances, using more restrictive holds

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: eg to prevent a student hitting someone, or throwing something. Members of staff should **NOT** act in a way that might cause injury to the student, for example:

- holding the student around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the student's ability to breathe;
- slapping, punching or kicking a student;

- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- tripping up a student;
- holding or pulling a student by the hair or ear;
- holding a student down on the ground

Staff should always avoid touching or holding a student in a way that might be considered indecent.

5 **Recording Incidents**

All major incidents should be recorded in the Incident Book maintained by the Head Teacher.

The member of staff should prepare for the Head Teacher, a written report of the incident as soon as possible.

The report should include:

- the name(s) of the student(s) involved;
- when and where the incident took place;
- the names of any other staff or students who witnessed the incident; the reason that force was necessary (eg to prevent injury to the student, student or member of staff);
- how the incident began and progressed, including details of the student's behaviour, what was said by each person, the steps taken to defuse the situation, the degree of force used, how it was applied and for how long;
- the student's response, and the outcome of the incident;
- details of any injury suffered by the student, another student, or a member of staff and of any damage to property

Staff might find it helpful to seek advice from a senior member of staff or a representative of their professional association when preparing a report. They should also keep a copy of the report.

Parents should be informed of any incident involving their son or daughter by the Head Teacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Group.

6 **Complaints**

Where there are complaints from parents reference should be made to DCSF Guidance Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and other staff.

7 **Physical Contact with Students in other Circumstances**

Some physical contact may be necessary to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE, sports coaching, or Design Technology, or if a member of staff has to give first aid. Students with special educational needs may need staff to provide physical prompts or help. Touching may also be appropriate where a student is in distress and needs comforting.

Staff should use their own professional judgement when they feel a student needs support.

There may be some students who find touching particularly unwelcoming eg because of their cultural background or because they have been abused. Staff should bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

8 Monitoring Evaluation and Review

The use of force to control or restrain students will be monitored and evaluated by the Head Teacher.

The policy will be reviewed triennially by the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

The Head Teacher will report any incidents to the governors.

9 Dissemination of the Policy

This policy is available on the school website, on request to parents, the LA and OFSTED through the Head Teacher.

Other policies that have relevance are:

Safeguarding Children
Health and Safety
School Behaviour
Special Educational Needs

Date approved by governors	2 March 2010
Date to be reviewed	March 2013